Fall 2-23-2021

ENG 4761-600: Advanced Nonfiction Writing

Woody Skinner
Eastern Illinois University

English 4761
Advanced Creative Nonfiction
Fall 2020

Instructor
Dr. Woody Skinner
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Digital Office Hours
Mondays & Wednesdays: 12:00 p.m.-1:30 p.m.
Fridays: 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m.

Required Texts and Materials
- *You Can't Make This Stuff Up* by Lee Gutkind (Da Capo, 2012)

Course Description
This advanced workshop is designed to deepen student knowledge of narrative craft while also encouraging participants to explore a variety of contemporary subjects, styles, forms, and genres. Our workshop conversations will draw on a diverse range of nonfiction pieces and craft readings, providing students with strategies for revision and publication.

Objectives
By the end of this course, students will be able to do the following:
- Describe the aesthetic tensions that exist within creative nonfiction
- Ethically negotiate the tension between 'creativity' and 'truth-telling'
- Distinguish between the major strains of creative nonfiction, both public and personal
- Apply the language of creative craft to published pieces and works in progress
- Describe and analyze the craft choices on display in literary essays
- Convert lived and researched experiences into dramatic scenes
- Use research to broaden the scope of personal experiences
- Present intimate details to make broad issues more immediate and accessible
- Draft, revise, and polish essays that successfully intertwine story and research-driven information

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 the submission deadline.

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. I do not allow make-up work for previously missed assignments.

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 Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, 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
Pre-Workshop Participation, Modules 1-4 (includes discussion board participation, D2L activity, writing exercises, quizzes, & small assignments)	20% (5% x 4 modules)	200
Workshop Participation, Modules 5-8 (includes discussion board participation, D2L activity, writing exercises, & small assignments)	10%	100
Workshop Submissions (2 literary essays, 8-15 pages each)	20% (10% x 2)	200
Workshop Feedback (in-text comments & a comprehensive endnote for every workshopped piece)	20%	200
Final Portfolio (Undergraduates: 2 revised essays & accompanying writer's note; Graduate Students: 2 revised essays, 1 new essay, & writer's note)	20%	200
Digital Presentation	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 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

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

Module	Key Subjects & Craft Concepts	Materials & Major Assignments
Module 1: August 24th-September 6th	--Defining Creative Nonfiction --Truth & Fact --Craft: Building Scenes	--*You Can't Make This Stuff Up* --D2L Resources & Activities
Module 2: September 7th-20th	--The Public or Big-Idea Essay --Research, Creativity, & Story --Craft: Structure & Plot	--*You Can't Make This Stuff Up* --D2L Resources & Activities
Module 3: September 21st-October 4th	--Writing the Personal --Expanding Your Scope	--*You Can't Make This Stuff Up*

	--Craft: Place, Character, & Dialogue	--D2L Resources & Activities
Module 4: October 5th-18th	--Drafting Module --Beginnings & Endings --"The Dance" --Solving Logistical Problems	--*You Can't Make This Stuff Up* --D2L Resources & Activities **Workshop Piece #1 due by Midnight on October 18th.**
Module 5: October 19th-November 1st	*Workshops Round 1, Part A*	--Workshop Submissions --D2L Resources & Activities **--Workshop Critiques Due**
Module 6: November 2nd-15th	*Workshops Round 1, Part B*	--Workshop Submissions --D2L Resources & Activities **--Workshop Critiques Due** **--Workshop Piece #2 Due by Midnight on November 15th**

Module 7: November 16th-29th	*Workshops Round 2, Part A*	--Workshop Submissions --D2L Resources & Activities
Module 8: November 30th-December 13th	*Workshops Round 2, Part B*	--Workshop Submissions --D2L Resources & Activities **--Digital Reading/Presentation Due**
Finals Week: December 14th-18th		**Final Portfolios Due by December 16th**