

Western University
Writing 2214F – Creative Nonfiction: Memoir, Memories, & Disclosure
Fall 2018

Section: # .001

Time/Room: Thursdays 2:30 – 5:20
UCC-58

Instructor: Claudia B. Manley

Email: cmanley2@uwo.ca

Office: University College, Room 1426

Office hours: Wednesdays 12 – 1pm,
Thursdays 1 – 2pm, and by appointment

Course Description:

In this course you will explore the fundamentals and challenges of creative nonfiction in the forms of the essay and memoir. The goal of this practice-based class is two-fold: to acquaint you with the variety of creative nonfiction published and to provide you with the tools to produce creative work of their own. You will share work and provide critical feedback on the work of your peers. Classes will be a mixture of in-class writing, discussion, and workshop.

Required Text:

Williford, Lex and Michael Martone, eds. *Touchstone Anthology of Contemporary Creative Nonfiction*.

Grade Breakdown:

In-class work	20%
Response Papers	15%
250-word essay	10%
500-word essay	15%
1,000-word essay	25%
Hybrid Nonfiction piece	15%

Courtesy and Decorum: Due to the nature of this class, which at times can explore raw, sensitive and highly personal material, all workshop pieces and discussions thereof are to remain confidential.

Submitting Assignments

Assignments are due in-class on the date specified on the schedule. **Late assignments: three marks per day will be deducted as a penalty from the assigned grade as a penalty, unless alternative arrangements are made prior to the due date.** You must apply for extensions ahead of the due date and provide a suitable reason; they are not automatic.

If necessary, please submit essays to the Writing Department Drop Box outside Stevenson-Lawson 3270, making sure you include your instructor's name and your section number. However, do not

- fax assignments
- e-mail assignments

Keep copies of all assignments submitted.

When submitting assignments on Owl, please title your papers thusly: Last Name_Essay # (for example, Manley_2). Failure to do so will result in a 5% penalty on that assignment's final grade.

Communication

All students are required to have an active UWO e-mail account and to check it regularly between class meetings. It is the primary way that I communicate with you outside of class. There will be no accommodations made for students who miss assignments or important messages because their UWO account is full and not receiving new e-mails. You are also to have a working knowledge of our Owl website. There will be required online discussions assigned throughout the semester.

Students should also carefully consider how they address me via email as well as the content of said email. While we may engender an informal community in class, email is a mode of professional communication and should be treated that way. Therefore, addressing me as "Yo, Teach!" should be recognized as inappropriate. [Please read this post on proper email etiquette: medium.com/@lportwoodstacer/how-to-email-your-professor-without-being-annoying-afcf64ae0e4087#.oaxpj163i](https://medium.com/@lportwoodstacer/how-to-email-your-professor-without-being-annoying-afcf64ae0e4087#.oaxpj163i)

Please note that I only check my UWO e-mail Monday through Thursdays (10am – 6pm), and it may take up to 24 hours to receive a response. I will neither be reading nor responding to e-mail on Fridays, Saturdays, or Sundays.

Attendance policies

Attendance at class is required to improve as a writer. Here is the Writing Studies attendance policy in this class:

- You may miss up to three hours (the equivalent of one week of class) of class meetings during the term without explanation. That means that the first three class hours you miss will be recorded as absences but *excused provided you don't miss any more*.
- However, if you miss a total of four to nine class hours (the equivalent of up to three full weeks of class), your final grade will be reduced by 10% (e.g. an earned final grade of 80% will be reported as a final grade of 72).
- If you miss a total of more than nine hours of class meetings (the equivalent of more than three weeks of class meetings) your final grade will be reduced by 15% (e.g. an earned final grade of 80% will be reported as a final grade of 68).

This policy will be waived only for medical or compassionate reasons. If you have good reasons for waiving an absence of one class meeting (e.g. if you've missed three hours, and need or want to miss another class meeting) discuss these reasons with your instructor within one week of that absence. If your absence is extended and prolonged (over one week of continuous non-

attendance), then you should discuss it with your academic advisor in your home faculty, who may require documentation. That advisor may then contact all of your instructors. See also: '**Medical Accommodation Policy**' below.

Attendance also extends to tardiness. If you are more than 20 minutes late, you will be penalized an hour of attendance. Please make every effort to be on time as late entry can disrupt the flow of discussion in our class. Early departures from class, which have not been previously arranged with the instructor, will also be counted as an absence. If you leave during the break, you will be docked an hour of attendance.

Note: a class meeting missed in order to write a test, exam, or other form of 'make-up class' in another course **will** count as non-attendance, and **will** attract penalties as defined above if applicable. Instructors at the University of Western Ontario **shall not require** a student to write a make-up test or similar at times which conflict with that student's other scheduled class times. If you are asked or 'required' to do this, you should immediately contact an academic counsellor in your Dean's office. If you elect to miss a class in order to write such a test, that is **your** choice; your absence will not be excused.

"Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy as above).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>)."

Prerequisites

The University Senate requires the following statement to appear on course outlines:

"Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites."

The prerequisite for registration in this course is a) a final grade of 65 or more in one of Writing 2101F/G, 2125F/G (or the former 2121F/G), 2111F/G, 2130F/G, or 2131F/G), b) a final grade of 70 or more in one of Writing 1000F/G, 1030F/G, 1031F/G, or c) Special Permission of the Department.

Medical Accommodation Policy

For UWO Policy on Accommodation For Medical Illness, see:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf>

(downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading).

Students seeking academic accommodation **on medical or other grounds** for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments **worth 10% or more of their final grade** must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation on medical grounds cannot be granted by the instructor or Writing Studies, and Writing Studies requires students in these circumstances to follow the same procedure when seeking academic accommodation on non-medical (i.e. non-medical compassionate or other) grounds.

Students seeking academic accommodation **on medical grounds** for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments **worth less than 10% of their final grade** must also apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Where in these circumstances the accommodation is being sought on **non-medical grounds**, students should consult in the first instance with their instructor, who may elect to make a decision on the request directly, or refer the student to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive medical documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds, or for other reasons (e.g. to explain an absence from class which may result in a grade penalty under an 'Attendance' policy in the course). **All** medical documentation **must** be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Special Requests: Special Examinations, Incomplete Standing, Aegrotat Standing

Please refer to the "Information for All Students in a Writing Course" for more detailed information. Briefly, remember that your instructor does not have the discretion to initiate, consider, or grant (or not) such requests; you must go directly to the Dean's office of your home faculty.

Assignment Breakdown:

In-class work (20%)

In-class work is essential to success in this course. This mark is based on your ability to take class concepts and apply those concepts to the feedback you provide to your classmates and to the discussion of class readings. It also includes your in-class writing assignments (explained below) and participation in class discussions as well as any other written work completed during class. Distinct elements are detailed below.

Discussion Leaders: Students will sign-up to help lead the discussion on class readings. For each reading, one or more (depending on final class size) person(s) will be responsible for leading discussion on at least two points. You should have a couple of additional points at the ready in case one of yours overlaps with another discussion leader's; however, leaders should coordinate their discussion questions to avoid duplication. Please note – you are not asked to lead the entire discussion of the reading but to bring to the class thoughts on and questions about the readings in an effort to prompt a class discussion.

These discussion points should attempt to look at how we might use the readings, via their approach, organization, literary devices, voice, etc. in our own writing. It should be neither a rehash of the content of the reading nor its popularity with the class. In other words, **a discussion on whether one liked, didn't like, or identified with the reading is irrelevant.**

Please be sure to note and remember when you're scheduled as discussion leader as there will be no "make-ups," and failure to lead a discussion will result in a 5-point deduction of your In-class work grade.

Workshop Summaries: Following workshops for Essays 1 & 2 each student is to provide a written narrative of the results of their own workshop, effectively summarizing their peers' comments on their work. These are to be handed in with your final draft of the relevant essay.

For the Essay 3 workshops you are to have summary comments on your peers' stories typed up *before* class and must upload a copy of these comments to the appropriate Owl thread by the class meeting for that workshop. You are also expected to hand (or email) each person being workshopped your copy of their story with your in-text comments and marginalia on it.

Writing Journals

Each week you will be provided with a writing exercise. These exercises are designed to help you develop a writing practice, and you may also find that you use some of the material and/or comments when crafting your essay assignments. Everyone is expected to participate during these timed exercises regardless of one's individual interest or engagement with the prompt.

Response Papers (100 – 250 words) (15%)

For each class reading (excluding the one for which you are discussion leader), you will write a response paper that you will upload or paste to the "Response Papers" file in the Discussions section of Owl before the class meeting, e.g. the response paper for Michael Cox is due before the start of class on September 20th. If there are readings assigned for a class, there should be a response paper for each. Response papers are generally only a few paragraphs in length (no more than a page, double-spaced) and should reflect not only the content and style of the readings but your thoughts about and responses to the work. You may opt to skip two response papers without penalty.

No late response papers will be accepted.

Essay 1 (250 words) (10%)

Workshop – Thursday, September 13

Due – Thursday, September 20

(Failure to bring a draft to class will result in a penalty of 5 points on the final grade for that assignment.)

This is the first writing assignment that we will workshop in class. Students are required to bring copies of their essay to class (details will be provided). Class will be divided into three groups, and students will read their essays aloud and receive constructive feedback from their peers. A revised version of your essay is due one week later.

Essay 2 (500 words) (15%)

Workshop – Thursday, October 4

Due – Thursday, October 18

(Failure to bring a draft to class will result in a penalty of 5 points on the final grade for that assignment.)

Students are required to bring copies of their essay for half of the class. Class will be divided into two groups, and students will read their essays aloud and receive constructive feedback from their peers. A revised version of your essay is due one week later.

Essay 3 (1000 words) (25%)

Workshops November 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29; Final story due one week following your workshop

Between November 1st and 29th we will workshop your 1,000-word essay with the entire class.

Essays to be workshopped (according to a schedule set up in class) are to be uploaded to Owl one week before the workshop. Failure to do so will result in a penalty of 5 points on the final grade for that assignment. Everyone is expected to read and have comments on ALL pieces each week. Students may opt to print the stories or to access them in class on their computers. The reading over these few weeks will be very intensive. Prepare to have something constructive to say about each story and to provide a written summary of your comments to each author (as detailed above).

Hybrid Nonfiction Piece (15%) – Idea discussion October 25; Due December 6 (see weekly breakdown for details)

Each student will create a hybrid nonfiction piece. These pieces may include film, photography, performance, excerpts from other works, and more. We will discuss the specific details in class. We will discuss ideas in class on October 25th. The final hybrid is due December 6th.

Weekly Breakdown

Week	Date	Reading	Assignment Due
1	September 6	Introduction – What is Creative Nonfiction? In-class reading	
2	September 13	"Repeat After Me" – David Sedaris Essay 1 workshop	Draft of Essay 1
3	September 20	"The Visitor" – Michael Cox "Embalming Mom" – Janet Burroway	Essay 1 due
4	September 27	"If You Knew Then..." – Ryan Van Meter "A Small Place" - Jamaica Kincaid	
5	October 4	Essay 2 workshop	Draft of Essay 2
6	October 11	Fall Break	No class meeting
7	October 18	"The Essayist Is Sorry for Your Loss" - Sara Levine "Living Like Weasels" – Annie Dillard	Essay 2 due
8	October 25	"Blur" – David Shields (online) Hybrid concept workshop (class discussion)	Have an idea for your hybrid
9	November 1	Essay 3 workshop – Group A; No additional readings	
10	November 8	Essay 3 workshop – Group B; No additional readings	Group A essay due
11	November 15	Essay 3 workshop – Group C; No additional readings	Group B essay due
12	November 22	Essay 3 workshop – Group D; No additional readings	Group C essay due
13	November 29	Essay 3 workshop – Group E; No additional readings	Group D essay due
14	December 6	Last day of class	Group E essay due Hybrid assignment due