

CREATIVE NON-FICTION

English 211
Creative Nonfiction
Tuesday/Thursday
Memorial 301
Spring 2009

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(student consultation by appointment)

Goals

As the college catalog describes, English 211 is a course providing guided practice in public and personal essay writing. With that aim in mind, we will explore the genre of creative nonfiction and will prepare, in a workshop format, a range of essays. Our goals will be:

1. regular, scheduled writing (assigned essay drafts and revisions, assigned readings, and responses to both those readings and other students' work, etc.)
2. improved critical and editorial skills
3. knowledge of the work of successful nonfiction writers
4. awareness of current markets for nonfiction
5. production of publication-ready work and fashioning an actual submission by course-end.

Text

Alice LaPlante, *The Making of a Story*. New York: Norton.
Handouts provided by the instructor

Attendance and Academic Honesty

This is a workshop-based writing course, which means your attendance and active participation are crucial. Please arrive on time and prepared for every class session. You may be excused from class for legitimate academic, medical, or emergency reasons only; spotty attendance--or chronic lack of response in class--will result in a lowering of your grade.

It should go without saying that any work you submit for this course must be your own; see the College's Academic Honesty policy in the Student Handbook on this issue. Writing for magazines and literary journals often calls for

different forms of acknowledgement of sources (instead of traditional academic citations), but acknowledgement will be part of our work in this course.

Assignments and Evaluation

How long should your essays be? They should be as long as they need to be for you to say what you are trying to say (hopefully in a creative, interesting way). This is a vague answer, but as serious writers, you will understand (or come to understand) what this means. That said, you should be aware of "word count" on everything you submit for this class (because word count often does come into play in the professional writing world.)

Note that your effort to seek out, and incorporate, useful suggestions in response to drafts of your essays, along with the seriousness of your revision of these drafts, will be significant factors in evaluation of your work. With that in mind, be sure to keep/save ALL drafts! Remember that English Track 3 (Writing) majors must submit formal portfolios of their work for various courses during the Spring semester of their junior year. If you are a Writing track major, then, you should get in the habit of retaining various drafts of assignments from all your writing classes.

The evaluative weight of the various assignments for this course, for grading purposes, will be as follows:

1. Three graded essays (including ALL rough drafts and ONE "final" fully-polished essay including cover letter for submission)--70 percent of your grade
2. Various "ungraded" writing exercises (including written responses to an assigned reading or to another student's work)--20 percent
3. Participation: Diligence in completing all assigned work (both writing and reading); attendance at at least one campus cultural event during the course (in connection to an essay assignment); and overall contribution to class--10 percent