

**LINN-BENTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
6500 Pacific Blvd. SW, Albany, Oregon 97321-3755

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**WRITING 240, CREATIVE WRITING, NONFICTION**

Section: B01

Tuesday 6:00pm-8:50pm

**CRN 31107**

BC-205

**FALL 2014**

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Instructor: Patrick J. Misiti

Offices: BC-102c (Benton Center); SSH-210 (Albany Campus)

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**BENTON CENTER OFFICE HOURS**

Albany Campus                      Tuesday/Thursday    12:00pm-1:00pm

Benton Center                      Tuesday                      5:00pm-6:00pm

**REQUIRED TEXT**

*No Text. Supplemental materials will be provided to you as hardcopy or posted on my instructor webpage*

**MATERIALS/SUPPLIES NEEDED**

Stapler, paper, writing utensils, folder.

Access to: computer, printer, email account, and internet.

Ability to open .pdf and doc files, attach and send files via email

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Creative writing workshops, including this one, are designed to help developing writers learn to better polish their work. We will learn terms, concepts, forms and purposes for creative. We will read published work and works of literary theory, and we will spend time in group workshops, reading and discussing original creative works.

This course studies basic elements of creative nonfiction, types of creative nonfiction, uses for creative nonfiction and the process of creating creative nonfiction. It emphasizes fostering individual style.

**PREREQUISITE**

College level writing and reading skills (WR 121) are strongly recommended for success in this course.

**CLASS LAYOUT**

Our class will include the following

- Survey of forms, concepts, theories, publishers and published works of creative nonfiction
- Critiques and responding to constructive criticism
- Developing original works and a "poet's eye"—Finding inspiration and using form, tropes, schemes, and mechanics to help capture that inspiration, are tricks creative nonfiction writers borrow from their older siblings, poetry, fiction, and drama. As we work on developing our "poet's eye," finding story in the world, we will also work through writing anxiety, writer's block, and writer's fatigue.

As stolen from my wonderful colleague Allison Ruch, "[creative nonfiction workshops] will discuss how carefully crafted language can bring ideas, events, and moments to life in ways that photographs and casual reminiscing cannot. This class will ask that you plumb the depths of your memories and your thoughts for subjects and that you find ways of translating those subjects into written work that speaks to others, regardless of shared—or even remotely similar—life experience."

Creative nonfiction, like any creative genre, has no limits in terms of writing on the dark and catastrophic or the light and hilarious. Try both or combine them.

### **CREATIVE NONFICTION GENRE**

Creative nonfiction writers create factually accurate texts or narratives while using literary techniques and styles. They communicate information, just like other nonfiction writers (technical writers, journalists, etc.) but they do so in a way that reads more like poetry or fiction.

Like poetry and fiction, Creative Nonfiction works to explore and share in the human condition.

Creative Nonfiction is a relatively new genre, and because of this, the genre is flexible and ripe with experimentation.

Some forms in the genre:

personal essay	memoir	navel gazing
literary journalism	lyric essay	travel writing
food writing	biography	hybridized essays
feral (gonzo) journalism		

### **BASIC LITERARY ELEMENTS**

In narrative fiction there are basic elements that help us discuss narratives. These same elements can be discussed in narrative creative nonfiction.

Some of these literary elements are:

plot	setting	character	theme
mood	structure	tone	language
mode	voice	conflict	style

### **BASIC LITERARY TECHNIQUES**

In poetry and fiction, literary techniques (or literary devices) are the tools authors use to convey their messages and expand and explore the poem or narrative. These same techniques can be and are used in creative nonfiction.

A very basic list of these literary techniques goes:

back-story	cliffhanger	flashback
flashforward	foreshadow	framing
hook	plot twist	red herring
unreliable narrator	defamiliarization	epiphany
allegory	amplification	Bathos
euphuism	hyperbole	repetitive designation
imagery	paradox	pathos
satire	understatement	conceit
irony	symbolism	thematic patterning
echoing	pathetic fallacy	personification

### **GRADING**

This class will be graded as follows

Participation and Peer Critique	30%
Writing Exercises (6@40pts each)	30%
Essay One (4-6 pages Double-spaced)	10%
Essay Two (5-10pages double-spaced)	10%
Final Portfolio	10%

## WRITING EXERCISES

### Exercise One:

Use an interaction with food (holiday meal, romantic date, break up, fast-food as you drive, national chicken wing festival, allergic reaction, choking, milk out the nose, whatever) to drive a personal narrative. Take advantage of the visceral elements of food as you drive your narrative. Basically, use food to tell a story! Remember that food is not just seen and tasted. It also has texture, scents, and even makes noises.

### Exercise Two:

At one point, in his short story "A Small Good Thing," Raymond Carver shows two parent's grief after losing their only child by illustrating that father's actions. Here is an excerpted section:

In a little while, Howard got up and began moving aimlessly around the room with the box, not putting anything into it, but collecting some things together on the floor at one end of the sofa. ...Howard put the box down and brought coffee into the living room. Later, Ann made calls to relatives. After each call had been placed and the party had answered, Ann would blurt out a few words and cry for a minute. ...Howard took the box out to the garage, where he saw the child's bicycle. He dropped the box and sat down on the pavement beside the bicycle. He took hold of the bicycle awkwardly so that it leaned against his chest. He held it, the rubber pedal sticking into his chest. He gave the wheel a turn.

This is the classic "show, don't tell." Rather than saying Howard was sad, or grief-stricken, or in denial, or in a daze, or whatever Howard might have been, Raymond Carver shows us his actions, and with those images he gives us a greater understanding of Howard's emotional state.

Pick an emotionally charged moment in your life or a moment you witnessed in another person's life, and use those same "show, don't tell" skills. Happy, sad, more complicated than either of those—pick anything from the wide range of emotion that humans experience. Be illustrative.

### Essay Three:

The definition of a character study is a work of fiction in which the delineation of the central character's personality is more important than the plot itself. Develop a character study about someone you know. Pick moments and details that help develop the "character" in a vivid way. What are the tendencies that define this person? The actions and mannerisms? What does your reader need to understand this person.

### Exercise Four:

Isolate a place from your childhood or adult life and write about. Try to use setting to drive the story. Perhaps make it a character.

### Exercise Five:

Write an essay in the form of a letter in which you confess something. Maybe it's light and funny, maybe dark and grim. Remember what Hunter S. Thompson said, though: *If I'd written all the truth I knew for the past ten years, about 600 people—including me—would be rotting in prison cells... Absolute truth is a very rare and dangerous commodity...*

### Exercise Six:

Get graphic. Even if you are a rotten artist, use your own drawings or visual art as accompaniment to your essay. If you want, make a pop up book. If you don't, do something else. Just have fun with this, especially if you aren't an artist. You've done a great job so far this term, so use this exercise as a place to play.

## **ESSAYS**

The only criteria for your two major essays is that they be creative nonfiction and that they fit the assigned page count. You may choose to use and expand upon one of your writing exercises and turn it into an essay, or you may choose to do something entirely different. Just keep it creative, keep it nonfiction, and keep it within the word counts.

Also please double-space, carefully proofread, and include a title.

## **DISABILITY SERVICES**

Students who may need accommodations due to documented disabilities, who have medical information which the instructor should know, or who need special arrangements in an emergency, should speak me during the first week of class. If you have not accessed services and think you may need them, please contact Disability Services, 917-4789. If you have documented your disability, remember that you must complete a Request for Accommodations form every term in order to receive accommodations.

## **CAMPUS RESOURCES**

Please familiarize yourself with the many campus resources offered to LBCC students. The Albany Campus Library (917.4628) is one such resource. Writing Helps (a cooperative writing service including ESOL, Writing Center, Writing and Study Skills Labs and more) and LBCC's Writing Center or Online Writing Lab (OWL) assistants, tutors, and peer tutors are also great resources. Benton Center, too, has a tremendous amount of resources that will help you in math, writing, and many other courses. Please ask for more information.