Course Meets
Day: Tuesdays and Thursdays | 3:30-4:45 | Islander Hall 157

Required Texts and Materials

The Ultimate Guide to Journaling (Paperback)—Hannah Braime
The Truth of the Matter: Art and Craft in Creative Nonfiction (Paperback)—Dinty Moore
Why Be Happy When You Can Be Normal—Jeanette Winterson

Course Description and Objectives

The course focuses on expressive writing, which includes personal journal writing and creative non-fiction writing, through examining and exploring published works of experienced writers and non-published works and through journaling and writing a variety of creative non-fiction sub-genres, (such as the personal narrative essay, the literary journalism essay, and the memoir essay), and through transforming private writing into public forums.

The objectives of the course are:

• to learn the value and range of journaling techniques for improving communication, self-discovery and self-awareness, and motivation for developing writing across the genres
• to expose you to a broad and eclectic selection of creative non-fiction being written and published in nationally recognized journals in your own time
• to learn how to transform private writing into public creative non-fiction genres, such as the personal narrative essay, the travel narrative, narratives of place, literary journalism, and memoir)
• to understand the uses, benefits, and contributions of creative non-fiction in your discipline and fields of studies.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:
• demonstrate knowledge of the range of handwritten, digital, and art journaling techniques by practicing these techniques through reading and responding to journal prompts;
• demonstrate knowledge of the range of creative non-fiction genres through critical written responses, discussions, and written exercises that employ creative non-fiction techniques;
• write original works of creative non-fiction, employing appropriate and varied techniques from the range available to the “creative” writer.
• Review and respond to their peers’ drafts during in-class peer reviews and workshops.

Course Requirements and Grade Distribution

Grades will be determined according to the following percentages for each component of the course requirements:

Professionalism: 10%  | | Journaling: 20%  | | Writing Exercises: 20%  ||
|| Reading Responses 10%  || Final Electronic Portfolio and Presentation: 40%  ||

My Course Policies

Professionalism: (10%)
Your professional conduct is an urgent part of what will help you and our community of learners in this course successful. In other words, you are one of the parts that make the whole. Your professional contribution to our community of learners requires your attendance, daily preparation, participation, and interaction. Participation in physical and virtual class discussions is an important part of this course. This course sees professionalism as the ways you prepared, contributed to/engaged in the processes of reading, writing, online and face-to-face discussions and inquiry, collaborative paired or group work and discussion, peer-draft reviewing, drafting, revising, and critical thinking.

You need to plan to attend every class, be in class on time, and stay until the end of class. Bring your English notebook--your reading notes--and be prepared to stay engaged by taking notes. No cell phones shall be visible or audible during class period (unless you are conducting research for a class assignment or have a child, elder, or other family member with special needs, under your care, in which case you may have your phone on “vibrate”). The old Procrastination Devil is a smooth operator. Let us strive to be a step ahead of it.

Blackboard Policy
You are responsible for checking our course on Blackboard every day. Check Announcements, for daily assignments and messages from me. We will be using Announcements, Course Content, and Discussion Forums frequently.

**E-Communication Policy**
- The best way to contact me is through my email address: robin.carstensen@tamucc.edu.
- I will respond to professional emails that include your subject and class section in the Subject Heading, address me by my professional title, and offer your signature.
- I will respond to email within 24 hours between 9 a.m.- 9 p.m, M-F.
- Though I do respond to e-mails from students who have very specific questions, I never respond to tweets, instant-messages, badly misspelled, and vague, unprofessionally addressed e-mails or text-messages, such as “hey, slept thru alarm. what’d i miss?”
- If you need an appointment with me outside of my office hours, please ask me after class or email me.

**Absence Policy:** It is impossible to earn an A after three absences, and very unlikely to earn a B after six absences. So, try to save your absences for unexpected illnesses and crises (i.e, don’t use them all up recuperating from all-night festivities). Typically, an “A” student exemplifies outstanding community professionalism and self-initiative.

**Late work Policy:** In the case that a document is turned in or posted late with no prior arrangement with me, that document’s grade will be lowered ten percentage points for each class meeting that the student fails to turn it in. If the student has made arrangements with me prior to class, due to job, sports team travel or family crisis, late work may be accepted with no grade penalty.

**The Writing Exercises (20%)** will develop from prompts offered throughout the course, and used as a place for your growth as a writer and possible development into a prose piece. However, as your portfolios will be partially graded on how much work you have put into the course, skimpily done exercises will inevitably count against you. I hope you will put as much into these as you can, not just for the grade, but for your own forward progress as a writer.

**Journaling (20%):** You will be practicing a variety of handwritten, digital, and art journaling. Some will be prompted at various time. Show me you’re engaged, committed to reading the text on journaling, and critically thinking about how to apply the reading to your own journaling. I will collect your journals mid-way and near the final.

**Reading Responses (10%):** You will be reading text from the assigned books and from peers. From time to time, I will require responses to the readings, such as quizzes in the form of basic recall and short answer responses. Sometimes I will ask for short responses via the BB Discussion Forum before or after class discussion.

**Electronic Portfolio (40%):** Final Portfolio Converted to PDF, Submitted on Blackboard
• a minimum of three polished prose pieces, one in each subgenre (memoir, literary journalism, and the personal narrative essay) with at least two substantial early drafts and peer reviews for each piece (you’ll need to scan the draft with my comments, and at least two of the most helpful peer reviews. You will also want to scan a handwritten rough draft or exercise or journal response that led to this piece).

• a self-evaluative cover letter that addresses the work you have done and the progress you feel you have made in this section of the course

**Extra Credit**: I encourage you to attend literary events, performances, and lectures within and around the campus community. To that end, I award you extra credit for attending a literary, creative, and/or performance-based event, in full, and typing at least a one-page reflection. I announce these events on Blackboard and in class, and welcome your own announcements of such events hosted by any student organizations and extracurricular groups in which you are active.

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**Grading Standards**

A (90%-100%): Outstanding work. An A document superbly addresses all components of the assignment. It clearly and logically expresses and develops an idea for a particular audience in an interesting way. A writing is highly polished and generally contains no errors in the use of English.

B (80%-89%): Very good work. A B document does a better than average job of addressing all components of the assignment. It expresses and develops an idea in a clear, logical way, and it is well adapted to the needs of its intended readers. B writing contains few or none of the common errors in the use of English. The professional appearance of B work is generally neat and polished.

C (70%-79%): Competent work. A C document manages to address most of the components of the assignment and develops an idea for its intended readers, but does little to create a positive or lasting impression on them. C writing avoids serious errors in the use of English. The professional appearance of C work is acceptable but unremarkable and needs revision, polish, or redesign.

D (60%-69%): Unsatisfactory work. A D document is flawed by one or more of the following: insufficient attention to the assigned task and its audience, poorly developed ideas, inaccurate information, errors in the use of English.

F (50%-59%): Unacceptable work. An F document is flawed by one or more of the following: failure to accomplish the assigned task and adapt to its audience, failure to develop an idea, serious errors in the use of English language.
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Policies

Dropping a Class
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. Please be aware that you are allowed 6 drops in your entire undergraduate career, so these decisions must be made carefully. April 7th is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

Grade Appeals Process
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures (available at http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf). For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

Academic Advising
The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

Disability Services
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that pro-
vides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116.
If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

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Recommended for ENGL major undergraduates

Reminder to English Majors: As part of the English undergraduate capstone course (ENGL 4351), all English majors are required to submit a portfolio of writings in different discourse genres that they have completed for their college classes. To help you prepare for this assignment, you should keep a copy of all essays, research papers, literary analyses, creative and report writing, etc., so that you will have an ample selection from which to choose when the portfolio comes due.

Student Resources

The Center for Academic Student Achievement (CASA): The Writing Center of CASA provides free writing instruction to any student interested in improving his/her writing abilities. Tutors will assist you with all aspects of writing. The Writing Center’s purpose is not to correct or proofread your drafts but to help you learn strategies that good writers use during the processes of writing. You may visit the Center for assistance with a writing project for any of your classes. It is located in the Glasscock Building (825-5933).

University Counseling Center

We all encounter stress, problems, and difficult decisions in our daily lives. Sometimes, these problems may seem overwhelming or it might be difficult to talk about certain issues with your friends or family. The University Counseling Center is available for all students enrolled at TAMUCC. Students seek counseling for a multitude of reasons and the University Counseling Center offers individual therapy, group counseling, psychiatric services, psychological testing, consultation, outreach services, alcohol and drug education and prevention programs, and personal skills training. If you are in need of counseling services or just someone to talk to, please call or visit the University Counseling center at (361) 825-2703 in the Driftwood Building. Visit: http://counseling.tamucc.edu for more information.
Week 1: Introduction to The Ultimate Guide to Journaling

Journal Prompts

Essays on the Craft of Creative Non-Fiction
Annie Dillard, “Seeing”
Tracy Kidder, “Making the Truth Believable”
Bret Lott, “Toward a Definition of Creative Nonfiction”

What Makes Non-Fiction Creative
Creative Nonfiction vs. Standard Journalism: An Illustration
Honesty, Memory, and the Stranger in the Room

Writing Prompts: What Is Creative Nonfiction?

Week 2-4: Readings and Writing Workshops on The Memoir Essay

The Ultimate Guide to Journaling: Journal Prompts

“Genesis,” Bret Lott; “Thumb-Sucking Girl,” Sonja Livingston (Additional Readings from Jeanette Winterson’s Why Be Happy When You Can Be Normal?, plus Writing Prompts Assigned)

Week 3: Writing Your Own Memoir Essay (Building Blocks of Creative Nonfiction: Detail and Description – Characterization and Scene, through dialogue and action); Winterson continued. Workshop Draft Exchange and Critique, Rough Draft to Intermediate)

Week 4: Writing Your Own Memoir Essay (Workshop Exchange and Critique, Advanced Draft to Final Polished)

The Memoir Piece: Due Thursday, February 9th

Week 5-9: Readings and Workshops on The Literary Journalism Essay

The Ultimate Guide to Journaling: Journal Prompts

Week 5: Examining the Literary Journalism Essay, “Hope,” Brian Doyle (Writing Prompts)
Week 6: Examining an Excerpt from “Where Worlds Collide,” Pico Iyer (Writing Prompts)
Week 7: Additional Readings from the Anthology Section and Online (Writing Prompts)
Week 8: Writing Your Own Literary Journalism Essay (Building Blocks of Creative Non-Fiction: Distinctive Voice and Intimate Point of View, Discovery for Details: Workshop Draft Exchange and Critique, Rough Draft to Intermediate Draft)

Spring Break: March 13-17th

Week 9: Writing Your Own Literary Journalism Essay (Building Blocks, Revising for Discovery: Workshop Draft Exchange and Critique, Advanced Draft to Final Polished)

Literary Journalism Piece: Due on Thursday, March 23rd
Week 10-15: Readings and Writing Workshops on The Personal Narrative

The Ultimate Guide to Journaling: Journal Prompts

Week 10: Examining the Personal Narrative: “The Meadow” James Galvin (Additional Readings and Writing Prompts)
Week 11: Examining the Personal Narrative: “The Bed” Joan Didion (Additional Readings from Anthology Section and Online, and Writing Prompts)
Week 12: Additional Readings from the Anthology Section and Online (Writing Prompts)
Week 13: Revision and Narrative Structure, Serious Revision, Collage, Braid, and Frame (Workshop Draft Exchange and Critique, Rough Draft to Intermediate)
Week 14: Essay (Workshop Exchange and Critique, Advanced Draft to Final Polished)
Week 15: Exchange, Review, Revise

The Personal Narrative: Due on Thursday, April 27th

Spring Break: March 13-17th
May 2nd/ Tuesday: Last Class
May 4th Thursday: Our Final Exam: Writer’s Celebration and Portfolios Due