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ENG 3061-600: Intermediate Nonfiction Writing

Woody Skinner

Eastern Illinois University

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English 3061
Intermediate Nonfiction
Eastern Illinois University
Spring 2021

Instructor

Dr. Woody Skinner

wwskinner@eiu.edu

Office: Coleman Hall 3040

Digital Office Hours

Mondays & Wednesdays--4:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m.

Fridays--2:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.

Required Texts and Materials

The Truth of the Matter by Dinty Moore

Course Description

This intermediate course will provide participants with an overview of the styles and techniques of contemporary creative nonfiction while also offering a venue for student work. We will begin the semester by analyzing anthologized essays, focusing on different aspects of narrative craft each week. Then we'll dedicate the second half of the semester to workshop—we'll critique student work, in other words, using the craft concepts covered earlier in the term.

Objectives

This course is designed to do the following:

- Explore the aesthetic and practical value of the essay form
- Provide you with a vocabulary of nonfiction writing craft
- Help you read like a writer and analyze the craft choices writers make
- Sharpen your decision-making process during the drafting and revision of your own work
- Acquaint you with workshop practices and etiquette
- Familiarize you with contemporary literary publishing

Course Policies

Technical Requirements

To take this course, you must be able to do the following:

- Regularly access the Internet, using a laptop or desktop computer
- Download and upload email attachments
- Use Microsoft Word and PowerPoint
- Use Collaborate Ultra and Kaltura for audio/video communications
- Use Adobe Reader (free download) or Preview (for Mac) to read PDF files
- Install software
- Use a webcam and microphone

Digital Decorum, or 'Netiquette'

Constructive university learning environments require professors and students to respect differences—of background, thought, opinion, and belief. This notion holds special significance in our online literature course, where you will be asked to routinely engage with your classmates' perspectives, experiences, and ideas. Therefore, respect will serve as the guiding principle and bedrock expectation of our work together this semester.

Here are some best practices for communicating in our online classroom:

- Healthy discourse provides room for differences of opinion; however, disagreements should, without exception, be respectfully expressed.
- Keep in mind that sarcasm is more difficult to understand without tonal cues and body language.
- When you're replying to a discussion board post, please summarize the portion of the original post that has inspired your response.
- Avoid unnecessary repetition. Privilege concision and rely on the substance of your ideas to meet suggested word counts.
- Since our discussions will draw extensively from primary and secondary sources, be sure to clearly indicate direct quotes and, when possible, provide page numbers.
- In the case of digital texts with unclear or ambiguous pagination, please clearly indicate the chapter to which you're referring.

The following content will not be permitted and will, furthermore, be referred for disciplinary action:

- Illegal materials
- Harassing or threatening comments
- Harmful, abusive, or sexually explicit statements

Submitting Assignments

Dropbox assignments should use reader-friendly, 12-point fonts and should be submitted as Word or PDF files.

Instructor Response Time

I will check the course daily Monday through Friday and periodically during weekends. You can expect an email response from me within 48 hours of your message, and you can expect to receive grades on all assignments within one week of submission deadlines.

Late Work and Make-Up Work

All work should be turned in on the designated dates, at the specified times. I do not accept late work unless qualifying circumstances are discussed with me beforehand; I will grant extensions only when provided with at least 48-hours notice.

Policy on Plagiarism

Here is the English department's plagiarism policy: "Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's own original work' (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)—has the right and responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office. Respect for the work of others should encompass all formats, including print, electronic, and oral sources."

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by McAfee Hall, Room 1210, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

Technical Support

If you need assistance with D2L, call D2L Support toll free at 1-877-325-7778. Support is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Email and Chat options are also available on the "My Home" page after logging in to D2L. Other D2L Resources, including a D2L Orientation course for students, are available on the "My Home" page. If you are experiencing less than optimal D2L Brightspace performance, review the D2L Brightspace Performance Checklist to assess the issue.

For technical questions related to other software, hardware, network issues, EIU NetID/password, or Panthermail, contact the ITS Helpdesk at 217-581-4357 during regular

business hours, or submit a help ticket at <https://techsupport.eiu.edu/>. If you have a question related to course content, please contact your instructor.

Grading

Assignment	Grade	Total Points
Writing Exercises	10 % (2.5% x 4)	100
Workshop Submissions (roughly 2,000-4,000 words each)	25% (12.5% x 2)	250
Workshop Feedback	25%	250
Final Portfolio (2 revised essays & accompanying 1-2 page craft statement)	25%	250
Digital Presentation	5%	50
Participation (discussion, in-class activities, in-class writing exercises, & reading quizzes)	10%	100
Total	100%	1000

Final Grade	Total Points/Percentage Grade
A	895-1000 (90-100%)
B	795-894 (80-89%)
C	695-794 (70-79%)

D	595-694 (60-69%)
F	0-594 (0-59%)

Additional Support

Office Hours

I will hold regular digital office hours at the times listed above, and I am always happy to speak with you—whether you have questions, want to brainstorm together, or simply would like to discuss one of our books. If the demands of your schedule prevent you from meeting during office hours, please contact me to make other arrangements—we will find a time that works well for both of us.

The Writing Center

I encourage you to use EIU's Writing Center located at 3110 Coleman Hall. This free service provides one-to-one conferences with writing center consultants who can help you with brainstorming, organizing, developing support, documenting your papers, and working with sentence-level concerns. The writing center is open to help any student from any major at any stage of his or her writing process, and its system of one-to-one conferences demonstrates value and respect for individual writers, all of whom can benefit from feedback about their works in progress.

To schedule an appointment, you can drop by the center (3110 Coleman Hall) or you can call 581-5929. The writing center is open Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. On Friday hours of operation are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The Student Success Center

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center (www.eiu.edu/~success) for assistance with time management, text taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to McAfee Hall, Room 1301.

Schedule

The dates below are tentative; I reserve the right to make adjustments for the benefit of the class.

Week 1: January 11th-15th

Subjects	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
True Stories, Innovative Forms What Makes Nonfiction Creative? Detail & Description	--Intro to Course	Read pp. 3-18 in Moore	Read pp. 21-28 & 279-285 & 127-131

Week 2: January 18th-22nd

Subjects	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Characterization & Scene Voice & Point of View	Class Canceled: Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Read pp. 29-40 & pp. 229-235	Read pp. 42-52 & pp. 276-278 & 200-206 Writing Exercise #1 Due

Week 3: January 25th-29th

Subjects	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Discovery Memoir Literary Journalism	Read pp. 54-62 & pp. 263-275	Read pp. 65-72 & pp. 286-291 & pp. 143-150	Read pp. 74-82 & pp. 167-173 Writing Exercise #2 Due

Week 4: February 1st-5th

Subjects	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
The Personal Essay	Read pp. 84-91 & pp. 143-150	Read pp. 103-106	Read pp. 107-110

Reading Like a Writer/Slow Reading			Essay #1 Due
Workshop Procedures			

Week 5: February 8th-12th

Subjects	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Workshop	Workshop 1	Workshop 2	Class Canceled: Lincoln's Birthday
Reading Like a Writer	Read pp. 132-139	Read pp. 140-142	

Week 6: February 15-19th

Subjects	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Workshop	Workshop 3	Workshop 4	Workshop 5
Reading Like a Writer	Read pp. 174-183	Read pp. 184-188	

Week 7: February 22nd-26th

Subjects	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Workshop	Workshop 6	Personal Wellness Day	Workshop 7
Reading Like a Writer	Read pp. 207-210		Writing Exercise #3 Due

Week 8: March 1st-5th

Subjects	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Workshop Reading Like a Writer	Workshop 8 Read pp. 220-223	Workshop 9 Read pp. 224-228	Workshop 10 Writing Exercise #4 Due

Week 9: March 8th-12th

Subjects	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Workshop Reading Like a Writer	Workshop 11 Read pp. 211-219	Workshop 12 Read pp. 189-199	Workshop 13 Essay #2 Due

Week 10: March 15th-19th

Subjects	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Workshop Reading Like a Writer	Workshop 14 Read pp. 151-156	Workshop 15 Read pp. 236-242	Workshop 16

Week 11: March 22nd-26th

Subjects	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Workshop Reading Like a Writer	Workshop 17 Read pp. 243-251	Workshop 18 Read pp. 252-256	Workshop 19

Week 12: March 29th-April 2nd

Subjects	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Workshop	Workshop 20	Workshop 21	Workshop 22
Reading Like a Writer	Read pp. 257-262	Read pp. 157-166	

Week 13: April 5th-9th

Subjects	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Workshop	Workshop 23	Personal Wellness Day	Workshop 24
Reading Like a Writer			

Week 14: April 12th-16th

Subjects	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Workshop	Workshop 25	Workshop 26	Workshop 27
Reading Like a Writer			

Week 15: April 19th-23rd

Subjects	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Workshop	Workshop 28	Workshop 29	Workshop 30
Reading Like a Writer			

Week 16: April 26th-30th

Subjects	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Revision Pursuing Publication	Read pp. 93-99	Revision Exercises	Revision Exercises

Finals Week: May 3rd-May 7th

Subjects	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Final Portfolios		Final Portfolios due by 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 5th	