



ENG 585 (OSW)

Workshop on Writing: Forms and Genres

COURSE SYLLABUS: Spring 2024

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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

Email: kelin.loe@tamuc.edu

Office Location: 113 Talbot (you can enter through The Writing Center)

Office Hours: Fridays, 10am-1pm

Office Phone: 903-886-5260 (Dept. of Literature & Languages)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an advanced, intensive course that will focus on reading, writing, and discussing the emerging genre of the [“hybrid” or “lyric” essay](#). It has two primary modes: discussion of craft (grounded in the course texts) and workshops on pieces written by members of the course. While the course content is the “hybrid” or “lyric” essay ...

...the structure of this course is built upon active and timely collaboration between members of the course. In Felicia Rose Chavez, in *The Anti-Racist Writing Workshop*, recommends emphasizing strengthening both collaboration and building a writing practice (over the consumption of model texts). Following her lead, this course is designed to *foster creativity from a vibrant writing community*, meaning the methods we bring to both reading and writing lyric essays will come from the group. I consider this course an “intensive” because of its reliance on pacing—missing a deadline or a class meeting directly affects collaborators. Membership in a “vibrant writing community” is a skill that can sadly go missed in creative writing education, so I’ve made it a cornerstone skill in this course. While the course community is dependent on the pace (material must be completed on time in order for classmates to respond to it), the pacing of the course also requires that course members create a regular writing practice that will serve you long after the semester ends.

This course has four primary goals (and they will be articulated again, more verbosely, in the Student Learning Outcomes section below):

1. develop a regular writing habit;
2. practice writerly collaboration and build writerly relationships;
3. learn the ins and outs of the lyric essay; and
4. start, build, and/or realize one or more pieces of creative nonfiction writing that are exciting to the writer.

This course is structured around the first three goals, knowing that they directly support the fourth. Said differently, instead of assigning specific writing projects with specific goals and targets, beyond writing creative nonfiction, **there are no expectations in this class for what you write, how long it is, or what shape it takes.** If you want guidance, I'll be happy to give it, but this course is designed to push you to follow your research interests, experiences, and stories, and develop a nonfiction form that best communicates them.

Since there are zero expectations as to the products you'll create in this class, **the expectations will be placed on the process.** Beyond the final, no project will be due to the professor for evaluation over the course of the semester. Instead, there will be multiple low-stakes reading and writing tasks due each week. These tasks will be evaluated by completion.

Student Learning Outcomes

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

1. Construct a foundational—and regular, at least weekly—creative writing practice; and
2. Build a reflexive and responsive writing community and play a responsible role in that community (a.k.a. be a member of a vibrant writing community); and
3. Learn to improvise with collaborators and create shared projects; and
4. Collaborate to build knowledge of and experience with the craft of reading and writing lyric essays; and
5. Read and enter conversations taking place in the emerging genre of lyric creative nonfiction; and
6. Practice composing original creative nonfiction essays.

Required Texts & Materials

- *Bluets*, Maggie Nelson (Wave 2009)
 - *Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Mammals*, Alexis Pauline Gumbs (AK Press, 2020)
 - *Citizen: An American Lyric*, Claudia Rankine (Greywolf, 2014)
 - *Static Palace*, Leora Fridman (Punctum Books, 2022)
 - *The Lyric Essay as Resistance: Truth from the Margins*. (2023). Edited by Zoë Bossier and Erica Trabold. Wayne State University Press
 - *In the Dream House*, Carmen Maria Machado (Greywolf, 2019)
 - *A Harp in the Stars: An Anthology of Lyric Essays*. (2021). Edited by Randon Billings Noble. University of Nebraska Press.
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- A valid, working email address that you check daily
 - Regular internet access (as some readings, course materials, course activities are on D2L)
 - 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:

DISCUSS & WORKSHOP DISCUSS –During our course meetings—required synchronous online meetings, Wednesdays 5:30-8:10pm—we will engage in discussions about the reading or workshop course members’ writing. Because your discussion prep will be seen by only one other course member (see the “correspondence” project below), your participation during our Zoom meetings is how you will show your engagement with the course material (including the work of your peers).

READ & COMPOSE – As writers, we will practice a continual shift between writing, reading, and responding. Week-to-week, you’ll either be reading a book, a set of assigned readings, or the work of your fellow course mates. And every week, you’ll process the thoughts and experiences you have through the correspondence you share with your partner.

LEARN & TEACH & WORK COLLECTIVELY – This course flips between seminar mode and workshop mode—both of which require consistent and rich participation from all course members. The course culminates in an edited collection of letters between you and your correspondence partner, capturing your conversations and what you’ve taken from them (see “Correspondence Edited Collection” below).

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.

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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 the “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. <i>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.</i>
Creative Nonfiction Project	Following the model outlined in Chavez’s <i>The Anti-Racist Writing Workshop</i> , each student will share their project in a workshop once during the semester. The workshop will include the writer composing a process letter to share with the group. There will be a conference before and after the workshop with the professor.

Prompts	Once during the semester, you will compose a prompt or other writing activity to help colleagues create and revise their creative nonfiction projects.
Warmups & Cooldowns	For one writing session each week, you'll post a record of your warmup and cooldown.
Correspondence	You will be assigned an anonymous partner at the beginning of the course (a classmate). Each week, you'll write a letter to your partner that shares your independent reading and research and connects it to your life (you should also respond to your partner's previous letter). This correspondence project will take the place of a weekly writing journal or discussion preparation that would usually be on D2L. Over the course of the semester, you will collaborate with your partner to create a rich, personal, complex, and thought-provoking correspondence.
Correspondence Edited Collection	As your final project, you and your correspondence partner will curate a selection of your letters and compose a critical introduction.

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/>

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

Writing Center

The Writing Center offers writers free, one-on-one assistance. We currently offer 45min, face-to-face or online sessions that writers can book from our website: www.tamuc.edu/writing-center

We welcome all writers, majors, and disciplines—undergraduate and graduate students alike (faculty and staff too!). Research shows that all workers benefit from sharing their work with a focused reader. The Writing Center staff is trained to support writers in any stage of the writing process (from the blank page to polishing sentences), and we work with writers to verbalize writing goals and to stay on track with larger writing projects. We work with any form of writing (academic and nonacademic). The writers with whom we work usually bring projects like important emails, weekly writing assignments, midterm and final essays, and theses and dissertations. Contact us with any questions here: writingcenter@tamuc.edu.

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.

AI Use in Course (Thanks to Dr. Kumari for sharing this language!)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) will be a topic of conversation this semester, and could even become part of your writing process. You must consider the ethical and privacy implications of employing any kind of composing or AI-generative technology. **You should *absolutely never* input the intellectual property of others into any AI system without expressed permission; that is, do not input course readings or other materials into AI.** I'm happy to discuss further if needed.

Here's the University's policy (as of August 2023) regarding AI:

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course. Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism). Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructor's guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed. In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty

13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

Texas Senate Bill 17 (this is a link to bill text)

The recent law that outlaws diversity, equity, and inclusion programs at public colleges and universities in Texas, does not in any way affect content, instruction or discussion in a course at public colleges and universities in Texas. Expectations and academic freedom for teaching and class discussion have not been altered post-SB 17, and students should not feel the need to censor their speech pertaining to topics including race and racism, structural inequality, LGBTQ+ issues, or diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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.a.spx).
<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.a.spx>

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

COURSE SCHEDULE - ENG 585: Forms & Genres

When		Preparation				Class Meeting Blocks				
Week	Date	A	Annotations & Working Texts	Prompts	W/C	Letter	1	2	3	
4	1/31		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resistance Intro Harp Intro Seneca Review statement 				Discuss Course	Prompts	Small Group Share	
5	2/7		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBA TBA TBA 	Lozen Micah	1	1	Discuss Annotations	Prompts	W1 PRE Conf. Small Group Share	
6	2/14		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bluets (first 10 pages) TBA TBA 	Angie Van	2	2	Discuss Annotations	Prompts	W2 PRE Conf. Small Group Share	
7	2/21		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBA TBA TBA 	Stacy Tamara	3	3	Discuss Annotations	Prompts Bluets Diss.	W3 PRE Conf. Small Group Share	
8	2/28	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizen (first 10 pages) TBA TBA 	Karon Rachel Dingle	4	4	Discuss Annotations, W4 PRE Conf.	Prompts		
9	3/6		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ITDH (first 10 pages) TBA TBA 	Brittany Diego Rachael	5	5	Discuss Annotations	Prompts	W5 PRE Conf. Small Group Share	
10			Spring Break							
11	3/20		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBA TBA 	Wksp Group 1	-	6	6	Discuss Annotations	WORKSHOP 1	Prompts Citizen Diss.
12	3/27		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBA TBA 	Wksp Group 2	-	7	7	Discuss Annot.	WORKSHOP 2	W1 POST Conf. Small Group Share
13	4/3	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBA TBA TBA 	Prestee Clare Jeff	8	8	Discuss Annotations, W2 POST Conf.	Prompts		
14	4/10		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBA TBA 	Wksp Group 3	-	9	9	Discuss Annotations	WORKSHOP 3	Prompts ITDH Diss.
15	4/17		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBA TBA 	Wksp Group 4	-	10	10	Discuss Annotations	WORKSHOP 4	W3 POST Conf. Small Group Share
16	4/24		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBA TBA 	Wksp Group 5	-			Discuss Annotations	WORKSHOP 5	W4 POST Conf. Small Group Share
17	5/1		Finals Prep Week, I'll hold class time as office hours and W5 POST Conferences.							
Final	5/8		Due the Wednesday of Finals Week							