Course Syllabus

Department: Humanities

Date: February 16, 2013

I. Course Prefix and Number: ENG 232

Course Name: Workshop in Creative Nonfiction

Credit Hours and Contact Hours: 3 Credit Hours – 3 Contact Hours

Catalog Description including pre- and co-requisites: supporting data required for grade prerequisite of 'C-' or higher.

This course focuses on the writing of Creative Nonfiction. Techniques and skills of the various forms of creative nonfiction, including The Personal Essay, Memoir, Literary Journalism, Flash Nonfiction, and the Travel Essay are examined in class and practiced in student writing. Students will learn and practice strategies for brainstorming, drafting, critiquing, and revising their work, as well as the critical expertise and technical language to help them better discuss works-in-progress.

Previous experience in creative non-fiction is not required, but the student is expected to be proficient in the mechanics of writing.

Prerequisite: English 101 or permission of Instructor

Relationship to Academic Programs and Curriculum including SUNY Gen Ed designation if applicable:

This course fulfills a Liberal Arts or General Elective in AA, AS, and AAS degree programs. This course meets requirement for “The Arts” SUNY Gen Ed Knowledge and Skills area.

II. Course Student Learning Outcomes: State the student learning outcome(s) for the course (e.g. Student will be able to identify…)

As a course that meets the SUNY Gen Ed requirements for “The Arts” Knowledge and Skills area, students will demonstrate an understanding of at least one principal form of artistic expression (creative nonfiction) and the creative process inherent therein. This includes the following outcomes specific to this form:

- Students will be able to draft and revise short works of creative nonfiction.
- Students will be able to use appropriate generative strategies for any given topic. Strategies include: listing, freewriting, clustering, mapping, writing from images, looping, and text rendering.
- Students will respond to various rhetorical situations.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of basic concepts about creative nonfiction: what the terms implies, the forms it takes, the craft elements necessary to its success.
Students will be able to analyze and evaluate the ethical implications involved when writing about one's own life and the lives of others.

Students will be able to read published nonfiction writers as models for their own work, and learn how to read their colleagues' writing with authority, compassion, and insight.

Students will interact effectively in workshops by giving and receiving various forms of feedback on drafts in progress.

Students will effectively participate in various on-campus, off-campus, and on-line writing communities.

Students will reflect on their reading, writing and learning processes and articulate their insights about these processes.

As a course that meets the SUNY Gen Ed requirements for the “Critical Thinking” Knowledge and Skills area, students will

- Identify, analyze, and evaluate arguments as they occur in published works of creative nonfiction.
- Develop well-reasoned arguments in their creative nonfiction manuscript.
- Develop well-reasoned arguments about their learning experience in their reflective introduction.

As a course that meets the SUNY Gen Ed requirements for the "Information Management" Knowledge and Skills area, students will

- Perform the basic operations of personal computer use;
- Understand and use basic research techniques; and
- Locate, evaluate and synthesize information from a variety of sources.

**College Learning Outcomes Addressed by the Course:** *(check each College Learning Outcome addressed by the Student Learning Outcomes)*

- [x] writing
- [x] oral communications
- [x] reading
- [ ] mathematics
- [x] critical thinking
- [x] computer literacy
- [x] ethics/values
- [x] citizenship
- [ ] global concerns
- [x] information resources

**III. Assessment Measures (Summarize how the college and student learning outcomes will be assessed):** *For each identified outcome checked, please provide the specific assessment measure.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List identified College Learning Outcomes(s)</th>
<th>Specific assessment measure(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>writing</td>
<td>Students will assemble and submit a Manuscript of their work at the end of the semester. This manuscript will include a Reflective Introduction. Students will also submit a Process Portfolio that includes generative exercises, class notes, reader...</td>
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<td>Category</td>
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<td>responses, revisions and changes to their creative pieces, and any other work they believe may demonstrate the learning they have achieved over the course of the semester.</td>
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<tr>
<td>oral communications</td>
<td>Students will interview various individuals as part of their research for their manuscript. Interview notes will be included in their process portfolio. Students will also participate in a public reading from their manuscripts at the end of the semester.</td>
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<td>reading</td>
<td>Students will include information about how their assessment of other texts (including both student work and published work) has contributed to their analytical and creative expression within their reflective introduction. Annotations of various texts will be included in their process portfolios.</td>
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<td>critical thinking</td>
<td>Students will draft a reflective introduction that measures their learning over the course of the semester, assesses their own learning and learning habits, and demonstrates the work they have completed. This reflective introduction will also analyze and explain the choices they have made within the manuscript.</td>
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<td>computer literacy</td>
<td>Students will type and present the manuscript and reflective introduction in electronic formats when applicable.</td>
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<td>ethics/values</td>
<td>Ethical considerations involved when writing about one’s own life and the lives of others and one’s adherence to veracity when recounting an experience will be explored in a student’s reflective introduction to their manuscript.</td>
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<td>citizenship</td>
<td>Students will participate in a writing community. Their participation will include peer feedback sessions, on and off campus literary events, online participation in various digital literary communities (blogs, website, social media, etc.) and submissions to various literary publications. Their participation will be quantitatively assessed through evidence of participation (online posts, event attendance, receipts of submissions, etc.) as well as qualitatively assessed through their reflective introduction to their manuscript.</td>
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<td>information resources</td>
<td>Students will include both primary and secondary sources in their manuscript. These sources will be appropriately documented. Annotations of these sources will be included in the process portfolio.</td>
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IV. Instructional Materials and Methods

Types of Course Materials:

A Creative Nonfiction Anthology such as Philip Lopate’s *The Art of The Personal Essay* or Judith Kitchen’s *In Brief: Short Takes on the Personal*

A Book-Length work of Creative Nonfiction such as Sonja Livingston’s *Ghostbread* or Tobias Wolff’s *This Boy’s Life*

A Craft Text such as Bruce Ballinger’s *Crafting Truth: Short Studies in Creative Nonfiction* or *Shadow Boxing: Art and Craft Creative Nonfiction* by Kristen Iversen,

Methods of Instruction (e.g. Lecture, Lab, Seminar …):

Seminar, lecture, discussion, workshop, response papers, student driven peer reviews, classroom exercises.

V. General Outline of Topics Covered:

- Definitions and History of Creative Nonfiction
- Features and characteristics of the genre and its various sub-genres
- Craft Elements and Considerations (Style, Voice, Point of View, etc)
- Strategies for Reading-for-the-Craft
- Strategies for Generating
- Strategies for Drafting
- Strategies for Revising
- Research Strategies
  - Incorporating sources
  - Interviewing
- The ethics of writing Creative Nonfiction