**Spring 2014**

Introduction to Creative Nonfiction – ENGL 0180, Section 6

M, W, F –12-12:50

J. Walter Wilson, 402

Instructor: Susan Kushner Resnick

Office: 70 Brown Street, Room 401A

Email: [susan\_resnick@brown.edu](mailto:susan_resnick@brown.edu); phone: 617-697-6575

Office hours: Monday 1-2; Wednesday and Friday, by appointment

Course objective: To gain exposure to and appreciation for creative nonfiction, and to learn how to write in this genre. Students will read and practice many styles of CNF and will complete original essays and immersion journalism pieces. Two comprehensive papers will be required, along with shorter writing assignments throughout the semester. Participating in class discussions and offering constructive workshop feedback are all required.

Creative Nonfiction is true writing with personality. Good CNF writing evokes an emotional response, such as sorrow, laughter or rage. CNF is not neutral, but it is always factual. CNF writers use techniques traditionally employed by fiction writers, such as setting, dialogue and rich description. Imagination is necessary – not for invention of material, but for presenting fact as creatively as possible.

HW: Homework is due *after* the class on which it has been listed, not *for* that class unless otherwise noted.

Grading: I will assess writing as if I am an editor. This means that besides looking at spelling, grammar and clarity, I will be weighing how effectively you’ve told a story and produced a piece of writing that could interest a general reader. Though this is a S/NC class, you must earn the equivalent of a C to pass. I will letter-grade some assignments throughout the semester to give you and me an idea of where you stand. Late papers and excessive spelling and grammar errors will result in full letter grade deductions per assignment. Papers that I deem lower than C quality will receive NC. They may be rewritten for credit. You cannot pass this class if you earn three NC grades. An A for the semester is eligible for S with Distinction.

Lateness and absences: Don’t be late. It’s rude. You are allowed two *excused* absences, meaning you’ve notified me in advance, and two *unexcused* absences per semester. These include sporting events, job interviews, illnesses and mental health days. Any additional absences will be grounds for NC in the class unless I receive a note from health services or the dean.

Unbreakable rules: Do not misspell words. Do not depend on spell-check. Do not plagiarize. Do not make anything up. Do not miss a deadline unless you have requested an extension in advance.

Kind requests: Please do not send me assignments via email unless we’ve agreed on that method of transmission in advance. I like to edit/correct hard copies. This means planning ahead to avoid early morning printer back-ups.

Please insert page numbers in your assignments.

~~PROFREAD!~~ PROOFREAD.

**Required Materials:**

Course Packet - Available at Allegra Printing

The Glen Rock Book of the Dead by Marion Winik – available at Brown Bookstore

A creative-nonfiction book of your choice

1 notebook whose pages can be ripped out (for in-class work and journaling).

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The following schedule is not set in stone. Don't ever use the cliché "set in stone" in your writing.

**Wed., Jan 22** – Welcome Shoppers

HW: Get packet and books if registered or accepted into class.

Start journaling: ideas, scenes, descriptions, insights

**Fri., Jan 24** - Turning Fact into Art: This is CNF

HW: Read Sunday paper from the city closest to your home community (or The Providence Journal). Bring in 3 ideas of stories you could turn into a piece of CNF and a description of how you’d report and research them.

**Mon., Jan 27**. – The NON in Nonfiction

HW:  Read Updike and Michaels essays in packet.

Finish map story.

**Wed., Jan 29** – The Universal Truth

HW: Read Zinsser

**Fri., Jan 31** – How To Write

HW: Read Doyle, Arundel, Legler and Lamott essays

**Mon., Feb. 3 –** The Essay

HW: Read White essay and interview

Finish list essay – **Due Wed., Feb. 8**

**Wed. Feb. 5 –** Classic Forms

HW: Read Gerard essay

**Fri., Feb 7 –** Braided essay

HW: Bring in three essay ideas for Editorial Board meeting

**Mon., Feb. 10 –** Editorial Board Meeting

HW: Start first draft – **Due Wed., Feb 19**

Read Sedaris piece

**Wed., Feb 12** – Journalism

HW: essay draft

Read Ephron in packet

**Fri., Feb. 14 –** Interviewing

HW: Finish essay draft for Wed.

Read Tietz piece.

**Mon., Feb. 17 - No class, long weekend**

**Wed., Feb. 19 –** Longform stories

HW: Write 750 word news story – **Due Wed., Feb. 26**

Read Laskas piece

**Fri., Feb. 21** – Immersion Journalism

HW: report and write news story for Wednesday

Start Winik book

**Mon., Feb., 24** – Profiles

HW: Finish news story

Finish Winik and write a “dead” piece – short profile on someone out of your life – **Due Mon. March 3**

**Wed., Feb. 26 – TK**

**Fri., Feb. 28 – no class, AWP**

**Mon., March 3** – The Dead

HW: Start revising essays after your conference – **due Fri., March 14**

**Wed., March 5 –** essay draft conferences **(no class)**

**Fri., March 7 –** essay draft conferences **(no class)**

**Mon., March 10 –** First Sentences

HW: Read Jones piece

**Wed., March 12 –** Building a Story

HW: Read Talese

**Fri., March 14 –** (What's Left of)Magazines

HW: Write Harper’s Index – must have 5 verifiable facts

**Mon., March** 17 – Magazines 2

HW: Read three issues of one magazine and come in with at least one story to pitch to that publication.

Chose outside reading book. **To be read by Wed., April 16**

**Wed., March 19** – Pitches

HW:Read McCourt

**Fri., March. 21 –** Dialogue/Dialect

HW: Start thinking of final paper topics – memoir or literary journalism. Ideas due week after break

**Mon., March 22 - Fri., March 30 - Spring Break**

**Mon., March 31** – The third third

HW: Read Auslander*.*

**Wed., April 2 -** Voice and Humor

HW: Three story ideas for final piece

**Fri., April 4** – Editorial Board Meeting

HW: start writing or reporting final paper

**Mon., April 7** – The Big Story

HW: Read and Write

**Wed***.,* **April 9 –** Workshopping

HW: continue final paper – **draft** **due to group Monday, April 14**

HW: Email draft to group members by noon Sun., April. 13

**Fri., April 11 –** Query Letters

HW: Write query letter for final paper; finish outside book

**Mon., April 14** –Workshopping

HW: Revise draft based on group feedback. **Revised draft due group Mon., April 21**

**Wed., April 16 –** Book Reports

**Fri., April 18 –** Book Reports

HW: Revise draft for workshopping group - email to members by Sun., April 20

**Mon., April 21–** Final Workshopping

**Wed., April 23 -** The Writing Life

**Fri., April 25 –** Final Class

**Mon., April 28. – Fri., May 2 - Conferences**

**Fri., May 9 – FINAL PAPER DUE**