



Course Title: An Introduction to Creative Nonfiction: Telling the Truth
Course Code: CNF 50 W
Instructor: Stephanie Soileau

Course Summary:

The first three weeks of this class will serve as a general introduction to creative nonfiction, including issues of craft and ethics, as well as an opportunity for you to write about yourselves in the form of personal essay or memoir. The next two weeks will focus on writing about family and community, and then finally, we will expand our perspective even further to write about “the world,” producing a short essay that involves some element of “research.”

You will be turning in three short essays for workshop critique. The first two essays will be 3-5 pages in length, and the third will be 5-10. These essays may be inspired by the writing exercises we do in class, or they may be something that you start on your own. I will give you very loose guidelines for each of them, coinciding with the topic we are discussing in that portion of the course (i.e., Self, Family/Community, World).

I understand that you all have busy lives and commitments beyond this class, and so I encourage you to do as much of the reading and writing as you feel capable. If you miss an assignment or two or three, don't fret. Come back to the coursework when you can. I do ask, though, that you make every effort to comment on your classmates' writing in workshop critiques. Your classmates will be counting on you as a member of this writing community. Your feedback is vital to make this workshop work!

Please see course page for full description and additional details.

Grade Options and Requirements:

- No Grade Requested (NGR)
 - This is the default option. No work will be required; no credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided.
- Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)
 - Score will be determined by student attendance and participation.
- Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)
 - Written work, as assigned by the instructor, will determine a student's grade.

Please Note: *If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose either the Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.*

Please contact the Stanford Continuing Studies office with any questions
365 Lasuen St., Stanford, CA 94305
continuingstudies@stanford.edu
650-725-2650

Tentative Weekly Outline:

Please note that this outline is subject to change (but only in the direction of lightening your load, not increasing it!)

Week One: Greetings and Writing Profiles

Reading: "The Basics of Good Writing in Any Form (*Tell It Slant*), "Being Brians," "Dr. Don"

Writing Exercise (200-500 words)

Week Two: A General Introduction to Creative Nonfiction Craft and Ethics

Reading: "The Particular Challenges of Creative Nonfiction" (*Tell It Slant*).

Listen to two "This American Life" episodes

Writing Exercise (200-500 words)

Week Three: Writing about Memory and Yourself

Reading: "The Personal Essay" and "The Body of Memory" (*Tell It Slant*), "Mirrorings," and "Burl's"

Writing Exercise (200-500 words)

Week Four: Writing about Family/Community/People We Know

Reading: "Writing the Family," "The Writing Process and Revision" (*Tell It Slant*), "Visitor," "Interstellar"

Essay #1 Due (3-5 pages)

Week Five: Writing about Family, etc., cont'd; How to Workshop an Essay; Workshop on Essay #1

Reading: Your groupmates' essays; "The Fourth State of Matter," "Sharing Your Work" (*Tell It Slant*)

Week Six: Workshop on Essay # 1, cont'd. Writing the World

Reading: "Using Research to Expand Your Perspective" (*TIS*); "Shitdiggers, Mudflats and the Worm Men of Maine"

Essay #2 Due (3-5 pages)

Week Seven: Workshop on Essay #2; Writing the World, cont'd.

Reading: Your groupmates' essays

Pitches for final essay due

Week Eight: Workshop on Essay #2, cont'd.

Essay #3 Due

Week Nine: Essay #3 Workshop. Thinking about Revision.

Week Ten: Essay #3 Workshop, cont'd. Thinking about Publishing.

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