Stephen F. Austin State University

ENGLISH 362: Intermediate Nonfiction (Spring 2018): The Lyric Essay

Course number/section: ENG 362-090
Meeting place: Ferguson 177
Meeting time: 6:00-8:30 pm M

Professor: Dr. Sara Hennings
Office: LAN 230
Office hours: 3-6 pm M, 3-4 pm WF
Email: henningsd@sfasu.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Readings and discussion demonstrating the basic structural and technical elements of creative nonfiction with opportunities for practice and peer workshop. Prerequisite: ENG 261 or consent of instructor.

REQUIRED TEXTS


COURSE REQUIREMENTS

WEEKLY EXERCISES AND MINI-WORKSHOPS

You will be responsible for writing weekly nonfiction pieces in response to creative writing exercises offered either in class or in your form and technique manuals (*Telling It Slant; RMP Field Guide*). You must post these to the weekly class discussion boards on D2L, in addition to posting them in the weekly course Dropbox.
FORMAL WORKSHOPS

Every week, we will have mini-workshops during the last 90 minutes of our class session over exercises generated in response to weekly creative writing exercises. Each student will be placed in Group A, B, or C, and on the day that a group is up for workshop, each member must provide electronic copies of their work on the course Discussion Board. During these mini-workshops, we will consider each person’s work, giving instructive, holistic feedback. Assignments will be due on Fridays by 11:59 pm in order to give group members (and professor) adequate time to consider the work by each workshop participant.

As part of preparation for weekly workshop, each workshop member should prepare a short, typed critique of the work up for weekly discussion (100 words). These critiques can take the form of marginal comments as well as synthesis statements provided at the end. These critiques will be turned in for grading, and you will also pass them on to the appropriate workshop participant.

NOTE: A detailed model with instructions, etiquette, and expectations for workshop will be provided prior to the first formal workshop. Due dates for submitting drafts and submitting feedback will also be provided.

FINAL CREATIVE WRITING PORTFOLIO

You are to submit a final creative writing portfolio composed of revised final versions of your original, creative work. The portfolio will contain revised versions of your formal workshop pieces and revisions of your twelve (12) weekly creative writing exercises. Your portfolio must also include a 5-8 page preface statement summarizing, synthesizing and reflecting on the writing and revising process—discussing and evaluating the ways in which the work has changed, evolved, and improved as a result of the revision process/in-class workshopping and close discussion of model nonfiction and the study of craft, as well as your understanding/appreciation of the form of creative nonfiction.

The portfolio must include all of the following:
1) ‘Table of Contents’ page listing all pieces in portfolio including page numbers

2) Preface Statement
   Some Additional Notes on Preface Statement:
   A. Responses to written comments/suggestions for revision with a thoughtful, substantive revision of each piece included in the final creative writing portfolio.
   B. As you approach each of the eight pieces, you should aim to discuss your own revision process, uses of narrative techniques as discussed in class, notes on your own writing process, reactions to any feedback received that may have been useful in revision, notes on thematic goals for the work, and thoughts on the completed work.

3) Original and final drafts of all completed exercises.

All work must be compiled in an electronic document, formatted using MLA standards, and uploaded to the appropriately labeled Dropbox on D2L.
Notes on Grading Criteria:

This portfolio assignment is worth a total of 300 points (roughly 30% of final grade). The portfolio will be scored by completeness of assembled work, attention to detail and description in analyses for each piece submitted, obvious attempts at development and revision in creative work, and obvious ability to utilize subject specific terms discussed in class throughout the semester.

Portfolios are due via electronic submission on Dropbox. If you wish to turn the portfolio in early, you may feel free to do so as soon as you have completed your workshop and received feedback on your creative nonfictions. Due to the nature of final exam week, late portfolios will not be accepted. Thus, it is imperative to work with your schedule ahead of time, and arrange for an earlier submission if you know that other obligations occur around the deadline.

SHORT PAPERS

You will be asked to write two short papers (750-1,000 words) on topics of significance to writers and creative writing. One of these papers must include the additional research component. You will be expected to demonstrate fluency in expository writing skills in these assignments, and cite your sources in appropriate MLA format.

GRADING

Weekly Exercises (12 at 25 points per exercise): 300 points (30%)
Final Creative Writing Portfolio: 300 points (30%)
Short Papers (100 points each): 200 points (20%)
Workshop Critiques /Participation: 200 points (20%)

Total: 1000 points

Note: Because this is a studio workshop, I expect each student to participate fully in class discussion and attend class. Lack of attendance and participation will negatively impact your grade.

Grading Standard:

A (excellent performance): 90-100.
B (above average performance): 80-89.
C (average performance): 70-79.
F (failure): 0-59.
COURSE POLICIES

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Desire2Learn (D2L)

D2L will be used to facilitate some aspects of the course. In D2L, you will be able to:

- Access additional required materials not found in your textbook (additional assigned readings on elements of craft and additional poems or stories which illustrate those elements).
- Access your course grades.
- Access supplemental resources/activities which are not required but may be useful.

Email

Course news and updates will be sent to you via email, so you will be responsible for checking your SFA email account regularly. Emails sent to the instructor on weekdays (Monday-Friday) will receive a response within 24 hours.

ABSENCES

Because this is a hands-on, activity-oriented studio class, attendance is a significant factor for success in this course. You will be allowed one absence during the course of the semester. For each absence beyond this, there will be a half-grade deduction in your final grade (a final grade of 95 would be reduced to a 90). It is up to the student to arrange to meet with the instructor to discuss missed course material. Make-up work will not be arranged or accepted for any missed peer-to-peer workshop or class presentation.

Students who miss three or more class meetings, regardless of circumstance, will receive a course grade of “F.”

Valid excuses are limited to health, religious observation, family emergencies, and participation in certain SFASU-sponsored events. Students must provide written documentation from which a decision will be made regarding the absence’s excusability. Without written documentation, the absence will automatically be considered unexcused. Students with acceptable excuses may be permitted to make up work when the nature of the work missed permits. However, no absences beyond the allotted number will be permitted, whether unexcused or excused. Whether an absence is excused or unexcused, students are still responsible for all course content and assignments. Note also that you must turn in all major assignments to pass the course.

I take attendance at the beginning of class; arriving more than five minutes after class begins will result in your being marked absent.
Please note that I DO NOT make distinctions between excused and unexcused absences, and an absence always counts as an absence. I will expect you each to manage your own attendance accordingly. Please let me know ASAP if you have specific concerns or questions.

LATE WORK

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the assigned due date. Late work will be accepted for all major assignments, but a 10% late penalty will be applied for each day past the deadline. For example, if a paper is due at the beginning of class on Monday, there will be a penalty of 10% if turned in by Tuesday, and 20% if turned in by Wednesday, and so on. This applies to all major assignments (papers, portfolio, workshop critiques, weekly exercises) only. You should save your work in multiple places; I highly recommend using online storage options such as OneDrive, which is included as a free service in the university’s downloadable subscription of Microsoft Office 365, to prevent lost work.

COURSE CITIZENSHIP

Sleeping or reading other materials during class are not acceptable. All cell phones must be turned off prior to coming to class, and no text messaging or web surfing will be tolerated. Laptops/tablets are to be used exclusively for workshop participation.

Although students with disciplinary problems tend to be few and far between at the college level, if behavioral disruptions persist within a single class meeting (or, for that matter, across multiple meetings), the student in question will be asked to leave the class with a lowered participation grade and an absence for the day.

Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance available to help SFA students succeed.

ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION

All written work will be submitted electronically via D2L into the appropriate Dropbox for grading and administrative purposes, as well as on the course Discussion Board for student electronic access. Assignments are due by 11:59 pm on the Friday preceding next workshop. All files must be formatted in either .doc or .docx (compatible with Microsoft Word). I will not accept Mac Pages or Google Docs, for example. I will return feedback to your assignment via written commentary (for exercises and workshop drafts) and D2L.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Adhering to academic integrity standards at all times by producing your own work and successfully attributing others’ ideas to them is a necessary aspect of university communication. Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a
class; (2) falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assignment; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism.

Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to: (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from the Internet or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper or presentation without giving the author due credit.

Any appeals on academic integrity cases must be made within thirty days after the first class day of the next long semester. Students should appeal to the instructor first then to the chair if the situation is not resolved. Further appeals can be made to the dean and provost if necessary.

Please read the complete policies at: http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp and http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic-appeals-by-students.pdf.

COURSE EVALUATIONS

Course evaluations will be available online near the end of the semester. I highly encourage you to take advantage of the opportunity to give feedback about how effective this class and my teaching was, particularly because I read evaluations to help make decisions about future classes. In other words, your feedback can help my future students have a good class experience.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES (PLOs)

1. The student will demonstrate close reading skills and recognize strategies used by professional creative writers.
2. The student will employ techniques and strategies for crafting carefully composed, competent creative work in a variety of genres (fiction, poetry, literary non-fiction).
3. The student will articulate useful, critical editorial advice for peer writers.
4. The student will demonstrate strategic revision on completed creative work.
5. The student will compose and sustain a complete, polished manuscript of substance in the focus-genre.

ACCOMMODATIONS

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify your instructors and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations, and no accommodations can be made except through the ODS. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.
COURSE SCHEDULE
*** This schedule is tentative. I reserve the right to change its contents and will post changes to D2L. Where noted, TIS indicates the collection Telling It Slant, TA indicates the Touchstone Anthology, and RMP indicates The Rose Metal Press Field Guide to Writing Flash Nonfiction.

Module 1: Flash Nonfiction

Jan. 22 Course Introduction
Homework: RMP: “Of Fire and Ice: The Pleasing Sting of Flash Nonfiction” (XIII-XXV); On Miniatures” (1-7); “Writing into the Flash” (8-14); selections from Beth Ann Fennelly (D2L). Complete Exercise 1

Jan. 29 The Flash Nonfiction Form: Discussion. Mini-Workshop 1 (Group A)
Homework: RMP: “Memory, Triggers, and Tropes” (33-36); “Paperclips, Sausage, Candy Cigarettes, Silk: ‘Thingy-ness’ in Flash Nonfiction” (37-42); “The Wound in the Photograph: A Meditation on the Well-Chosen Detail” (50-56); selections from Lee Ann Roripaugh (D2L). Complete Exercise 2

Feb. 5 The Power of Image and Detail: Discussion. Mini-Workshop 2 (Group B)
Homework: RMP: “Crafting Voice” (57-63); “Writing Through Innocence and Experience: Voices in Flash Nonfiction” (70-75); “Location, Location, Location” (82-92); Selected Readings (D2L). Complete Exercise 3

Feb. 12 Sound, Language, and Voice: Discussion. Mini-Workshop 3 (Group C)
Homework: RMP: “Bye-Bye, I, and Hello, You” (93-99); “The Art of Digression” (118-125); “Building a Frame, Giving an Essay a Form” (126-133); Selected Readings (D2L). Complete Exercise 4

Feb. 19 Point of View and Aesthetic Structure: Discussion. Mini-Workshop 4 (Group A)
Homework: RMP: “The Question of Where We Begin” (134-134-141); “Of Artifacts and MRIs, or Stuck on the Web with You” (142-150); “Writing the Brief Contrary Essay” (157-163); Selected Readings (D2L). Complete Exercise 5

Feb. 26 Beginnings, Endings, and Alternative Approaches: Discussion. Mini-Workshop 5 (Group B)
Homework: TIS: “Playing with Form: The Lyric Essay and Mixed Media” (107-126); Brevity: “A Brief Guide to Essays” (D2L); TA: TBA. Complete Exercise 6
Short Paper #1 Due on D2L by 11:59 PM

Module 2: The Lyric Essay: Other Possibilities

Mar. 5 Discussion and Mini-Workshop 6 (Group C)
Homework: TBA. Complete Exercise 7

Mar. 12 Spring Break Week: No Classes

Mar. 19 Discussion and Mini-Workshop 7 (Group A)
Homework: TBA. **Complete Exercise 8**

Mar. 26  Discussion and **Mini-Workshop 8 (Group B)**
Homework: TBA. **Complete Exercise 9**

Apr. 2  Discussion and **Mini-Workshop 9 (Group C)**
Homework: TBA. **Complete Exercise 10**

Apr. 9  Discussion and **Mini-Workshop 10 (Group A)**
Homework: TBA. **Complete Exercise 11**

Apr. 16  Discussion and **Mini-Workshop 11 (Group B)**
Homework: TBA. **Complete Exercise 12**

Apr. 23  Discussion and **Mini-Workshop 12 (Group C)**
Homework: TBA.

Apr. 30  **Publication Workshop**
Homework: Prepare Final Portfolio (please feel free to see me to discuss portfolio revisions during office hours this week)
**Short Paper #2 due on D2L by 11:59 pm**

May 7-11  **Final Exams: Final Portfolio Due by Monday, May 7 at 11:59 PM on D2L**