

**Tompkins Cortland Community College**  
**Master Course Syllabus**

**Course Discipline and Number: ENGL 258**

**Year: 2022-2023**

**Course Title: Creative Nonfiction Writing**

**Credit Hours: 3**

**Attendance Policy:** *To maintain good grades, regular attendance in class is necessary. Absence from class is considered a serious matter and absence never excuses a student from class work. It is the responsibility of all instructors to distribute reasonable attendance policies in writing during the first week of class. Students are required to comply with the attendance policy set by each of their instructors. Students are not penalized if they are unable to attend classes or participate in exams on particular days because of religious beliefs, in accordance with Chapter 161, Section 224-a of the Education Law of the State of New York. Students who plan to be absent from classroom activity for religious reasons should discuss the absence in advance with their instructors. See college catalog for more information.*

**Services for Students with Disabilities:** *It is the College's policy to provide, on an individual basis, appropriate academic adjustments for students with disabilities, which may affect their ability to fully participate in program or course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Coordinator of Access and Equity Services, to discuss their particular need for accommodations. All course materials are available in alternate formats upon request.*

**Course Description**

Creative Writing Course: This course offers an introduction to the art of writing creative nonfiction, focusing on the genre's five hallmarks (Gerard, *Creative Nonfiction: Researching and Crafting Stories of Real Life*). Using real life as its focus, creative nonfiction has an apparent subject and a deeper subject; addresses enduring human concerns; is rendered as narrative; is based on the author's observations, reflection and research; and employs the conventions of the writing craft. Combining observation, research, and the writing process, students will produce original texts that artfully render lived experience. ENGL 258 fulfills the SUNY General Education requirement in the Arts. Cross-listed as SOCE 258. Prerequisites: ENGL 100 and RDNG 116 if required by placement testing. 3 Cr. (3 Lec.) Spring semester.

**Course Audience**

Do you wonder what's going on beneath what you see? Do you like to write stories about your experiences and your observations of the world? Creative nonfiction is a genre of writing that uses the elements of creative writing – voice, character, dialogue, narrative, musicality, etc. – to make art out of our lives. At the same time, creative nonfiction combines meticulous observation and research to produce a whole picture of a subject, allowing us to make connections between ourselves and the world and to uncover the deeper meanings of everyday happenings. As a community of writers, we will invite and inspire each other to craft "true" stories in order to reveal both the ordinary and extraordinary substance of our lives.

**Basic Skills/Entry Level Expectations**

**Writing:** WC ENGL 100 if required by placement testing

**Math:** M0 Very little or no math skills required.

**Reading:** R4 RDNG 116 if required by placement testing.

**Course Objectives/Topics**

Objective/Topic	% Course
Genre Hallmarks and Conventions	Approx. 20%
Writing process and craft (free writing, drafting, revising)	Approx. 20%
Artistry	Approx. 20%
Work-shopping	Approx. 20%
Research	Approx. 20%

**General Education Goals - Critical Thinking & Social/Global Awareness**

CRITICAL THINKING OUTCOMES	HOW DOES THE COURSE ADDRESS THE OUTCOMES (
<p>Students will be able to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. develop meaningful questions to address problems or issues.</li> <li>2. gather, interpret, and evaluate relevant sources of information.</li> <li>3. reach informed conclusions and solutions.</li> <li>4. consider analytically the viewpoints of self and others.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The subject matter of creative nonfiction is “real life,” and an important aim of creative nonfiction is to discover both the obvious and deeper processes at work in real life.</li> <li>2. A significant percentage of class time and assignments will be devoted to research, in the spirit of discovering deeper processes.</li> <li>3. Informed conclusions may or may not be incorporated, depending on the students’ specific interests.</li> <li>4. One of the 5 hallmarks of creative nonfiction is reflection. Additionally, students will explore how their position and point of view shape the pieces they craft.</li> </ol>
SOCIAL/GLOBAL AWARENESS OUTCOMES	HOW DOES THE COURSE ADDRESS THE OUTCOMES (Include required or recommended instructional resources, strategies, learning activities, assignments, etc., that must or could be used to address the goal/outcomes)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students will begin to understand how their lives are shaped by the complex world in which they live.</li> <li>2. Students will understand that their actions have social, economic and environmental consequences.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The subject matter of creative nonfiction is “real life,” and an important aim of creative nonfiction is to discover both the obvious and deeper processes at work in real life.</li> <li>2. #2 may or may not be supported depending on the student’s specific interests.</li> </ol>

**Instructional Methods:** seminar discussions, writing workshops, lecture.

**Methods of Assessment/Evaluation**

Method	% Course Grade
Finished projects	20-50%
Rough materials	10-30%
Focus reflections of assigned readings	10-20%
Attendance	0-20%
Workshop participation	10-20%
Research	20-40%

## **Text(s)**

Gerard, Philip. *Creative Nonfiction: Researching and Crafting Stories of Real Life*. University of North Carolina at Wilmington. Illinois. 1996.

Kitchen, Judith & Mary Paumier Jones, eds. *In Brief: Short Takes on the Personal*. W. W. Norton & Company, New York. 1999.

## **Bibliography**

### Anthologies:

Gutkind, Lee. Ed. *In fact: The Best of Creative Nonfiction*. W. W. Norton & Company. New York. 2005.

Kitchen, Judith & Mary Paumier Jones, eds. *In Short: A Collection of Brief Creative Nonfiction*. W. W. Norton & Company, New York. 1996.

-- *In Brief: Short Takes on the Personal*. W. W. Norton & Company, New York. 1999.

Lopate, Phillip, ed. *The Art of the Personal Essay: An Anthology from the Classical Era to the Present*. Anchor Books, New York. 1995.

### Combination Textbook & Anthologies:

Bradway, Becky & Doug Hesse, eds. *Creating Nonfiction: A Guide and Anthology*. Bedford/St. Martin's. New York, 2009.

Miller, Brenda & Suzanne Paola, eds. *Tell it Slant: Writing and Shaping Creative Nonfiction*. McGraw Hill, New York, 2004.

### Craft

Gerard, Philip. *Creative Nonfiction: Researching and Crafting Stories of Real Life*. University of North Carolina at Wilmington. Illinois. 1996.

Gornick, Vivian. *The Situation and the Story: The Art of personal Narrative*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. New York. 2001.

Klaus, Carl H. & Ned Stuckey-French, eds. *Essayists on the Essay: Montaigne to Our Time*. University of Iowa Press. 2012.

Root, Robert. *The Nonfictionist's Guide: On Reading & Writing Creative Nonfiction*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. Maryland. 2008.

### Subscriptions:

*Creative Nonfiction*

The Best American Essays series

### Additional Authors to stock up on if/when possible:

David Foster Wallace: Consider the Lobster

David Shields: *Reality Hunger: A Manifesto*

Joan Didion: *The White Album*

Rev 02-01-16/D. Gold

Montaigne: *The Complete Essays*.

Ander Monson: *Neck Deck and Other Predicaments*

### Other Learning Resources

<b>Audiovisual:</b> None specified
<b>Electronic:</b> None specified
<b>Other:</b> None specified

### Library Review

To add copies of all the books listed in the course proposal, to add titles by the authors listed, as well as to add a number of other recent and relevant books, the Library anticipates spending about \$400 to establish a baseline collection. This initial outlay, as well as ongoing costs to continue to build the collection in this area, can be met by the Library's current budget.

The research component of the class is already well-served by the Library's subscriptions to magazine, journal and newspaper databases. The Library's relationships and agreements with other academic libraries, as well as its institutional memberships, enable the Library to fulfill most research needs, even when the TC3 Library does not own the materials requested.

As students enroll in the course and fulfill course requirements, the Library is well-prepared to meet their needs. The Library looks forward to ongoing communication with the course developers to ensure close alignment between the class and the Library's collection.

### Books

The Library currently has only a handful of books – whether print or online - relevant to creative nonfiction, personal essays and memoirs. The Library will buy the materials listed on the course proposal, monitor publications in this field, and consult with the teachers about future acquisitions.

### Articles

The Library subscribes to more than 60 popular magazines, a number of which are literary or social commentary magazines that publish creative nonfiction and personal essays. The full text of magazines, journals and newspapers available in the Library's databases provide students with ample resources for work in this topic area. The Library will add subscriptions to *Creative Nonfiction* and *The Best American Essays*.

### Media

No particular media needs are evident from the course proposal. Should interest in commercial media develop, that extends beyond what's currently available in the Library's collection of DVDs, audio books, and streaming video in Films on Demand, for example, the Library will address those needs as possible.

### Instructional/Research Support

Librarians are available to consult with teachers regarding the research component of assignments and will provide whole-class, individual, and online research assistance as needed.

**Susanna Van Sant**

**August 29, 2012**