**Fall 2014**

Introduction to Creative Nonfiction – ENGL 0180

M, W, F – Section 2: 10-10:50 - 70 Brown St., Room 130

Section 3 : 12-12:50 – Sayles Hall 105

Instructor: Susan Kushner Resnick

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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).

**Wed., Sept. 3** – Welcome Shoppers

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

**Fri., Sept. 5** - Turning Fact into Art: This is CNF

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

Read Sedaris piece

**Mon., Sept. 8**. – The NON in Nonfiction

HW:  Read Updike and Michaels essays in packet.

Finish map story.

**Wed., Sept. 10** – The Universal Truth

HW: Read Zinsser

**Fri., Sept. 12** – How To Write

HW: Read Doyle, Arundel, Legler and Lamott essays

**Mon., Sept. 15 –** The Essay

HW: Read White essay and interview

Finish list essay – **Due Wed., Sept. 17**

**Wed. Sept. 17–** Classic Forms

HW: Read Gerard essay

**Fri., Sept. 19 –** Braided essay

HW: Bring in three essay ideas for Editorial Board meeting

**Mon., Sept. 22 –** Editorial Board Meeting

HW: Start first draft – **Due Mon., Sept. 29**

Read Hohler story

**Wed., Sept. 24** – Journalism

HW: essay draft or at least one solid scene from it

Read Ephron in packet

**Fri., Sept. 26 –** Interviewing

HW: Finish essay draft

Read **TK Mon., Sept. 29 –**

Longform stories

HW: Write 750 word news story – **Due Mon., Oct. 6**

Read Laskas piece

**Wed., Oct. 1** – Immersion Journalism

HW: report and write news story; finish 3rd person scene for Friday

Start Winik book

**Fri., Oct. 3** – Profiles

HW: Finish Winik book and write a “dead” piece – short profile on someone out of your life – **Due Wed., Oct. 15**

HW: Finish news story for **Mon., Oct. 6** – **due in Monday conference or in my mailbox by 1 pm**

**Mon., Oct. 6 –** essay draft conferences

HW: Start revising essays – **due Fri., Oct. 17**

**Wed., Oct. 8 –** essay draft conferences

**Fri., Oct. 10** – essay draft conferences

**Mon., Oct. 13 – Fall Weekend, No Class**

 **Wed., Oct. 15 –** First Sentences

HW: Read Jones piece

HW: Finish essay rewrite

**Fri., Oct. 17 –** Building a Story

HW: Read Talese

**Mon., Oct. 20 –** Frank and Gay

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

**Wed., Oct. 22–** Op-eds

HW: write op-ed for Friday

**Fri., Oct. 24** – Read a book

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

Chose and start approved outside reading book. **To be read by Wed., Nov. 19**

**Mon., Oct. 27** – Magazines Pitches

HW:Read McCourt

**Wed., Oct. 39 –** Dialogue/dialect

HW: Read Auslander

Start thinking of final paper topics – memoir or literary journalism. Ideas due **Monday. Nov. 3**

**Fri., Oct. 31** – Voice and Humor

HW: Three story ideas for final piece

**Mon., Nov. 3 -** Editorial Board Meeting

HW: start writing or reporting final paper – **due Fri., Dec. 19**

**Wed., Nov. 5** – How to Organize

HW: Write outline or reporting plan for final paper

 **Fri., Nov 7** – The Big Story/Querying

HW: Write a query for your final piece

**Mon., Nov. 10 –** Workshopping 101

HW: Work on final paper

**Email draft to group members by noon Sun., Nov. 16. Draft due to me Wed., Dec. 3**

 **Wed., Nov. 12 – TK**

HW: **TK**

**Fri., Nov. 14** – **TK**

HW: finish draft for workshop group – share by Sunday; written notes on papers you’re workshopping for me and other writers

**Mon., Nov. 17 –**  Workshopping in Practice

HW: Finish book report presentation

**Wed., Nov. 19 –** Book Reports

**Fri., Nov. 21 –** Book reports

**Mon., Nov. 24 –** Something About Turkey

**Wed., Nov. 26 - Fri., Nov. 28 – Thanksgiving break**

**Mon., Dec. 1 –** Final Workshopping

*Off site or in groups on rewritten drafts*

HW: Finish drafts – due Wed.

**Wed., Dec. 3** – The Writing Life

**Fri., Dec. 5** – Final class

**Mon., Dec. 8 – Thurs., Dec. 11 - Conferences**

**Fri., Dec. 19 – FINAL PAPER DUE**