

## English 211: Creative Nonfiction

Monday and Wednesday 1:00 to 2:10 PM on Zoom

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### Course Professor

Dr. Crystal N. Fodrey, Associate Professor of English and Director of the Writing at Moravian program

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Zinzendorf 202/Zoom

Student Open Hours: Tuesdays from 2:30 to 4:00 PM, Wednesdays 10:30 to 11:30 AM, and by appointment. Feel free to reserve an appointment on my Google Calendar any time you would like to talk privately about the class or other matters. All student open hours will be held via Zoom. Please book appointments with me at least 2 hours in advance. You can schedule an appointment with me by emailing me if my office hours do not fit your schedule.

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### Course Description

#### Official Description from Course Catalog:

Guided practice in public and personal essay writing. Workshop setting.

#### Professor's elaboration of official description

What does a piece of creative nonfiction (CNF) do that a “traditional” academic essay or newspaper article or personal narrative might not? While we will explore many answers to that question over the next few months, I’d like to offer my preliminary answer now, as my answer guided me in the development of this course: CNF takes risks with content, form, and style. It delights readers as it informs and possibly persuades them. It refuses to deny the existence of a fallible and uncertain self behind the words, and it upholds truth and memory and the fascinating idiosyncrasies of individual experience. It journeys via paragraphs comprised of captivating sentences from the self into the world and must ultimately be written for that world, not the self alone, to consume. Editor of *Creative Nonfiction Magazine*, Lee Gutkind, says that the best CNF has the potential to “communicate ideas, germinate wisdom, and create change.” My hope for this course is that we strive toward such goals together with the writing we produce.

We begin this semester studying the craft of the CNF genre, a genre that, according to scholar Bronwyn Williams, “bring[s] together the relating of events, people, and places that are the province of journalists, historians, and biographers, with the narrative techniques and lyrical tools of novelists and poets.” Throughout the semester, you will have the opportunity to draft pieces of various lengths in various CNF sub-genres—especially memoir, place writing, and personal essay—for various audiences, purposes, and potential publication spaces. To generate ideas for your writing and engage in CNF craft exercises, you will keep an invention journal on Google Drive. To expand your understanding of what CNF is and can be, you will write and present a review of any book-length work of CNF that you choose. And you will work on improving your writing and constructively critiquing the writing of your peers through participation in group workshops and a dedication to constant revision. The semester will culminate with a portfolio of your completed, revised nonfiction prose.

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**This Course Addresses the Following Outcomes:**

- Manage and reflect upon individual nonfiction writing projects from the planning and drafting stages through the peer-review and revision stages
- Write ethically and effectively for a variety of audiences and purposes in a variety of creative nonfiction subgenres—namely memoir, place writing, and personal essay/cultural criticism
- Demonstrate the ability to use a variety of ethical creative nonfiction-appropriate research strategies and integrate/document this research according to creative nonfiction-appropriate standards
- Recognize the sub-genres of creative nonfiction, the relations among them, and their rhetorical purposes and effects
- Examine the writing of creative nonfiction as a personally and culturally-situated practice that can, as noted above, “communicate ideas, germinate wisdom, and create change”

**Writing-Intensive Learning Practices**

1. Students respond in writing to all assignments.
2. Students participate in class discussions, workshops, and oral presentations.
3. Students routinely evaluate themselves in writing for each draft of an essay.
4. Students analyze and write personally situated, narrative-privileging, literarily stylized, fact-based prose in various creative nonfiction sub-genres.
5. Students practice making diverse writing choices (i.e., styles and modes of discourse).
6. Students are responsible for their own writing choices.
7. Students collaborate in drafting workshops.
8. Students edit and polish all essays before submitting final drafts.
9. Students produce a project that uses multiple forms of research.
10. Students receive feedback in numerous ways, such as margin comments, conferences, audio files, final evaluative portfolios.

**Required Texts**

Monroe, Debra, ed. *Contemporary Creative Nonfiction: An Anthology*. Kendall Hunt, 2020.

You will be required to read, critique, and discuss one of the following during the memoir unit:

Bechdel, Alison. *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2006.

OR

Broom, Sarah M. *The Yellow House*. Grove Press, 2019.

OR

Westover, Tara. *Educated: A Memoir*. Random House, 2018.

You will be required to read, critique, and discuss one of the following between the personal essay/cultural criticism unit:

Coates, Ta-Nehisi, *Between the World and Me*. Spiegel and Grau, 2015.

OR

Vargas, Jose Antonio. *Dear America: Notes of an Undocumented Citizen*. Dey Street Books, 2018.

You will also be assigned to read and write a book review on a work of creative nonfiction published in the last four years that is not assigned for the class.

Other assigned readings to be downloaded from our Canvas course site.

## Recommended and Referenced Websites

*Assay: A Journal of Nonfiction Studies* (scholarly journal—<http://www.assayjournal.com/>)  
*Brevity* (literary journal—<http://brevitymag.com/>)  
*Creative Nonfiction* (literary magazine—<http://www.creativenonfiction.org/>)  
*Fourth Genre: Explorations in Nonfiction* (literary journal—<https://msupress.org/journals/fourth-genre/>)  
*Hippocampus Magazine: Memorable Creative Nonfiction* (<https://www.hippocampusmagazine.com/>)  
*New Pages*—<http://www.newpages.com/> site indexing and reviewing small literary journals, writing contests, and conferences.  
*River Teeth: A Journal of Nonfiction Narrative* (<https://www.riverteethjournal.com/>)  
Storycenter (<http://www.storycenter.org/>)  
*Under the Gum Tree* (literary journal—<https://www.underthegumtree.com/>)

## Technology

Please have the following fully charged / available each class unless otherwise specified:

- MacBook pro
- iPad with Notability installed
- Apple Pencil
- Hypothes.is account. Sign up here: <https://web.hypothes.is/start/>

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## Grading Contract for Creative Nonfiction

This Creative Nonfiction class is built on principles of productive risk, collaborative learning, and student agency. Pushing yourself to become better at anything requires trying new things (some of which will be unsuccessful), working with and learning from others, and using what you have learned to make informed choices.

To facilitate this work, I have set up the class in a way that you may at first find unfamiliar—and perhaps even uncomfortable. Specifically, I will not assign grades to your work during the semester. This does *not* mean that you won't know how you are performing in the class. Quite the opposite, in fact. You'll receive a lot of feedback on your writing throughout the semester, and you will have repeated opportunities to apply feedback and revise your work.

Why have I decided to not assign grades during the semester? Dr. Asao Inoue, a writing researcher who has studied how assessment impacts student learning, has this to say about grades:

[U]sing conventional classroom grading of essays and other work to compute course grades often leads students to think more about acquiring grades than about their writing or learning; to worry more about pleasing a teacher or fooling one than about figuring out what they really want to learn, or how they want to communicate something to someone for some purpose. Lots of research in education, writing studies, and psychology over the last 30 or so years have shown overwhelmingly how the presence of grades in classrooms negatively affect the learning and motivation of students. (Inoue 329)

My intent with all class activities and assignments is to facilitate your growth as a writer, and I'll be as transparent as possible throughout the semester about why we are doing particular things in class. For your part, I expect to see deep engagement and effort, and I hope you will also be transparent and proactive in communicating about how things are going and what you need in order to succeed. Here are several principles that are embedded in the way I have designed our Creative Nonfiction course for this semester:

- **Risk is rewarded.** You will develop your writing skills when you try new things and then seek and incorporate feedback about your writing. You will have many opportunities to revise your work until you are satisfied with what you have produced. To that end:
- **Your writing in this class will be read by others.** Some writing may initially be shared only with me, but will be de-identified (your name and other identifying information will be removed) and shared with the class. Some writing will be shared with the class directly either in small workshop groups or for full class workshop. Some writing may be public and shared with others across and beyond campus. In part, this will allow you to understand how your writing is perceived by a variety of audiences; therefore:
- **You are responsible for keeping track of feedback on your writing.** You will receive feedback in a variety of ways, both written and verbal, formal and informal, from me, your classmates, peers outside of the class, Writing Center tutors, and yourself. *All* of this feedback is equally valuable and important to your development as a writer, and you are expected to write down, record (with permission), save copies, or otherwise preserve any feedback you receive on your writing for this class. At various points, you will be asked to review and respond to feedback and you should be able to quickly locate records of feedback you have received. Related to this:
- **Responding to writing is as important as writing.** In order to receive insightful feedback on your writing, we all need to practice giving good feedback. The work you put into commenting on others' writing—whether that writing was created by peers in the class or by authors of the many published pieces we will read—serves two purposes. First, your honest and thoughtful feedback will help your peers understand what is working and what they can improve upon. Second, interacting with others' writing, even when the author may never see your comments, will help you identify what is effective for various genres will expand your repertoire of writing strategies.

All of the work we do in this class is grounded in these principles, and they are also what informs the grading matrix on the following page. Are you interested in learning about why I've taken this approach? Here is some of the scholarship that informed this grading contract:

Albracht, Lindsey, et al. "Response to Joyce Olewski Inman and Rebecca A. Powell's 'In the Absence of Grades: Dissonance and Desire in Course-Contract Classrooms.'" *College Composition & Communication*, vol. 71, no. 1, 2019, pp. 145–51.

Davidson, Cathy. "Getting Started 6: Contract Grading and Peer Review." *Hastac*, 16 Aug. 2015, [hastac.org/blogs/cathy-davidson/2015/08/16/getting-started-6-contract-grading-and-peer-review](https://hastac.org/blogs/cathy-davidson/2015/08/16/getting-started-6-contract-grading-and-peer-review)

Inman, Joyce Olewski, and Rebecca A. Powell. "In the Absence of Grades: Dissonance and Desire in Course-Contract Classrooms." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 70, no. 1, 2018, pp. 30–56.

Inoue, Asao B. *Labor-Based Grading Contracts: Building Equity and Inclusion in the Compassionate Writing Classroom*. The WAC Clearinghouse, 2019.

Inoue, Asao B. "Theorizing Failure in US Writing Assessments." *Research in the Teaching of English* vol. 48, no. 3, 2014, pp. 330–52.

Kohn, Alfie. "The Case Against Grades." *Counterpoints*, vol. 451, Peter Lang AG, 2013, pp. 143–53.

McNutt, Chris, host. "[Making the Shift to Ungrading](#)." *Human Restoration Project*, season 3, episode 12. 31 August 2019. ([transcript](#))

Talbert, Robert. "Specifications Grading: We May Have a Winner." Robert Talbert, PhD: Math, Technology, Education, Productivity, 28 April 2017, [rtalbert.org/specs-grading-iteration-winner/](http://rtalbert.org/specs-grading-iteration-winner/)

Wood, Shane, host. "[Episode 12: Asao B. Inoue](#)." *Pedaggoque*, season 1, episode 12. 9 Dec. 2019. ([transcript](#)).

| A Grade  | B Grade   | C Grade   | D and Below  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p><b>Essays</b><br/>           Satisfactory completion by the end of the semester of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Memoir</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Place Essay</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Personal Essay</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Book Review</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Braided/Segmented/Expanded</li> </ul> <p>with at least one of these essays revised to “submission-worthy” quality</p> <p>Plus related components for each essay:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete drafts for workshop sessions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All feedback received for each major essay</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete revised draft on due date with an explanation of what you revised and why</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Excerpt sharing/presentations when relevant</li> </ul> | <p><b>Essays</b><br/>           Satisfactory completion of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Memoir</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Place Essay</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Personal Essay</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Book Review</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Braided/Segmented/Expanded</li> </ul> <p>Plus related components for each essay:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete drafts for workshop sessions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All feedback received for each major essay</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete revised draft on due date with an explanation of what you revised and why</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Excerpt sharing/presentations when relevant</li> </ul> | <p><b>Essays</b><br/>           Satisfactory completion of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Memoir</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Place Essay</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Personal Essay</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Book Review</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Braided/Segmented/Expanded</li> </ul> <p>Plus related components for each essay:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Some drafted material for workshop sessions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete revised drafts (one or more submitted late without permission)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Excerpt sharing/presentations when relevant</li> </ul> | <p><b>Essays</b><br/>           Unsatisfactory completion OR missing 1 or more components from these major essays:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Memoir</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Place Essay</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Personal Essay</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Book Review</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Braided/Segmented/Expanded</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Engagement and Participation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 0-2 total absences</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Consistently engaged, high-quality class participation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Consistently high-quality feedback in both small group and full-class workshops</li> </ul> <p>Satisfactory completion of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All Invention Journals/Discussion Posts/Reading Annotations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All workshop letters</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Engagement and Participation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 total absences</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Consistently engaged, high-quality class participation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Overall high-quality feedback in both small group and full-class workshops</li> </ul> <p>Satisfactory completion of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All but 1-2 Invention Journals/Discussion Posts/Reading Annotations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All workshop letters</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Engagement and Participation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 5 total absences</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Inconsistent class participation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Inconsistent quality feedback in both small group and full-class workshops</li> </ul> <p>Satisfactory completion of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All but 3-4 Invention Journals/Discussion Posts/Reading Annotations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All but 1 workshop letters</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Engagement and Participation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 6 or more total absences</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Consistent lack of class participation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory or missing feedback for small group and/or full-class workshops</li> </ul> <p>Missing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 5 or more Invention Journals/Discussion Posts/Reading Annotations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 2 or more workshop letters</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Reflection and Revision</b></p> <p>Satisfactory completion of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 3 Goals Statements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Digital Portfolio with all</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Reflection and Revision</b></p> <p>Satisfactory completion of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 3 Goals Statements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Digital Portfolio with all</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Reflection and Revision</b></p> <p>Satisfactory completion of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 2 Goals Statements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Digital Portfolio with all</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Reflection and Revision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 1-0 Goals Statements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Digital Portfolio missing two or more components</li> </ul>   |

|  |   |                                   |                 |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| revised work and components mentioned below, including a piece revised for publication along with an appropriate cover letter. | revised work and components mentioned below | but one component mentioned below | mentioned below |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------|

## Explanation of Assignments

In this course you will set goals for and practice writing in multiple sub-genres of CNF, each with multiple drafts. Invention journal entries, workshop response letters, and the book review and presentation are meant to provide additional outlets for response, brainstorming, drafting, and delivery of ideas related to the topic of the course.

- **Goal Statements** will be written at three points during the semester asking you to articulate and re-evaluate your goals for writing.
- **Short Essays #1-#3** give you approximately 1000 words apiece to practice the craft of four different sub-genres of CNF—including, but not limited to memoir (#1), place/nature (#2), and personal essay (#3). These will be completed in the first half of the semester as we work toward a greater understanding of the expansiveness of the CNF genre.
- Regular **Invention Journal** entries and periodic **Discussion Board** posts and **Reading Annotations** will help you develop your understanding of CNF craft conventions through assignments focusing on craft analyses of published CNF works, craft exercises asking you to practice certain stylistic elements of CNF, research activities, brainstorming/idea generation activities, and drafting. Each assigned entry/post/annotation is satisfactorily completed if it meets the stated criteria in the prompt. You get out of these what you put into them. The Invention Journal entries should be in a folder on Google Drive shared only with Dr. Fodrey. You will submit each Invention Journal entry on Canvas on the assigned due date. Discussion Board posts are usually completed during class time. Reading Annotations will be completed using Hypothesis.
- **Workshop Response Letters** are written throughout the semester to peers on their workshop days. This ongoing assignment asks you to reflect critically and conscientiously about your peers' work so that your peers receive substantive feedback in writing and verbally during full class workshops. Students in the class will be divided into five groups, and each of those groups will be responsible for turning in completed drafts on specific days and writing response letters to members of other assigned groups during the second half of the semester. More information about this recurring assignment will be forthcoming in class. Each workshop letter is satisfactorily completed if it meets the stated criteria in the prompt.
- The **CNF Book Review** and **Presentation** ask you to apply your knowledge of CNF craft and critique in order to write and present a thoughtful review of a book-length work of CNF that you choose off of a [pre-approved list](#) of over 80 titles published in the last few years and communicate your choice to Dr. Fodrey and your classmates on [this spreadsheet](#). (Note: Only one student can review each book, so as soon as you figure out which book you want to review, go ahead and claim it.) Students will present during Week 10 of the semester, and written book reviews are due the day of your scheduled presentation.
- The **Final Digital Portfolio** will comprise a variety of expanded, re-written, re-envisioned, and revised versions of the short essays completed during the first half of the semester. One of these works will likely become a braided/segmented essay, which we will work on at length during the second half of the semester. Other pieces may include a multimodal nonfiction piece (perhaps translating one of your essays into a video with images from your past or into an audio essay that shares audio excerpts of songs you critique in a personal essay), a short essay expanded into a blog concept . . . the sky's the limit. However, the portfolio must include the following:

- o An introductory/cover letter in which you provide context for what you have included in the portfolio and provide a final reflection on your growth as a writer of creative nonfiction over the course of the semester.
- o A expanded/braided/segmented essay presented as alphabetic text or in audio/audiovisual format, which will likely come from a concept or concepts with which you worked for one or more of the short essays.
- o If your expanded/ braided/segmented essay is under 16-20 double-spaced pages (or multimodal equivalent), you will need to expand another one of your short essays and include this as well.
- o Two revised short essays—not necessarily expanded, just improved
- o Plus: all related components for all essays and all goal statements
- o **For “A” Grade Only:** At least one of the essays mentioned above revised to the point where you feel comfortable submitting it for possible publication in an undergraduate literary journal (or elsewhere). The one you choose for publication submission should include a cover letter addressed to the editor of the publication giving context about the piece.

## Preparedness and In-Class Participation

Your in-class participation is vital to our online learning environment. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive assessment. A significant amount of time will be spent engaging in group discussion and in-class activities. Participation in class discussion, contributions to workshop activities, attentiveness to the instructor's directions and explanations and relevant questioning in response, readiness for individual conferences and class workshops, and productive involvement with the content of the course is expected. Contributions to discussion-based classes require careful attention to peers and course material alike. This is an opportunity to develop a healthy self-awareness of how much time and space you are occupying in discussion, and whether or not you are carefully and respectfully listening, challenging, and building off of peers' discourse.

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## Creative Nonfiction Course Policies and Resources for Students

### Class Conduct and Commitment to Equity and Inclusion

In English 211: Creative Nonfiction, I am committed to fostering a community of writers that is inclusive to all students. As part of this commitment, I strive to create an environment that accepts, supports, and respects all different backgrounds, to check in on you if I see you falling behind, to engage you in the analysis and writing process of creative nonfiction in multiple ways, and to facilitate a sense of belonging and connection to our course and course content. In this course, we will not allow feedback or comments that are racist, classist, ableist, homophobic, transphobic, sexist, xenophobic, or that demonstrate other forms of discriminatory or hurtful language — although you may decide to address and work to dismantle such issues in your writing. There is a big difference between writing about injustice and perpetuating it. If you see or hear any offensive feedback or comments in class (from your peers or me), I hope that you will feel comfortable reaching me after class, in my student open hours, or via email, so it can be addressed. We must hold each other accountable to create better communities and a better world.

Additionally, all Moravian College students are responsible for upholding the Community Standards, which can be read online in the Student Handbook: <https://www.moravian.edu/handbook/campus-life/code-of-conduct>

## Zoom Expectations

Due to COVID-19, our class will meet online. Below are guidelines for how to engage in this online class:

- Make sure you have set up your Canvas account to receive notifications from our class and check your email at least every 24 hours. It is your responsibility to keep up with any and all announcements.
- For each class session, you should do your best to have open simultaneously Zoom and Canvas/Google Drive (split screen on your computer or using multiple devices). We will use both online platforms during our scheduled class sessions.
- Try to be in a minimally distracting environment if you can. Use headphones if you need to—both to hear class better and so your roommate(s)/family/other people who might be around you do not hear the private-to-the-class personal stories we discuss.
- **Your videos should be turned on during all of our Zoom sessions.** Personalized Zoom backgrounds are encouraged. If for any reason you feel uncomfortable with your video on, please contact me. **If you do not contact me and have your video turned off, you will not be counted as present.**
- Keep your audio muted until you want to speak. Let's work together to limit background noise!
- On the bottom of the Zoom window, click on “Participants” and “Chat.” Two pop-up windows will open on the right side of your screen.
- When you want to speak, use the “Raise Hand” feature (on the bottom left of the Participants window). Be sure to unmute yourself to talk.
- Use the Chat box to make a point or ask a question. Remember that the Chat is public and may be recorded (even if you are privately messaging a peer).
- Have a plan for taking notes (paper and pencil, iPad and Apple Pencil, Google Doc, etc.) It is your responsibility to capture ideas, thoughts, and updates.
- One unit of course credit is equivalent to 12 hours of work a week. Even though we will only meet synchronously for two hours and twenty minutes each week, you should dedicate an additional 9-10 hours per week to working on this class.

## Attendance

Creative Nonfiction is a course that includes engaged discussion, in-class writing, peer group work, and conferences. Therefore, you should attend all scheduled synchronous class meetings. Throughout the semester, if absences occur, it is your responsibility to make up the work missed. Permission to make up classwork is granted at the discretion of the instructor. As a matter of courtesy, whenever you find it necessary to be absent from class, you should inform the instructor as soon as possible and remain in consistent communication with the instructor to ensure all missed work is appropriately addressed and/or completed.

Students enrolled in this section of English 211 cannot miss more than a week of classes—two class meetings—without penalty because of the impact on class participation. See grading contract for details.

## Academic Code of Conduct

All work that you submit or present as part of course assignments or requirements must be your original work unless otherwise expressly permitted by the instructor. This includes any work presented, be it in written, oral, or digital form or in any other technical or artistic medium. In addition, the use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly and consistently documented using styles common to published creative nonfiction. **To reiterate: When you use the specific thoughts, ideas, writing, or expressions of another person, you must accompany each instance of use with some form of attribution to the source, regardless of the genre or medium in which you are working.**

You can familiarize yourself with all aspects of Moravian College's Academic Code of Conduct here:  
<https://www.moravian.edu/catalog/academic-regulations/academic-code-of-conduct>

### Submitting your Work

- On the first day of class, you will create a Google Drive folder titled “Creative Nonfiction 2021: Your Name,” and you will share that folder with Dr. Fodrey ([fodreyc@moravian.edu](mailto:fodreyc@moravian.edu)).
- In-class and out-of-class writing will be assigned throughout the course. Students not in class when writing is assigned are still responsible for completion of the assignment when due.
- It is your responsibility to submit your work to Canvas by the published assignment deadline. A proper submission will be a link to your work in Google Drive. To get the correct link:
  - Make sure that the Google Doc or other file is in the Google Drive folder you shared with me on the first day of class titled “Creative Nonfiction 2021: Your Name.”
  - Click the blue “Share” button in the top right corner of your page.
  - Where it says “Get Link” make sure it is set to “Anyone at Moravian College with the link **can edit**.”
  - Copy the link.
  - Paste the link into Canvas and submit.
- It is your responsibility to submit the correct version of your assignment.
- Students are required to keep saved copies of all drafts and major assignments until after the end of the semester. The best way to accomplish this is to save all of your work on Google Drive. Even if you forget to save multiple drafts, you can still access older versions of the work via the revision history function.
- Rough drafts must be submitted prior to final-for-now (i.e., revised) drafts. Final-for-now drafts should address, when deemed appropriate by the writer, feedback received during small/large group workshops.
- All submitted work should be typed —unless otherwise noted — and follow the appropriate style guidelines for the assignment.

### Late Work

Work in this class should be completed and posted to the appropriate location on time. Your ability to meaningfully and effectively participate in class discussions and workshops depends on your timely completion of class work, and in some cases late submission of work will negatively impact other students. If you anticipate needing extra time on any assignment due to circumstances beyond your control, contact me as soon as possible to discuss alternate arrangements. Repeated late work may result in a lower final grade even if all other requirements are met.

### Workshops

We improve as writers by responding to input from readers. To that end your essay drafts will go through extensive peer review via writing workshops. You are expected to take the input from your classmates **seriously** and respond to their feedback when you revise. You are likewise expected to take your job as a reviewer seriously. Critique others' work as you wish to be critiqued, both in the workshop response letters and in person. Treat each other with respect. Each of us has areas to improve in our writing.

### Writing Center

All members of the Moravian College community are welcome to visit the Writing Center. Writing Center tutors work with papers and multimodal compositions for any class, at any stage of the writing process. If you need the services of the Writing Center, please visit [moravian.edu/writingcenter](https://www.moravian.edu/writingcenter) to make an appointment.

### **Other Academic Support**

If you need other academic support, such as assistance with time management, learning strategies, or a tutor for a content area other than writing, please contact the Tutor Coordinator in the Academic and Accessibility Support Center at 610-861-1401.

### **Accessibility Support**

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact the Academic and Accessibility Support Center, located in the lower level of Monocacy Hall, or by calling 610-861-1401.

Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic and Accessibility Support Center. Moravian encourages persons with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation or have questions about the physical access provided, please contact the event sponsor at least one week prior to the event.

### **Title IX**

Moravian College faculty are committed to providing a learning environment free from gender discrimination and sexual violence. Should a student disclose a concern of this nature, the faculty member is obligated to inform the Title IX Coordinator, who will assist the student in determining resources for support and resolution. Fully confidential reporting options include the [Counseling Center](#), [Health Center](#), and [Religious Life](#) (chaplain). Survivors are encouraged to seek immediate assistance by contacting the [Advocates](#) at 484-764-9242. For more information, please visit [moravian.edu/titleix](http://moravian.edu/titleix).

### **Counseling**

Counselors at the Counseling Center help students deal with the stresses of college life. They are a great resource for all students. You can give them a call at 610-861-1510 or stop by at 1301 Main Street.

### **English Major Portfolio**

In preparation for creating an English Major Portfolio in your senior capstone seminar, please save digital and/or hard copies of your work for this class, including drafts with peer and instructor comments. Note: This only applies to English Majors or those who are considering the English Major.

**Information contained in the course syllabus may be subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.**

### **Daily Schedule**

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Be aware that a daily schedule is occasionally subject to change due to time constraints, unexpected disruptions, or needs of the class. Therefore, pay attention to announcements of any changes in assignments or due dates. These changes will be announced in class and on Canvas. The most up to date homework will ALWAYS be posted on Canvas. Also note that **whatever is listed for a specific day is DUE that day**.

**Abbreviation Key:**      CCN = *Contemporary Creative Nonfiction*  
                                  C =      a PDF of the reading can be found on Canvas  
                                  IJ =      Invention Journal (to be explained in detail on Canvas)

### **WEEK 1**

Introduce genre of creative nonfiction; analyze the conventions of flash essays; write and share introductory flash nonfiction; introduce sub-genre of memoir

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| M 1-25 | <b>Read</b> syllabus (in class); Gutkind, “ <a href="#">What is Creative Nonfiction</a> ” (in class); Talbot, “ <a href="#">All or Nothing</a> <a href="#">Self-Portrait at Twenty-Seven</a> ” and Kiss, “ <a href="#">Chronology of the Body</a> ” (in class)<br><b>Draft</b> introductory “self-portrait” or “self-chronology” flash essays (in class)   |
| W 1-27 | <b>Read about Craft</b> Monroe, “Introduction” (CCN ix-xvi); Stuckey-French, “ <a href="#">Our Queer Little Hybrid Thing</a> ”; Williams, “Writing Creative Nonfiction” (C)<br><b>Write</b> IJ entry #1: What expectations did you have for a class on “creative nonfiction” prior to reading these introductory texts? If those expectations changed, how did they change? What aspects of writing creative nonfiction seem the most exciting and engaging to you? Which aspects of it are you least excited about or possibly even worried about? Make reference to ideas discussed in all three of the readings (unless you have talked to me about not being able to get CCN until week 2), and follow the posting directions on Canvas. Minimum 500 words.<br><b>Complete</b> “self-portrait” or “self-chronology” to share with classmates in class on Wednesday.<br><b>In Class:</b> Share flash memoirs. Assign essay #1. Recreate childhood memory. |

## WEEK 2

Form workshop groups; choose book-length memoir to read; introduce and draft short essay #1—memoir emphasis; practice writing dialogue

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| M 2-1 | <b>Read about Craft:</b> Blew, “The Art of Memoir” (C); Hampl, “Memory and Imagination” (C) + “Other People’s Secrets” (CCN 207-218); Bunn, “ <a href="#">How to Read Like a Writer</a> ”<br><b>Read Like a Writer (pick at least two):</b> Sundberg, “It Will Look Like a Sunset” (Warning: Domestic Abuse — <a href="https://www.guernicamag.com/features/it-will-look-like-a-sunset/">https://www.guernicamag.com/features/it-will-look-like-a-sunset/</a> ); Urrea, “Sanctuary” (CCN 387-398); Van Meter, “Cherry Bars” (CCN 399-406)<br><b>Write</b> IJ entry #2—Metaphorical Memories: Memories are fallible. When we look back into our pasts, we do not have video footage of every event that took place (unless you’re <u>Deb Roy’s</u> child—constantly recorded as part of a research study—or live in a futuristic world where we record every moment of our lives through cameras in our eyes like that in <i>Black Mirror’s</i> “The Entire History of You”—Netflix: Season 1 Episode 3.) For now, for most of us, we recreate events in our minds. During that process of memory recreation, we focus on some things and not others. What might be significant to you this week about a memory might have little significance five years from now. In memoir writing, what is most interesting to <i>readers</i> is not necessarily what you remember but <i>why</i> you remember something the way you do. |
|-------|---|

For this IJ entry, I ask you to do the following:

- Free write about a strong, lasting memory from earlier in your life. Rely on all of your senses to include as many details as possible. (Think back to the kitchen recreation activity from Wednesday’s class.) Pay particular attention to odd details that may or may not seem out of place because these are often the most significant aspect of the memory.
- Once you have jotted down the details, write a short paragraph narrating the memory. At the end, stop and pick out the metaphors and other imagery/symbolic details embedded in what you have written.
- Finally, write a 500-750 word memoir that highlights the significance of the memory via metaphor or dominant image or idea (akin to sunset, sanctuary, and cherry bars in the assigned model essays).
- Draft in your Invention Journal, share the link on Canvas (IJ#2), and be prepared to share an excerpt from this in class.

**In class:** Share excerpts from memoir. Discuss readings. Begin drafting Goal Statement #1.

**W 2-3**

**Read about Craft:** Bradway and Hesse, "Form," "Description," and "Dialogue" (C); Steinberg, "Finding the Inner Story in Memoir and Personal Essays" (C)

**Read Like a Writer (pick at least 3) —** Arundel, "The Things I've Lost" (CCN 21-22); Eggers, from *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* (C); Laymon, "The Worst of White Folks" (CCN 245-250); Moore, "If Mr. Clean Had Been My Father: An Essay on Family and Coincidence" (CCN 283-285); Phan, "The Disciples of Memory" (CCN 287-294); Ward, "Ronald Wayne Lizana" (CCN 461-470)

**Write** Goal Statement #1 due; IJ entry #3—A practice in dialogue. By this point, you should be working toward a draft of your memoir essay, which is due for small group workshop on Wednesday, February 10. Pick a moment from a scene where a recreation of dialogue would 1) make sense and 2) enhance the scene. Your dialogue doesn't need to be Eggers-long or be supplemented with art (but it can be). It just needs to help develop you and the other people in that scene as characters . . . as three-dimensional, realistic, truthful human beings. [Bonus "research": ask a person whose speaking you have recreated to read and give you feedback on the dialogue.]

**In Class:** Create workshop groups. Discuss readings and share dialog with groups.

**WEEK 3**

Discuss chosen book-length memoir; draft, workshop, and revise essay #1—memoir emphasis

**M 2-8**

**Read about Craft:** Strayed and Almond, ["How Do I Write About My Life Without Alienating Everyone In It?"](#)

**Read to Critique:** Bechdel, *Fun Home: A Family Tragikomic* OR Broom, *The Yellow House*, OR Westover, *Educated: A Memoir*

**Write** IJ entry #4—a letter (minimum 1 single-spaced page) addressed to the author of the book you chose to read:

- The first section of the letter should be analytical (but not particularly critical) and descriptive of what is on the page before you: What is the book asking, what drives it or gives it its energy? What is the book's greatest ambition, its "so what"? In what is it most deeply interested? Describe the voice, tone, language, and form of the book. Do any of these elements shift or are they constant throughout the piece? Are there idiosyncrasies in the writing or the voice or the thinking that are of interest to you?
- The second section of your letter should outline the book's successes. What does it do well? What helps it achieve its ambition? What are its best moments, its most effective craft elements, its best section, its best sentence, etc. Basically, where does it work? Be specific.
- The third section should outline some of your thoughts for revision (pretend the author still has a chance to revise, even though the book is published). Which parts of the book could be made stronger in order for it to fully realize whatever, in your mind, it's trying to realize? As a reader, what could you have used more or less of? Are there places where a particularly enjoyable element breaks down for you? Do you have thoughts on re-ordering or restructuring the piece? Are there elements or ideas that the piece could or should more fully explore or interrogate? Are there elements or ideas that could be taken out or pared down in order to more clearly focus you as a reader?

**In Class:** Break into groups based on what you chose to read. Critique your chosen memoir as practice for Wednesday's first small group workshop session.

**W 2-10**

**Read about Craft:** Bradway and Hesse, "Revision" (C); Butler, from *The Writer's Style* (C)

**Write** short essay #1 (memoir) draft  
**In Class:** Workshop short essay #1 in small groups.

## WEEK 4

Introduce and draft short essay #2—place essay

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|--------|--|
| M 2-15 | <b>Read for Craft:</b> Root, “Place” (C); Barnes, “On Place” (C)<br><b>Read Like a Writer (pick at least 3):</b> Cisneros, “A House of My Own” (CCN 69-77); Dungy, “A Good Hike” (CCN 137-147); Gates, “In the Kitchen” (CCN 173-178); Smith, <a href="#">“Tracking the Demise of My Marriage on Google Maps”</a> ; Kincaid, “A Small Place” (C)<br><b>Write</b> IJ entry #5—TBA on Canvas |
| W 2-17 | <b>Read Like a Writer (pick at least 3):</b> Griswold, “We Transit” (CCN 199-205); Luisellio, “Manifesto a Velo” (CCN 267-270); Sukrungruang, “Into the Country” (CCN 355-363); Borich, from <i>Body Geographic</i> (C); Tucker, “Fountain Girls” (CCN 377-385)<br><b>Write</b> revised short essay #1 due to Canvas; IJ entry #6—TBA on Canvas  |

## WEEK 5

Workshop and revise short essay #2—place emphasis; introduce short essay #3—personal essay

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| M 2-22 | <b>Read about Craft:</b> Tredinnick, “The Essential Prose of Things” (C)<br><b>Write</b> short essay #2 draft   |
| W 2-24 | <b>Read about Craft:</b> Lopate, “Introduction to <i>The Art of the Personal Essay</i> ” and “The Essay, Exploration or Argument” (C); Bascom, <a href="#">“Picturing the Personal Essay: A Visual Guide”</a><br><b>Read Like a Writer (pick at least 3):</b> Chee “Mr. and Mrs. B” (CCN 47-54); Dasgupta, “Goddesses” (CCN 95-102); Gay, “To Scratch, Claw, or Grope Clumsily or Frantically” (CCN 165-172); Gordon, “Kafka and Me” (CCN 185-197); Jamison, “The Empathy Exams” (CCN 219-234); Didion, “On Keeping a Notebook” (C)<br><b>Write</b> IJ entry #7—TBA on Canvas |

## WEEK 6

Read and examine person essays

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| M 3-1 | <b>Read about Craft:</b> Bradway and Hesse, “Written Sources” (C)<br><b>Read Like a Writer (pick at least 3):</b> Biss, “Time and Distance Overcome” (CCN 41-45); Gay, “Some Thoughts on Mercy” (CCN 157-164); Shields, “The Thing about Life Is that One Day You’ll Be Dead” (CCN 305-309); Stanton, “Laundry” (CCN 335-348)<br><b>Write</b> revised short essay #2 due to Canvas; Goals Statement #2; IJ entry #8—TBA on Canvas |
| W 3-3 | <b>Read to Critique:</b> Coates, <i>Between the World and Me</i> OR Vargas, <i>Dear America: Notes of an Undocumented Citizen</i><br><b>Write</b> IJ entry #9—a letter (minimum 1 single-spaced page) to the author of the book you chose to read. Use the same directions as were posted for 2/8.  |

## WEEK 7

Complete short essay #3 and begin short essay #4

**M 3-8** **Write** short essay #3 draft due by class time.

**W 3-10** **Read about Craft:** Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater, “Writing Self, Writing Cultures” (C)  
**Read Like a Writer (pick at least 3):** Daum, “The Joni Mitchell Problem” (CCN 103-112); Solnit, “Men Explain *Lolita* to Me”; Wade, “Trilogy” (CCN 411-427); Jamison, “The Photographs that Made Me Feel Less Alone”; Coates, “I’m Not Black, I’m Kanye”

### **WEEK 8**

Writing, Feedback, and Revision Week — Sign up for a time to meet with Dr. Fodrey if you did not meet with her during week 6 or 7

**M 3-15** **No Class** — Work on revisions and read your [CNF book chosen for review](#)

**W 3-17** **No Class** — **Write** revised short essay #3 for Dr. Fodrey review

### **WEEK 9**

Studies of form; researching for and drafting of segmented/braided/expanded essay(s)

**M 3-22** **Read about Craft:** Root, “College, Montage, Mosaic, Vignette, Episode, Segment” and “This is What the Spaces Say” (C)

**Read Like a Writer (pick at least 3):** Beard, “Cousins” (CCN 23-39); Diaz, “A Body of Athletics” (CCN 125-132); Kerns, “This is East Tennessee Punk Rock” (CCN 235-243); Miller, “Basha Leah” (CCN 271-281); Walker, “An Unkindness of Ravens” (Warning: Sexual Abuse — CNN 429-435)

**Write** IJ entry #10—TBA on Canvas

**W 3-24** **Read Like a Writer:** example book reviews — TBD

**Write:** Goal Statement #3

### **WEEK 10**

Presentations of book reviews; researching for and drafting of braided/expanded essay(s)

**M 3-29** **Read to Critique:** [CNF book chosen for review](#)

**Write** Book Review and presentation (students scheduled to present today; NOTE: all workshop group #1 and #2 members will be presenting today to give them more time to work on expanding an essay for the full class workshop)

**W 3-31** **Read to Critique:** [CNF book chosen for review](#)

**Write** Book Review and presentation (students scheduled to present today)

### **WEEK 11**

Full class workshops

**M 4-5** **TBD:** This will either be a make-up day for 3-31 OR a one-on-one meeting day with Dr. Fodrey. Depends on what happens on 3-31.

**Write:** Workshop group #1 submit completed drafts of extended essay for workshop on 4/7

**W 4-7** **Read to Critique:** Workshop group #1 essays

**Write** workshop response letters (members of group #5 only); workshop group #2 submit completed drafts of extended essay for workshop

### **WEEK 12**

Full class workshops

**M 4-12**      **Read to Critique:** Workshop group #2 essays  
**Write** workshop response letters (members of group #1 only); workshop group #3 submit completed drafts of extended essay for workshop

**W 4-14**      **Read to Critique:** Workshop group #3 essays  
**Write** workshop response letters (member of group #2 only); workshop group #4 submit completed drafts of extended essay for workshop

### **WEEK 13**

Full class workshops

**M 4-19**      **Read to Critique:** Workshop group #4 essays  
**Write** workshop response letters (members of group #3 only); workshop group #5 submit completed drafts of extended essay for workshop

**W 4-21**      **Read to Critique:** Workshop group #5 essays  
**Write** workshop response letters (members of group #4 only)

### **WEEK 14**

Completing Portfolio

**M 4-26**      **Read about Craft:** Root, “Truth” (C)  
**Write** Portfolio introduction/cover letter draft.

**W 4-28**      **End of Semester Celebration**—reading of excerpts from our completed work

Your **Final Digital Portfolio** is due no later than Sunday, May 2 at 11:59 PM.