



ENG 333 (01E): Advanced Writing: Non-Fiction COURSE SYLLABUS: Spring 2023

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Kelin Loe, Assistant Professor of English (she/her)

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Office Location: 316 Talbot

Office Hours: TBA

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

ENG 333 meets in person Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 10:00-10:50am, in David Talbot Hall, room 325.

Creative nonfiction can be a beautiful contradiction as it is simultaneously nonfiction (grounded in fact, research, or experience), prose (normal), and creative (working against normal). In this course, we will treat it as process of choosing which expectations to meet *and which to break* in order to build a structure that can deliver unique, personal, and fresh thinking and experiences to specific audiences. We'll explore this genre through reading, discussion, writing, workshopping, and revision.

Student Learning Outcomes

Through a mixture of reading, writing, and discussion throughout the semester, students will:

- Analyze and compare different forms of creative nonfiction, questioning the relationships the authors build between content and form, between meeting expectations and resisting them; and
- Grapple with possibility at the global level (purpose, inquiry), the meso level (organization and structure), and the local level (language); and
- Engage in writing process, particularly drafting, revision, and feedback; and
- Work towards building a writing community.

Required Texts & Materials

Texts:

In semester reading order

- *Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body*, Roxanne Gay (Harper Perennial, 2017)*
- *In the Dream House*, Carmen Maria Machado (Greywolf, 2019)
- *The Collected Schizophrenias*, Esme Wang (Greywolf, 2019)
- *Witches, Midwives & Nurses: A History of Women Healers* (2nd Edition), Barbara Ehrenreich & Deirdre English (Feminist Press, 2010) **
- *Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Mammals*, Alexis Pauline Gumbs (AK Press, 2020)
- *Citizen: An American Lyric*, Claudia Rankine (Greywolf, 2014)*
- *The Argonauts*, Maggie Nelson (Graywolf, 2015)
- *Static Palace*, Leora Fridman (Punctum Books, 2022)

* One copy of book available at Waters Library.

** Online copy available through Waters Library.

Materials:

- A journal (could be digital or paper, but something you bring to class every day)
- A valid, working email address that you check daily
- Regular internet access
- Access to a device you can use to participate in our online meetings
- Access to a word processing program (MSWord, Pages, Google Docs, etc.)
- At least two storage methods such as flash or external hard drive, cloud, or folder

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF REQUIRED WORK

In brief, you will work through the following each week:

FREE WRITE & DISCUSS – During our course meetings, we will engage in: discussions about the readings; writing prompts to push you forward on your original compositions; and time to share and workshop students' work.

READ – The course texts represent different approaches to creative nonfiction. We will investigate how these authors put their texts together and why. These texts will serve as models for us as we define for ourselves what creative nonfiction is and how (and why) to write it.

WRITE – This course is structured around four major tasks: three essays and one revision. Unit 1 focuses on memoir, preparing you to write a narrative essay. Unit 2 takes up research-informed creative nonfiction, preparing you to create your own researched essay. Unit 3 is the lyric or braided essay, and it invites you to write one of your own. In Unit 4, we'll take the time to talk about process and revision, and hopefully be able to interview one of our authors, Leora Fridman, about her process. The final will be a revision of one of your first three essays.

When Your Grades Are Based on Labor

Read more at tracigardner.com/labor



Your grades are based on your labor—on the time and intensity you put into your writing. Here's how to approach your projects.



Focus on Ideas

Focus on your ideas, on what you're trying to say. Forget about the pressure to be perfect. Focusing on perfection can distract writers from developing their ideas. Because you are graded on labor, mistakes won't undermine your grade.



Write for Yourself

You're studying the kinds of writing that are important in your field and developing a sense of what makes that writing effective. Don't worry about impressing me. Write what will make you successful in the workplace.



Take Risks

Try kinds of writing that stretch your abilities and help you learn new things. There's no need to play it safe. After all, the safe, easy route doesn't push you improve your writing.



Have a Do-Over

If you take a risk and it doesn't turn out, you can always try again. Just as in a game, you have unlimited do-overs. Making mistakes is part of the learning process. As long as you are trying to improve your work, you can't fail.



Put In the Effort

You will write, rewrite, start over, and try again. All this work counts, as long as you listen to feedback, incorporate what you hear, and reflect on how to improve.

Credits: Infographic was created on canva.com. Icons are all from The Noun Project, used under a CC-BY 3.0 license: report by Li Squid, Fluorescent Light Bulb by Matt Brooks, analytics by Wilson Joseph, aim by Gilbert Bages, Switch Controller by Daniel, and Gym by Sathish Selladurai.

GRADING

I see grading and evaluation as technologies of surveillance and control. I have never found normal grading practices productive for learning, watching how they limit the learning process, create habits designed only to “get the A,” and cause harmful anxiety that is counter-productive to learning and thinking (and surviving school). Much research suggests the limits of grades and the benefits of going “gradeless.” However, our education systems depend on grades, and they are a major factor in your pathway towards your degree. As data points, they almost work like a form of currency that you need to obtain and maintain scholarships, employment, and sometimes reductions in insurance costs. To balance my distrust of grades with the requirements of the university, we will work on a feedback and labor model, which will be codified in a grading agreement we negotiate at the beginning of the semester. This means you will receive (a lot of) feedback from me and your colleagues throughout the semester with the expectation that you use that feedback to continually revise, rethink, and remix your work.

That being said, this course is not “gradeless.” In this US higher education system, I must enter a final course grade at the end of the term. At the end of the semester, I will review your work, my various responses to your work throughout the semester, your attempts to compose something of quality, and your general fortitude and determine a final grade using our grading agreement and the standard TAMUC grading scale. You may always meet with me to discuss your progress in the course (though don’t expect me to give you a “grade”). *This grading policy is based on the pedagogical work of Traci Gardner, Gavin P. Johnson, & Ashanka Kumari.*

Assessed Course Work

Course Project	Description
Fortitude: Collaboration	Collaboration is your investment in your colleagues. You listen, respond, debate, and contribute your fair share. The goal of collaboration is to grow alongside your colleagues by making space for them. Contributing means sharing your thoughts and actions—and also remembering, responding to, and inviting the thoughts and actions of your colleagues.
Fortitude: Communication & Perseverance	Communication & Perseverance are combined because I will not know about your perseverance if you do not communicate with me. To me, perseverance means that you reach out when either the content or the pacing of the course gets difficult, and when you fall out of pace, you catch back up again. Higher marks here will come with TIMELY communication—you ask for help or clarification as soon as you realize you need it, and you communicate about extensions 24 hours or more before the deadline.
Journal	Can be handwritten or on a computer. Must contain all in-class writing exercises.
Narrative Essay	An essay using your life experience as the primary source. Narrative, description, and scene will be focuses.
Researched Essay	An essay using research as a primary source. Reference, organization, and argument will be focuses.

Lyric Essay or Braided Essay	An essay that works in shorter paragraphs and weaves together different stories or topics. Structure, description, and language will be focuses.
Revision & Process Note (FINAL)	A revised version of one of the prior essays with a note detailing your process and how it's grown over the course of the semester.

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

Our classroom is made up of a diverse array of learners and I am happy to make reasonable accommodations to make sure you and your colleagues have as much access to accomplishing course goals as possible. Disabilities are documented and undocumented, visible and invisible. If you know how you best learn, please communicate with me. If something is hard or isn't working for you, please communicate with me. If you are proud of something, please communicate with me. In whatever workplace or academic context you enter next, you'll best served by articulating your needs, challenges, and strengths as a learner and as a colleague. My hope is that this course can be generative for, and support you in, developing how you understand and talk about your needs, challenges, and strengths.

Students with Disabilities – ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

Military and Student Veteran Accommodation

I recognize the complexities of being a military student or a student veteran. If you are a military student or student veteran, please inform me if you need special accommodations. Drill schedules, calls to active duty, complications with GI Bill disbursements, and other unforeseen military and veteran-related developments can complicate your academic life. If you make me aware of a complication, I will do everything I can to assist you or put you in contact with other university staff who are trained to assist you.

Accessing the Course Website

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here: <https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES, POLICIES, & RESOURCES

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

Inclusion & Nondiscrimination Notice

To me, diversity is the goal—and inclusion the practice—of valuing difference in higher education. If your colleagues share ideas and experiences you haven't encountered before, *they are giving you something beyond the course that I have designed*. Our readings, discussions, and activities may challenge how you perceive the world and your reality—and that challenge is at the heart of a liberal arts seminar. To learn *both from and alongside* your colleagues is an immense privilege. Often, moments when our thinking and perceptions are altered or challenged, we are provided a window into a deeper understanding of critical thinking and complexity. My goal is to *include* the challenges that difference and non-normativity create, and to approach them with openness,

curiosity, and generosity. In so doing, I hope we can better prepare each other for our next academic and professional contexts.

When it comes to your comfort zone, my intention is that our beliefs and understandings are challenged, not our senses of value to our course community and campus community. I will not tolerate discrimination, rudeness, or insults (in person or online, in discussion or peer feedback, in voice or text). For questions, concerns, and problems related to discrimination based on race, ethnicity, class, disability, nationality, gender identity, sexuality, religion, veteran status, or other social or personal identity factors, if you are willing, please communicate with me. My intention is to support my students by any means available to me.

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx). <http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

Academic Integrity & Honesty

In a nutshell, plagiarism is any attempt to pass off the ideas (or worse, the words) of another as your own. And this can happen mistakenly by not giving credit where credit is due. I want to hear your thoughts, ideas, inquiries, and language. My assignments are challenging, and I want to support you through them. Please, before intentionally plagiarizing, communicate with me. Plagiarism is never worth the risk.

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the Attendance webpage and Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01.

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

DEPARTMENTAL-SPECIFIC PROCEDURES

Student Grievance Procedure

Students who have concerns regarding their courses should first address those concerns with the assigned instructor in order to reach a resolution. Students who are unsatisfied with the outcome of that conversation or have not been able to meet individually with their instructor, whether in-person, by email, by telephone, or by another communication medium, should then schedule an appointment with the Department Head or Assistant Department Head by completing a Student Grievance Form (available in the main office, HL 141). In the event that the instructor is the Department Head, the student should schedule a meeting with the Dean of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Humanities after following the steps outlined above; if the instructor is the Assistant Department Head, students should schedule a meeting with the Department Head. Where applicable, students should also consult [University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.05 \("Student Appeal of Instructor Evaluation"\)](#).

Collection of Data for Measuring Institutional Effectiveness

In order to measure the level of compliance with the university's Institutional Effectiveness guidelines, throughout the semester, I may collect some of the ungraded texts you produce. The texts will be part of a portfolio created on your behalf and will be measured to ensure that our program "promotes practices that result in higher student academic achievement; an enhanced student experience; aligned and transparent decisions; and readily available information for improvement, accountability, and accreditation" (see "Department of Institutional Effectiveness," <http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutus/institutionalEffectiveness/default.aspx>).

This is solely an assessment of program effectiveness and in no way affects students' course grades or GPAs.

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Narrative Essay & Memoir

Weeks 1-5

- *Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body*, Roxanne Gay (Harper Perennial, 2017)
- *In the Dream House*, Carmen Maria Machado (Greywolf, 2019)
- *The Collected Schizophrenias*, Esme Wang (Greywolf, 2019)

Researched Essay

Weeks 6-10

- *Witches, Midwives & Nurses: A History of Women Healers* (2nd Edition), Barbara Ehrenreich & Deirdre English (Feminist Press, 2010, original 1973)
- *Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Mammals*, Alexis Pauline Gumbs (AK Press, 2020)

Lyric & Braided Essay

Weeks 11-13

- *Citizen: An American Lyric*, Claudia Rankine (Greywolf, 2014)
- *The Argonauts*, Maggie Nelson (Graywolf, 2015)

Process, Revision, Meet the Author

Weeks 14-16

- *Static Palace*, Leora Fridman (Punctum Books, 2022)