

Creative Nonfiction
ENGLISH 204, 304, 404

10-11:15 TTh

PA 207

Fall Semester, 2014

Instructor: Gayle Brandeis

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Office hours: TBD

Course description: Creative non-fiction gives us an opportunity to look both within and beyond ourselves, to explore both self and world. Every Tuesday, we will discuss an essay from our text, as well as related craft issues (tone, voice, point of view, setting, situation vs. story, the ethics of writing about family, the reliability of memory, subjective truth, etc.); each Thursday, we will workshop student essays. We will also do some in class writing during every session to keep our creative juices flowing, our writing muscles flexed. I will share other hand-outs in class and over Moodle throughout the semester, as well. I hope by the end of the term, you will know yourself more deeply as well as understand what makes an essay satisfying for both writer and reader.

Text: *In Fact: The Best of Creative Nonfiction*, edited by Lee Gutkind

Grades:

In a workshop setting, attendance is mandatory to be able to develop and maintain a supportive community and sense of trust within the group. Two absences are acceptable (though not desirable); anything beyond that will affect your grade.

Your grade will be determined in equal measure by:

--your original creative non-fiction (you will submit one original 5-7 page essay for workshop and one significant revision of that story in your portfolio, along with a short essay exploring your revision choices, and three of your favorite in class writing exercises.) **404 students will write and revise two essays.**

--your participation in class (including discussions, workshop critiques and in-class writing exercises)

--304 and 404 students will also write annotations of three essays read in class.

General guidelines:

--Come to class on time and prepared, and be sure to turn off all cell phones, iPods, etc. Laptops are okay for notes and in-class writing, but you may not go online.

--Type all assignments in 12pt Times New Roman (or a comparable standard font) in black ink, double spaced, 1-inch margins, 8 ½ x11” paper, page numbers clearly marked.

--Share your essay on Moodle at least 48 hours before your scheduled workshop, or bring copies of your essay the class session before your workshop time (we will set the schedule the first day of class). I will pass out a separate sheet of workshop guidelines to clarify the process. It is important to me to create a safe, supportive workshop environment, one in which everyone is honest but kind. My greatest hope is that all of you will leave workshop excited to make your work even better.

--Be willing to explore, to be vulnerable, to push your own boundaries, to dig deep and take creative risks.

Class Schedule

Tu August 19 Introduction to our time together--intentions, expectations, workshop schedule, etc.

Th August 21 Discuss “Introduction: Notes for Young Readers” by Annie Dillard (p xi) and “The Creative Nonfiction Police?” by Lee Gutkind (p. xix), write

Tu August 26 Discuss “Three Spheres” by Lauren Slater (p. 3) and related craft issues, write

Th August 28 Workshop, write

Tu September 2 Discuss “Shunned” by Meredith Hall (p. 49) and related craft issues, write

Th September 4 Workshop, write. **Annotation 1 due for 304 and 404 students.**

Tu September 9 Discuss “Dinner at Uncle Boris” by Charles Simic (p. 85) and related craft issues, write

Th September 11 Workshop, write

Tu September 16 Discuss “Prayer Dogs” by Terry Tempest Williams (p. 92) and related craft issues, write

Th September 18 Workshop, write

Tu September 23 Discuss “What Is It We Really Harvestin’ Here?” by Ntozake Shange (p. 109) and related craft issues, write

Th September 25 Workshop, write

Tu September 30 Discuss “The Brown Study” by Richard Rodriguez (p. 119) and related craft issues, write

Th October 2 Workshop, write. **Annotation 2 due for 304 and 404 students.**

Tu October 7 Discuss “Being Brians” by Brian Doyle (p. 163) and related craft issues, write

Th October 9 Workshop, write

Tu October 14 Discuss “Notes from a Difficult Case” by Ruthann Robson (p. 226) and related craft issues, write

Th October 16 Workshop, write

Tu October 21 Discuss “Gray Area: Thinking with a Damaged Brain” by Floyd Skloot (p. 288) and related craft issues, write

Th October 23 Workshop, write

Tu October 28 Discuss “In the Woods” by Leslie Rubinkowski (p. 318) and related craft issues, write

Th October 30 Workshop, write

Tu November 4 Discuss “Going Native” by Francine Prose (p. 356) and related craft issues, write. **Annotation 3 due for 304 and 404 students.**

Th November 6 Workshop, write

Tu November 11--Veteran’s Day--No School

Th November 13 Workshop, write

Tu November 18 Discuss “Mixed-Blood Stew” by Jewell Parker Rhodes (p. 382) and related craft issues, write

Th November 20 Workshop, write

Tu November 25--Thanksgiving Break

Th November 27--Thanksgiving Break

Tu December 2 Discuss “Delivering Lily” by Phillip Lopate (p. 419) and related craft issues, write

Th December 4 Workshop, write

Tu December 9--Final

SCHOOL POLICIES

Sierra Nevada College Mission Statement: Sierra Nevada College graduates will be educated to be scholars of and contributors to a sustainable world. Sierra Nevada College combines the liberal arts and professional preparedness through an interdisciplinary curriculum that emphasizes entrepreneurial thinking and environmental, social, economic and educational sustainability.

Core Themes: Liberal Arts, Professional Preparedness, Entrepreneurial Thinking, Sustainability

Learning Differences: In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, students with a documented disability are eligible for support services and accommodations. If a student wishes to request an accommodation, please contact the Director of Academic Support Services, Henry Conover, at (775) 831-1314 x7534, HYPERLINK "mailto:hconover@sierranevada.edu" hconover@sierranevada.edu.

The Honor Code: The faculty of SNC believes students must be held to high standards of integrity in all aspects of college life in order to promote the educational mission of the College and to encourage respect for the rights of others. Each student brings to the SNC community unique skills, talents, values and experiences which, when expressed within the community, contribute to the quality of the educational environment and the growth and development of the individual. Students share with members of the faculty, administration and staff the responsibility for creating and maintaining an environment conducive to learning and personal development, where actions are guided by mutual respect, integrity, responsibility and trust. The faculty and students alike must make diligent efforts to ensure high standards are upheld by their colleagues and peers as well as themselves. Therefore faculty and students accept responsibility for maintaining these standards at Sierra Nevada College and are obligated to comply with its regulations and procedures, which they are expected to read and understand.

Consequences of Violating the Student Honor Code: SNC students and faculty share the responsibility for maintaining an environment of academic honesty. Thus, all are responsible for knowing and abiding by the SNC Faculty/Student Honor Code published in the current SNC Catalog. Faculty are responsible for presenting the Honor Code and the consequences of violating it to students at the start of their classes AND for reporting all incidences of academic dishonesty to the Provost. Students are responsible for knowing what constitutes CHEATING, PLAGIARISM and FABRICATION and for refraining from these and other forms of academic dishonesty. Violations of the Honor Code become part of a student's academic record.

1st Offense: Student receives a zero for assignment/exam and counseling with faculty on the honor code, consequences for violating the honor code, and the value of academic honesty in learning.

2nd Offense: Student fails course and receives counseling with

faculty on the honor code, consequences for violating the honor code, and the value of academic honesty in learning.
3rd Offense: Student is expelled.

The SNC Email System: The SNC email system is the official communication vehicle among students, faculty members and administrative staff and is designed to protect the confidentiality of student information as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 Act (FERPA). Students should check their college email accounts daily during the school year.

Students have a right to forward their SNC e-mail to another e-mail account (for example, @hotmail or @gmail). However, confidentiality of student information protected by FERPA cannot be guaranteed for SNC e-mail forwarded to an outside vendor. Having email redirected does not absolve a student from the responsibilities associated with official communication sent to his or her SNC email account.