

**English 299 and 299Z
Veterans Writing Workshop
Wednesdays
Spring 2015**

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Office Hours: Tues. 1:30-2:30; Wed., 4-5; Thurs. 10-11; Fri. 11:30-12:30; and by appointment.

Course Objectives

- To read, analyze, and discuss literature (mainly contemporary literature) that chronicles the experiences of military veterans
- To explore the wide range of military veterans' experiences (from life prior to enlistment, to military service [of whatever form], to the return to civilian life) in writing
- To shape complete narratives (both nonfiction and fiction) about the this range of experiences
- To attend, and possibly present work at, the March 27, 2015 LVAIC Conference on War and Peacebuilding: Drawing on the Power of Narrative and Dialogue to Build a Just Society in the Lehigh Valley
- Through reading, writing, and responding to peers' writing, to reach a new level of critical understanding of the roles, and expectations, of military personnel in American life

Required Texts

Ron Capps, *Writing War: A Guide to Telling Your Own Story* (The Veterans Writing Project, 2013)

Roy Scranton and Matt Gallagher, eds. *Fire and Forget: Short Stories from the Long War* (Da Capo Press, 2013)

Brian Turner, *Here, Bullet* (Alice James Books, 2005)

Plus handouts and online resources provided by instructor.

Attendance and Academic Honesty

We will meet in person at least every other week for fourteen weeks; we may also schedule a few additional meetings to share and discuss written work, and we will also discuss written work online (preferred forum for this—Blackboard? Google Drive?—to be determined). Please make every effort to show up on time for each meeting. I hope it goes 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.

*****Note to Moravian College English Majors:** In preparation for creating an English Major Portfolio in your senior capstone seminar, please save both digital and hard copies of your work for this class, including drafts with peer and instructor comments.

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Ms. Elaine Mara, Assistant Director of Academic & Disability Support, located on the first floor of

Monocacy Hall (extension 1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic & Disability Support office

Evaluation

Reading Responses (1-2 pages, in response to assigned readings)	15%
First Written Assignment (“My military experience in one word”) (500 words)	10%
Short Story (approx. 2,000 words min.)	30%
Personal Essay (approx. 2,000 words min.)	30%
Responses to three peer’s writing assignments (1-2 pages)	10%
Participation (including March 27 Conference participation, if possible)	5%

Schedule

Week 1 (1/21)

Introductions; veterans’ stories and writing about war; StoryCorps “Military Voices Initiative”: <http://storycorps.org/military-voices/>; discuss and begin “My Military Experience in One Word” assignment.

Week 2 (1/28)

Reading: Acquaint yourself with the Veterans Writing Project’s 0-Dark-Thirty site (<http://o-dark-thirty.org/>), and choose 3-5 nonfiction pieces to read from issues of *The Review* (<http://o-dark-thirty.org/the-review-2/>). Also read a few blog posts from *The Sandbox* (http://gocomics.typepad.com/the_sandbox/), which ran from October 2006 through April 2014. Note especially “The Chasm” (http://gocomics.typepad.com/the_sandbox/2007/04/the_burden.html#comments). And learn more about cartoonist Garry Trudeau’s creation of *The Sandbox* at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=15404358>.

Prepare a 1-2 page response to your reading (summary, reaction, highlights, things you observe about what makes the writing good [or not]).

Writing: Draft of 500-word essay explaining your choice of a single word to sum up your own military experience (“My Military Experience in One Word”).

Week 3 (2/4)

Reading: Capps, chs. 1-6 (pp. 1-68). 1-2 page reading response (most important points to hold on to from these chapters).

Writing: Final draft of “My Military Experience in One Word” essay; two exercises of your choosing from end of assigned chapters in Capps.

Week 4 (2/11)

Reading: Capps, chs. 7-12 (pp. 69-129). 1-2 page reading response (most important points to hold on to from these chapters).

Writing: Two or three exercises of your choosing from end of assigned chapters in Capps.

Week 5 (2/18)

Reading: Tim O'Brien, "The Things They Carried" and "How to Tell a True War Story" (handouts); stories by Fallon and Klay in *Fire and Forget*

Writing: Three possible short story openings (vary point of view, and experiment with things like varied settings, as well as varied gender and nationality for central character[s]).

Week 6 (2/25)

Reading: Two additional stories (of your choosing) from *Fire and Forget*.

Writing: First two (or more) pages of short story.

Week 7 (3/4)

Reading: Two additional stories (of your choosing) from *Fire and Forget*. 1-2 page reading response to two favorite stories (summary, reaction, highlights, things you observe about what makes the writing good [or not]).

Writing: Complete first draft of short story.

3/11: Spring Break

Week 8 (3/18)

Reading: David Wood's "A Warrior's Moral Dilemma": *Huffington Post* series (Part 1: "The Grunts" and Part 2: "The Recruits"): <http://projects.huffingtonpost.com/moral-injury>. 1-2 page reading response (your thoughts, reaction).

Week 9 (3/25)

Reading: David Wood's "A Warrior's Moral Dilemma": *Huffington Post* series (Part 3: "Healing" and Sidebar): <http://projects.huffingtonpost.com/moral-injury>.

Writing: Revisit your "My Military Experience in One Word" essay; drawing on this essay, your short story, and the reading you've done so far, prepare remarks on your own thoughts about war, moral injury, and the role of the U.S. military.

Friday, March 27: LVAIC Conference on War and Peacebuilding: Drawing on the Power of Narrative and Dialogue to Build a Just Society in the Lehigh Valley at Moravian College

Week 10 (4/1)

Final draft of short story due.

Reading: Revisit relevant sections from Ron Capps, *Writing War* and favorite pieces from O-Dark-Thirty's *The Review*.

Writing: Notes, and a possible outline, for a more fully developed personal essay.

Week 11 (4/8)

Writing: First draft of personal essay.

Week 12 (4/15)

Works by World War I poets (handouts); viewing of *Voices in Wartime* documentary (DVD provided by JH).

Week 13 (4/22)

Final draft of personal essay due.

Reading: Brian Turner, *Here Bullet* OR Ben Fountain, *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk*

Writing: poetry exercises.

Week 14 (4/29)

Course evaluation; final notes.