

**Carleton University
Fall 2021
Department of English**

**ENGL 2915 A: Writing Creative Non-fiction
Prerequisites: permission of the instructor.**

**Thursdays / 6:05-8:55 p.m.
Location: Tory Building, 202
Format: In-person**

**Instructor: John Coleman
Email: johncoleman3@cmail.carleton.ca
Office:
Office Hours: On Zoom by appointment**

I. Course description: This course familiarizes students with creative approaches to writing non-fiction. Students will learn strategies for writing pieces of different lengths and forms. We will explore how to use literary storytelling techniques in our writing, as well as how our own personal experiences and perspectives can be represented in creative non-fiction. We will read, discuss and write about exemplary forms of creative non-fiction, and texts about writing, by writers from a variety of backgrounds and perspectives. Students will also consider critical debates about what it can be like to be a writer in contemporary multicultural society. Our weekly workshops will include a variety of interactive, manageable writing prompts. Students will also complete larger writing assignments throughout the term.

II. Prerequisites: None.

III. Learning Outcomes:

The purpose of this course is for students to:

- Be introduced to creative approaches to writing non-fiction
- Practice and develop strategies for writing and revising pieces of creative non-fiction of different forms and lengths
- Develop skills in workshoping, brainstorming, drafting and editing
- Be introduced to recent critical debates about what it can be like to be a writer in multicultural society

IV. Texts:

All required texts will be available either on Ares (Carleton's online course reserve system), or as a link posted on Brightspace. The scheduled dates for all of our required texts are listed on the course calendar below.

V. Course calendar:

Date	Readings and Activities	Due
September 9	Introduction to the course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course Outline 	
September 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop Lee Gutkind, “Creative nonfiction: immersion in real life creates some of our most memorable writing” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prompt 1
September 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop Philip Lopate, “The Made-Up Self: On the Difficulty of Turning Oneself into a Character” 106-109 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Post 1 Prompt 2
September 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop Salman Rushdie, “Imaginary Homelands” (pages 9-13) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing Assignment 1 Prompt 3
October 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop Anita Sethi, “How We Are Haunted” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prompt 4
October 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop Jan Winburn, “Finding Good Topics: An Editor’s Questions” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prompt 5
October 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop Gay Talese, “Delving into Private Lives” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing Assignment 2 Reply 1 Prompt 6
October 25-29	Fall Break. No classes.	
November 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop Philip Lopate, “Facts Have Implications: or, Is Nonfiction Really Fiction?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Post 2 Prompt 7
November 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop Will Storr, “Creating a World” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prompt 8
November 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop Researching for the creative writer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing Assignment 3 Prompt 9
November 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop Fran Lebowitz 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading Response Prompt 10
December 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Project Workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reply 2
December 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course Wrap-Up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Project

⇒ **Note:** The **Readings and Activities** and **Due** sections of the course calendar list what you should read and submit for each class:

- Readings are listed by author and/or title. These are expected to be read by class on their scheduled date.
- Please note that additional reading materials, such as lecture slides, videos, factsheets or review materials, may be posted on Brightspace throughout the course.

VI. Evaluation:

General criteria that influence grading: *All work completed for this course will receive a numerical grade that corresponds to the guidelines set out by the Faculty of Arts:*

90-100 – A+
85-89 – A
80-84 – A-
77-79 – B+
73-76 – B
70-72 – B-
67-69 – C+
63-66 – C
60-62 – C-
57-59 – D+
53-56 – D
50-52 – D-
Below 50 – F.

All term work will be subject to the following general evaluation criteria:

Each student is encouraged to genuinely engage with course material by expressing clear ideas about assigned readings, lecture material and class discussions.

Furthermore, it is paramount for students to display a genuine attempt at:

- (a) developing writing and comprehension skills
- (b) genuine, critical engagement with course material

Aside from the discussion posts and replies, all written assignments designated under “Term Work” will be subject to the following evaluative criteria in addition to any particular criteria stated in each assignment’s outline:

- 1) Written assignments are to be presented in MLA citation style and format. All references must be cited parenthetically in your prose. Written assignments should be formatted following MLA style (typed, double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman Font, numbered

pages, identification info at top left-hand corner of page one). Students are encouraged to consult the Eighth Edition of the *MLA Handbook*.

- 2) Where applicable, significant consideration will be paid to:
 - (a) accuracy in identifying texts, authors and context
 - (b) effective expression and communication of ideas through proper grammar, spelling, punctuation and sentence and paragraph structure

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Term Work:

- **Reading Response, 10% of final grade:**

Students will write a reading response based on a text and topic assigned by the instructor. The assignment instructions will be provided in advance of the due date.

⇒ **Due date:** November 25

- **3 Writing Assignments, 10% each for a total of 30% of the final grade:**

Students will submit a creative piece in response to each prompt, as well as a brief reflection on specific writing principles they have learned and employed in the piece. Students will get feedback from the instructor on their pieces, and they will select from these pieces to revise and submit in their final project. Further explanation will be provided in the assignment instructions at the beginning of the term.

⇒ **Due dates:**

- Writing Assignment 1: September 30
- Writing Assignment 2: October 21
- Writing Assignment 3: November 18

- **Workshop Attendance, Participation, and Assignments, 20% of the final grade:**

Students are required to attend a minimum of 8 of our 11 scheduled workshops (September 16-December 2). In each workshop, students will be given a writing prompt. Each student is required to submit a response for the prompts given in the workshops they attend. These will be brief, engaging responses designed to get students thinking about the pieces they are working on.

- **2 Discussion Posts and 2 Replies, 20% of final grade:**

- Students will post 2 discussion posts on a discussion forum by the dates noted on the course calendar. Students will post 2 replies to other students' discussion posts – each reply will be on a different discussion forum.
⇒ **The first reply is due by October 18, and the second reply is due by December 10.**
- Each post and reply is worth 5% of the final grade.
- Further explanation will be provided in the assignment instructions.

- **Final Project, due August 10 at 11:59 p.m., 20% of the final grade:**

Students will submit a final project consisting of a selection of revised writing assignments they have written throughout the term, and a reflection on how the experience of taking part in our workshops and class activities has helped them develop as a writer. Further explanation will be provided in the assignment instructions in advance of the due date.

Policy on submitting assignments: All term work is due in digital format on Brightspace on the date and time noted on the course calendar. Submission portals where students can submit assignments will be made available on Brightspace. Assignment instructions will specify the method of submission for each assignment; this will include typing directly in an assignment portal on Brightspace, uploading an assignment as a Microsoft Word .docx file to an assignment portal on Brightspace, or another method to be specified by the instructor. Submission of an assignment outside of these specifications will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor.

Late Assignment Policy: After its due date, each late assignment will be docked 2% per day up until one week after the due date, after which it will receive a grade of zero.

Policy on Extensions: Aside from for the Final Project, extensions for term work will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If a student is aware in advance that an extension will be needed, they must provide the instructor with a valid reason at least one week before the due date, and a new due date may be negotiated.

In emergency circumstances within one week of the due date, the instructor must be made aware of the situation and valid reasons necessitating an extension immediately, and a new due date may be negotiated.

For late assignments to be accepted without being docked late marks, official documentation noting the student's inability to attend class and/or complete school work, such as a doctor's note or documentation of a personal emergency, may be necessary.

Absolutely no extensions will be provided for the Final Project.

Policy on lost assignments: If a student claims to have submitted an assignment and the instructor has not received the assignment, the student must email the instructor an electronic version of the assignment within two hours of email request by the instructor.

Policy on returning graded assignments: The instructor will strive to return all graded assignments within two weeks of the due date. The primary methods of returning graded

assignments will be via the assignment portal on Brightspace with feedback and/or the grade posted.

Policy on communicating with the instructor: The instructor will be available by appointment for office hours on Zoom. Outside of office hours, the instructor can be contacted by email; from Monday to Friday, the instructor will strive to reply to emails within 24 hours; emails received on weekends or holidays will be replied to on the following weekday that the university is open.

Statement on Accessibility: A variety of measures will be made to make our course materials accessible. To request additional measures or alternate assignment submission formats, please contact the instructor at johncoleman3@cunet.carleton.ca.

PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” According to the Department examples of plagiarism include the following:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else;
- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.

Plagiarism is a form of intellectual theft. It is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include failure of the assignment, failure of the entire course, or suspension from a program. For more information please go to: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

Special Information Regarding Fall 2021 Pandemic Measures

All members of the Carleton community are required to follow COVID-19 prevention measures and all mandatory public health requirements (e.g. wearing a mask, physical distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory and cough etiquette) and **mandatory self-screening** prior to coming to campus daily.

If you feel ill or exhibit COVID-19 symptoms while on campus or in class, please leave campus immediately, self-isolate, and complete the mandatory [symptom reporting tool](#). For purposes of contact tracing, attendance will be recorded in all classes and labs. Participants can check in using posted QR codes through the cuScreen platform where provided. Students who do not have a smartphone will be required to complete a paper process as indicated on the [COVID-19 website](#).

All members of the Carleton community are required to follow guidelines regarding safe movement and seating on campus (e.g. directional arrows, designated entrances and exits, designated seats that maintain physical distancing). In order to avoid congestion, allow all previous occupants to fully vacate a classroom before entering. No food or drinks are permitted in any classrooms or labs.

For the most recent information about Carleton's COVID-19 response and required measures, please see the [University's COVID-19 webpage](#) and review the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#). Should you have additional questions after reviewing, please contact covidinfo@carleton.ca

Please note that failure to comply with University policies and mandatory public health requirements, and endangering the safety of others are considered misconduct under the [Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy](#). Failure to comply with Carleton's COVID-19 procedures may lead to supplementary action involving Campus Safety and/or Student Affairs.

Requests for Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For accommodation regarding a formally-scheduled final exam, you must complete the [Pregnancy Accommodation Form](#).

Religious obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details [click here](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>