**ARTICLE AND ESSAY TECHNIQUE**

**ENC 3310**

**Instructor:** Alexa Doran, MFA, MA, BA

**Instructor Email:** aed16e@fsu.edu

**Instructor Office:** WMS 329

**Instructor Office Hours:** MW 3:30-5 p.m.

**Class Website:** <https://aed16e.wixsite.com/creativenon>

**Course Description**

This course is for upper-level undergraduate students interested in writing creative nonfiction. “Creative nonfiction,” a common but sometimes misleading term, exists on a spectrum that stretches between researched, journalistic articles on the one hand, and lyrical personal essays on the other. The genre is “nonfiction,” and so it tries to be true—with the recognition that truth is various and not always objective, and that it exists within a contract established between the writer and the reader. At the same time, the genre is “creative” and uses many of the techniques of fiction, such as scenes, dialogue, characters, setting, sensory detail, narrative, plot, story, point of view, conflict, rising tension, climax, denouement, anecdote, etc. In this course, we will explore and practice many styles within the genre of creative nonfiction, though the subjects we study will be largely of an autobiographical and personal nature.

**Course Objectives**

By the end of the course, students will demonstrate the ability to

* identify craft techniques of non-fiction and how these elements of craft are apparent outside of strictly nonfiction prose
* analyze and interpret complex texts and representations of various forms of nonfiction
* gain experience reading and composing in several styles to understand how style conventions shape and are shaped by readers’ and writers’ practices and purposes
* develop facility in responding to a variety of non-fiction styles calling for purposeful shifts in voice, tone, level of formality, design, and structure
* use various styles and techniques to compose in various nonfiction styles
* practice applying constructive analysis and criticism to their peers’ (and their own) creative nonfiction

**University Attendance Policy**

Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

**Class Attendance Policy**

This is a discussion-based course; therefore, attendance is imperative to success. Any absence over the four unexcused absences permitted by the university will result in the loss of a letter grade.

**Academic Honor Policy**

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "...be honest and truthful and...[to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://fda.fsu.edu/academic-resources/academic-integrity-and-grievances/academic-honor-policy>.)

**Americans With Disabilities Act:**

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should:  
(1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and  
(2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type.

Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from the Student Disability Resource Center has been provided.

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Student Disability Resource Center  
874 Traditions Way  
108 Student Services Building  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167  
(850) 644-9566 (voice)  
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)  
sdrc@admin.fsu.edu  
<http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/>

**Free Tutoring from FSU**

On-campus tutoring and writing assistance is available for many courses at Florida State University. For more information, visit the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) Tutoring Services' comprehensive list of on-campus tutoring options - see <http://ace.fsu.edu/tutoring> or contact [tutor@fsu.edu](mailto:tutor@fsu.edu). High-quality tutoring is available by appointment and on a walk-in basis. These services are offered by tutors trained to encourage the highest level of individual

academic success while upholding personal academic integrity.

**Syllabus Change Policy**

This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

**Reading Reflections**

All reading will be paired with written reflections. Reflections should be 300 to 400 words. In your reflections you should address questions such as 1) what you learned from the text that you can apply to your own writing 2) what you enjoyed about the text and why 3) what you did not enjoy the text and why 4) insights about how the current text relates to other texts we have read in class 5) insights about how the current text relates to our current cultural climate 6) questions you have about the text/points of confusion 7) ways that the text relates to your life 8) ways in which the form of the text effects the meaning 9) when reading essay collections, pointing out which essays stood out and why, as well as which essays were weaker and why. Reading Reflections should be turned in via email any time BEFORE class begins. Reading Reflections will not be accepted post class-discussion. Reading Reflections are meant to prepare you for class discussion – you are encouraged to reference a digital or print copy during class.

**Essays:**

Each student will write four 5-7page essays throughout the semester. You may choose from the following prompts:

**Essay 1 Choose either:**

Pop-Culture Based Essay: This essay is inspired by your reading of Chuck Klosterman and Roxane Gay.

Social Studies Based Essay: This essay is inspired by your reading of Roxane Gay.

**Essay 2**

Form-Based Essay: This essay is inspired by your reading of Ander Monson and Maggie Nelson.

**Essay 3**

Research-Based Essay: This essay is inspired by your reading of Leslie Jamison.

**Essay 4 Choose either:**

Lyrical Essay: This essay is inspired by your reading Lia Purpura.

Humor-Based Narrative: This essay is inspired by your reading of David Sedaris.

**Grade Breakdown**

Essay 1 20 %

Essay 2 20 %

Essay 3 20 %

Essay 4 20%

Homework/Drafts 20%

**\*\*\*\*\*Class Calendar\*\*\*\*\*\***

**M 1.7**

In class: Intro to class, Brief syllabus review, In-class writing, Klosterman and Gay intros

Homework: Read Klosterman *Killing Yourself to Live* excerpt, “Certain Rock Bands You Probably Like,” “Something Wicked This Way Comes” Writing Reflection 1.

**W 1.9**

In class: Attendance Activity, Discussion Klosterman

Homework: Read Roxane Gay 47-182, Writing Reflection 2

**M 1.14**

In class: Attendance Activity, Discussion Gay

Homework: Read Roxane Gay 183-318, Writing Reflection 3

**W 1.16**

In class: Attendance Activity, Discussion Gay, Guidelines Essay 1

Homework: Work on Draft 1 Essay 1

**M 1.21 NO CLASS MLK DAY**

**W 1.23**

In class: Attendance Activity, Peer Review

Homework: Work on Draft 2 Essay 1

**M 1.28**

DRAFT 2 CONFERENCES – WE WILL NOT MEET AS A CLASS THIS WEEK

**W 1.30**

DRAFT 2 CONFERENCES – WE WILL NOT MEET AS A CLASS THIS WEEK

**M 2.4**

In class: Essay 1 due BEFORE the beginning of class via email, Attendance Activity, Guidelines Essay 2, Monson and Nelson intros

Homework: Read Ander Monson 3-92, Writing Reflection 4

**W 2.6**

In class: Attendance Activity, Discussion Monson

Homework: Read Ander Monson 93-187, Writing Reflection 5

**M 2.11**

In class: Attendance Activity, Discussion Monson

Homework: Read Maggie Nelson, Writing Reflection 6

**W 2.13**

In class: Attendance Activity, Discussion Maggie Nelson

Homework: Work on Draft 1 of Essay 2

**M 2.18**

In class: Attendance Activity, In-Class Writing

Homework: Work on Draft 1 of Essay 2

**W 2.20**

In class: Attendance Activity, Peer Review

Homework: Work on Draft 2 Essay 2

**M 2.25**

DRAFT 2 CONFERENCES – WE WILL NOT MEET AS A CLASS THIS WEEK

**W 2.27**

DRAFT 2 CONFERENCES – WE WILL NOT MEET AS A CLASS THIS WEEK

**M 3.4**

In class: Essay 2 BEFORE class begins, Attendance Activity, Guidelines for Essay 3, Intro to Leslie Jamison

Homework: Read Leslie Jamison 1-90, Writing Reflection 7

**W 3.6**

In class: Attendance Activity, Jamison Discussion

Homework: Read Leslie Jamison 91-218, Writing Reflection 8

**M 3.11**

In class: Attendance Activity, Jamison Discussion

Homework: Work on Draft 1 Essay 3

**W 3.13**

In class: Attendance Activity, Peer Review

Homework: Work on Draft 2 Essay 3

**M/W 18-22 SPRING BREAK NO CLASS**

**M 3.25**

DRAFT 2 CONFERENCES – WE WILL NOT MEET AS A CLASS THIS WEEK

**W 3.27**

DRAFT 2 CONFERENCES – WE WILL NOT MEET AS A CLASS THIS WEEK

**M 4.1**

In class: Essay 3 due BEFORE class begins, Attendance Activity, Intro to David Sedaris and Lia Purpura

Homework: Read Lia Purpura 1-74, Writing Reflection 9

**W 4.3**

In class: Attendance Activity, Discussion Purpura

Homework: Read Lia Purpura 75-136, Writing Reflection 10

**M 4.8**

In class: Attendance Activity, Discussion Purpura

Homework: Read David Sedaris 3-147, Writing Reflection 11

**W 4.10**

In class: Attendance Activity, Discussion Sedaris

Homework: Read David Sedaris 153-272, Writing Reflection 12

**M 4.15**

In class: Attendance Activity, Sedaris Discussion, Guidelines for Essay 4

Homework: Work on Essay 4

**W 4.17**

In class: Attendance Activity, Peer Review, Mini-Celebration

Homework: Work on Essay 4

**M 4.22**

DRAFT 2 CONFERENCES – WE WILL NOT MEET AS A CLASS THIS WEEK

**W 4.24**

DRAFT 2 CONFERENCES – WE WILL NOT MEET AS A CLASS THIS WEEK

Essay 4 DUE **MONDAY, APRIL 29th** by MIDNIGHT

**\*\*\*FRIDAY APRIL 26th** David Sedaris is coming to campus!!! The tickets cost money (although they are discounted for students), so I cannot require you to go. However, I think getting to see one of the authors you have just read speak is a great thrill and a wonderful educational experience. If you do choose to attend this event, you can turn in a 100-word reflection on the experience in place of one of your unexcused absences. Link for tickets/more info here:

<https://openingnights.fsu.edu/events/david-sedaris/>

WE MADE IT!!!!! HAVE A LOVELY SUMMER!!!