

Course Description

Students will read and write creative nonfiction texts, studying the distinctions between the subgenres within this category and between *creative* nonfiction and other nonfiction genres.

Students will write essays in different nonfiction genres, focusing on the drafting, workshoping, and revising process, while reading example texts from these genres, and analyzing the texts read for commonalities and differences.

Course Goals

In this course, students will

- acquire a foundation of broad based knowledge of the major questions and methodologies in the disciplines of the liberal arts and sciences;
- develop clarity in values;
- develop maturity in moral reasoning;
- appreciate the role of ethics in a just society;
- understand and respect persons of diverse backgrounds;
- develop aesthetic appreciation;
- develop research skills;
- develop oral communication skills
- develop written communication skills;
- develop information literacy skills.

Course goals adapted from the Creative Non-Fiction syllabus of Prof. Lisa Sisler, College of St. Elizabeth, Morristown, New Jersey.

Required Course Texts & Materials

Eggers, Dave, ed. *The Best American Non-Required Reading 2007*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 2007.

King, Stephen. *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*. New York: Pocket, 2000.

Root, Robert L., Jr., and Michael Steinberg. *The Fourth Genre: Contemporary Writers of/on Creative Nonfiction*. 4th ed. New York: Pearson/Longman, 2007.

Wallace, David Foster. *The Best American Essays 2007*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 2007.

A notebook or journal to be used as a daybook/ideas journal; to be used exclusively for this course.

Several two-pocket folders.

Reliable and timely access to a printer and a supply of paper; do not rely on the library for this.

Appropriate diskettes, cdroms, cdrws, flash drives, etc., for backing up computer files; magnetic storage, flash memory, and motherboards die, but optical media are (almost) forever—back up in *several* places.

Access to LMC's Sakai course management system.

Course Requirements

In order to earn a passing grade in this course, students must:

- Complete four (4) major course projects over the course of the semester—8,000-10,000 words of polished prose in the term;
- Complete all drafts, participate actively in all workshops and conferences;
- Complete written responses to assigned reading;
- Present work in a portfolio at the end of the term.

The relationship of these components to the final grade in the course will be made clear under "Grading," below.

Major Projects

As stated above, there are four (4) major projects in this course; all projects will be completed individually, with active and extensive commentary and participation from all members of the class. Students must complete all major projects in order to pass the course.

- *Personal Essay* (18% of final grade). The personal essay deals with the writer's thinking on a subject. While the writer is clearly a defining presence in this type of essay, as in all creative non-fiction, it is also shaped by the subject matter.
- *Segmented Essay* (18% of final grade). The segmented essay is much like the personal essay; it tends to be longer, to be composed in sections, and to bring together seemingly diverse topics.
- *Literary Journalism Essay* (18% of final grade). Literary Journalism intersperses the traditional journalistic mission of reporting events and items of public interest with the writer's own perspective or behavior and/or the techniques of literature (poetry, drama, or fiction).
- *Memoir* (18% of final grade). The memoir focuses on the writer, even more clearly than the Personal and Segmented Essays do. It draws on the writer's

experience, reflects upon it, and often details how that past experience has shaped the writer's present; it deals primarily with events and the writer's experience of them.

Further details on these course projects will be forthcoming throughout the term: assignment guides with more specific requirements and instructions, as well as due dates, draft deadlines, and conference scheduling.

Course Policies

Attendance and Participation. Attendance, as such, is not a formal part of assessment of students' work in this course. Of course, attendance is a crucial part of the learning process, and students enrolled in an upper-division (400-level) course are expected to be well aware of that fact. Attendance is expected, but it is ultimately each student's decision whether or not to attend. Note, however, that active participation in the course (discussions, workshops, and activities) is a component of the course grade (18% of the final grade), and it is difficult to participate if one is not present. Please make every effort to attend regularly and participate actively.

Students with Additional Needs. Lees-McRae College makes every attempt to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Therefore, reasonable arrangements will be made for any student with a documented disability. If you have a documented disability, you can make confidential arrangements through Tami Tressler-Blewitt, the Coordinator of Disability Services at Lees-McRae, to accommodate your disability. If a student with a documented disability wishes to request accommodation, they must inform their instructor of that disability and must meet with the Coordinator of Disability Services at Lees-McRae prior to receiving any assistance or accommodations. Students with disabilities should make an appointment to meet with Ms. Tressler-Blewitt as soon as possible to complete the necessary paperwork and to develop an Individual Accommodation Plan. Ms. Tressler-Blewitt's office is in the Burton Center for Student Success and she can be contacted at ext. 2561 or via e-mail at: tressler-blewitt@lmc.edu.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity. As stated in the *Lees-McRae Student Handbook (2007-2008)*, "Lees-McRae College fosters a spirit of complete honesty and a high standard of integrity. All students are expected to act in a manner that does not infringe upon the rights and responsibilities of others, including the right to learn and prosper in a campus community free from fraudulence and dishonesty; every student has the responsibility to help maintain such a campus community. The

attempt of any student to present as his/her work that which they have not honestly performed is regarded by the faculty and administration as a most serious offense and renders the offender liable to severe consequences and possible suspension" (7).

Students are encouraged to be familiar with the definitions of cheating, collusion, lying, and plagiarism presented in the *Student Handbook*, pages 7 and following, as well as with the consequences for violations of academic integrity specified there. Students found to have knowingly and willfully breached academic integrity in this course will receive the grade of "XF" for the course, and will be referred to the Academic Affairs office for potential further action.

Computers. This course meets on a WiFi campus, and each student could, therefore, have a computer available for use during class time. Do not abuse this privilege. Using network access for research to augment class discussion, working on course projects, and communicating with others in the course are appropriate uses of the facilities; Facebook, instant messenger, random Web surfing, and checking email are not.

Late Work. The *Course Calendar*, below, details when major projects, drafts of projects, and homework assignments are due, and how they are to be handed in. Conference and workshop drafts may not receive my (and your peers') fullest or most careful consideration if they are submitted late. Homework is not accepted late, except by prior arrangement. The final examination period (used as a portfolio showcase) is the absolute deadline for completion of all work and submission of it in the portfolio; no work will be accepted after the end of the final examination period. No work is considered submitted until it has been submitted as required below.

Submission of Work. Various types of work will be submitted in various ways in this course. Reading responses should be typed, printed, and brought to class in hard copy to be handed in. Workshop drafts should be typed and emailed to the class mailing list (eng488spr2008@michaelkapper.com) as attachments by **5 pm each Saturday**. Final drafts of projects should be typed, printed, and submitted in hard copy in class in the final portfolio

Electronic File Formats. Please note that while this course takes place on a campus where the computers have the most up to date Microsoft Office package installed, Office 2007 has not yet become a standard in the corporate and non-profit sectors, and the .docx format is not yet a "standard." Please submit Word files only in the older format (.doc) or create rich-text (.rtf) or

.pdf format documents, when submitting electronic versions. If I can't open it with Office 2004 for Mac (or Adobe Reader), it has not been submitted.

Communication in and with the Class. For general correspondence (questions and the like), please use my LMC email address to contact me (kapperm@lmc.edu); I will use your LMC email address to contact you. I will also add each student's LMC email address (and one additional address, if you like) to a course mailing list that we can all use to post messages to the class: eng488spr2008@michaelkapper.com.

The Syllabus Itself. This document represents a contract between me, the professor, and you, the student. The policies will be enforced as stated here, though exceptions may be made for good cause. If you believe you have good cause, please discuss your situation with me. Any exception made will be on a case-by-case basis and will always be in the student's favor. The calendar is, of course, subject to change with circumstances. Your continued enrollment in the course signifies your understanding and acceptance of the goals and policies stated in this syllabus.

Grades

Your grade in this course will be determined by your performance of the work as measured against the standards you will be informed of for each assignment. I make every attempt to reward accomplishment, not to punish failure, in assigning grades: a grade lower than 'A' doesn't mean you "did something wrong"; rather, a grade higher than 'F' designates "doing things right."

Your final grade in this course will be calculated like a grade point average, using these percentages like the "credit hours" in the calculation:

Personal Essay	18%
Segmented Essay	18%
Literary Journalism Essay	18%
Memoir	18%
Participation in Workshops	18%
Responses to Readings	10%
Total	100%

Your final grade will be reported in these "GPA" ranges:

3.65 - 4.00	A
3.45 - 3.64	A-
3.15 - 3.44	B+
2.80 - 3.14	B
2.50 - 2.79	B-

2.20 - 2.49	C+
1.80 - 2.19	C
1.50 - 1.79	C-
1.20 - 1.49	D+
0.70 - 1.19	D
0.00 - 0.69	F

Note: Consistent 'A-' work will earn an 'A' in the course.

Course Calendar

Please note that this course calendar is the best roadmap I can provide for the semester when planning at the beginning of the term. Remember that it is subject to change, with appropriate notice to you. Assignments will never be "moved up," though they may be moved back. Unless you hear differently, all workshops and discussions will take place on the day they are listed in this calendar, and all assignments will be due as listed here. If you miss class or arrive late on a given day, it is your responsibility to check with classmates for lecture and/or discussion notes that you missed and to check with me for any assignment sheets or other handouts you may not have received. Please ask me about classroom content only for clarification after you have discussed what you may have missed with a classmate. Reading and homework assignments will be made in class.

Week	Before Class	Discussion	Activities
Week 1 14 Jan		Classes begin 16 January No Class on 14 January	
Week 2 21 Jan		Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday No Class	
Week 3 28 Jan		Introduce Course, Materials, Projects Introduce Workshop Procedures Introduce Response Assignment Introduce Personal Essay	Tarot Card Essay
Week 4 4 Feb	Reading (about writing): Brett Lott (4G, 392-398) Patricia Foster (4G, 348-350) Philip Lopate (4G, 384-391) Stephen King (<i>OW</i> , xiii-50) Reading (examples): Megan Daum (4G, 86-94) Dagoberto Gilb (4G, 103-106) Vivian Gornick (4G, 113-116) Nicole Lamy (4G, 149-153) Jonathan Letham (4G, 154-159) Selection(s) from <i>BA</i> : TBD Response Paper #1 Workshop Draft (by Saturday 5 pm)	Readings • Based on responses • Other topics Personal Essays	Workshop Writing Activity (TBA)
Week 5 11 Feb	Reading (about writing): Michael Pearson (4G, 399-403) Steven Harvey (4G, 364-369) Scott Russell Sanders (4G, 416-424) Michael Steinberg (4G, 438-441) Stephen King (<i>OW</i> , 50-99) Reading (examples): Phillip Lopate (4G, 160-167) Bret Lott (4G, 168-171) Wendy Rawlings (4G, 228-237) Arthur Saltzman (4G, 249-255) Scott Russell Sanders (4G, 256-261) Selection(s) from <i>BA</i> : TBD Response Paper #2 Workshop Draft (by Saturday 5 pm)	Readings • Based on responses • Other topics Personal Essays	Workshop Writing Activity (TBA)

Week	Before Class	Discussion	Activities
Week 6 18 Feb	<p>Reading (about writing): Jocelyn Bartkevicius (4G, 327-333) Emily D. Chase (4G, 451-464) Maureen Stanton (4G, 487-492) Stephen King (<i>OW</i>, 103-131)</p> <p>Reading (examples): Floyd Skloot (4G, 277-283) Maureen Stanton (4G, 479-486) Susan Allen Toth (4G, 294-296) Erika Vidal (4G, 297-308) Christine White (4G, 309-324) Selection(s) from <i>BA</i>: TBD</p> <p>Response Paper #3 Workshop Draft (by Saturday 5 pm)</p>	<p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on responses Other topics <p>Personal Essays</p> <p>Introduce Segmented Essay</p>	<p>Workshop Writing Activity (TBA)</p>
Week 7 25 Feb	<p>Reading (about writing): Robert L. Root, Jr. (4G, 404-415) Stephen King (<i>OW</i>, 135-188)</p> <p>Reading (examples): Jocelyn Bartkevicius (4G, 23-36) Robin Black (4G, 42-49) Mary Clearman Blew (4G, 50-60) Lisa D. Chavez (4G, 72-78) Selection(s) from <i>BA</i>: TBD</p> <p>Response Paper #4 Workshop Draft (by Saturday 5 pm)</p>	<p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on responses Other topics <p>Segmented Essays</p>	<p>Workshop Writing Activity (TBA)</p>
Spring Break	<p>As much "Spring" as there is in this Break (March 1-9), enjoy the fact that there is No Class</p>		
Week 8 10 March	<p>Reading (about writing): Mary Elizabeth Pope (4G, 471-478) Stephen King (<i>OW</i>, 188-240)</p> <p>Reading (examples): Nicole Lamy (4G, 149-153) Michele Morano (4G, 195-200) Mary Elizabeth Pope (4G, 465-470) Selection(s) from <i>BA</i>: TBD</p> <p>Response Paper #5 Workshop Draft (by Saturday 5 pm)</p>	<p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on responses Other topics <p>Segmented Essays</p>	<p>Workshop Writing Activity (TBA)</p>
Week 9 17 March	<p>Reading (about writing): Stephen King (<i>OW</i>, 240-297)</p> <p>Reading (examples): Robert L. Root, Jr. (4G, 242-248) Judith Ortiz Cofer (4G, 79-85) Naomi Shihab Nye (4G, 201-204) Selection(s) from <i>BA</i>: TBD</p> <p>Response Paper #6 Workshop Draft (by Saturday 5 pm)</p>	<p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on responses Other topics <p>Segmented Essays</p> <p>Introduce Literary Journalism Essay</p>	<p>Workshop Writing Activity (TBA)</p>
Week 10 24 March	<p>Easter Break No Class</p>		

Week	Before Class	Discussion	Activities
Week 11 31 Mar	<p>Reading (about writing): Vivian Gornick (4G, 351-353)</p> <p>Reading (examples): Sheri Caudron (4G, 61-71) Adam Gopnik (4G, 107-112) Pico Iyer (4G, 133-142) Selection(s) from <i>BA</i>: TBD</p> <p>Response Paper #7 Workshop Draft (by Saturday 5 pm)</p>	<p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on responses Other topics <p>Literary Journalism Essays</p>	<p>Workshop Writing Activity (TBA)</p>
Week 12 7 Apr	<p>Reading (examples): Jennifer Kahn (4G, 143-148) Jonathan Letham (4G, 154-159) John McPhee (4G, 186-194) Selection(s) from <i>BA</i>: TBD</p> <p>Response Paper #8 Workshop Draft (by Saturday 5 pm)</p>	<p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on responses Other topics <p>Literary Journalism Essays</p> <p>Introduce Memoir</p>	<p>Workshop Writing Activity (TBA)</p>
Week 13 14 Apr	<p>Reading (about writing): Mimi Schwartz (4G, 425-430)</p> <p>Reading (examples): Angela M. Balcita (4G, 5-9) Kim Barnes (4G, 10-22) Jo Ann Beard (4G, 37-41) Selection(s) from <i>BA</i>: TBD</p> <p>Response Paper #9 Workshop Draft (by Saturday 5 pm)</p>	<p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on responses Other topics <p>Memoirs</p>	<p>Workshop Writing Activity (TBA)</p>
Week 14 21 Apr	<p>Reading (about writing): Natalia Rachel Singer (4G, 431-437)</p> <p>Reading (examples): Patricia Hampl (117-124) Rebecca McClanahan (172-186) Simone Poirier-Bures (218-227) Selection(s) from <i>BA</i>: TBD</p> <p>Response Paper #10 Workshop Draft (by Saturday 5 pm)</p>	<p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on responses Other topics <p>Memoirs</p>	<p>Workshop Writing Activity (TBA)</p>
Week 15 28 Apr	<p>Reading (examples): Mimi Schwartz (269-276) Michael Steinberg (284-293) Selection(s) from <i>BA</i>: TBD</p> <p>Response Paper #11 Workshop Draft (by Saturday 5 pm)</p>	<p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on responses Other topics <p>Memoirs</p>	<p>Workshop Writing Activity (TBA)</p>
Final Exams	Time TBA	Portfolio Due	