

COURSE SYLLABUS



COURSE TITLE: CRWR-152-Introduction to Creative Nonfiction

CLASS SECTION: D01

TERM: 2025W

COURSE CREDITS: 3

DELIVERY METHOD(S): Online asynchronous

Camosun College respectfully acknowledges that our campuses are situated on the territories of the Ləkʷəŋən (Songhees and Kosapsum) and WSÁNEĆ peoples. We honour their knowledge and welcome to all students who seek education here.

INSTRUCTOR DETAILS

NAME: Dr. Heidi Tiedemann Darroch

EMAIL: darrochh@camosun.ca

OFFICE: P235

HOURS: Monday 10-11AM (Zoom) and Tuesday 5-6PM (in person), or by appointment

As your course instructor, I endeavour to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me. Camosun College is committed to identifying and removing institutional and social barriers that prevent access and impede success.

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

This course offers students an opportunity to develop their skills in writing major creative nonfiction forms, such as features, memoir, travel, personal essay, history, and social analysis. Students will write creative nonfiction in a style that is as accurate and informative as reportage, yet as provocative and dramatic as fiction.

PREREQUISITE(S): One of:

C+ in English 12

C in Camosun Alternative

CO-REQUISITE(S):

EQUIVALENCIES: ENGL 152

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES / OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

- Produce clear and interesting writing for a general audience.
- Produce creative non-fiction writing at a beginner level.
- Critically analyze the creative nonfiction process.
- Produce essays and articles that explore the world in a personal and creative way.
- Read, analyze, and discuss published works of creative nonfiction.
- Evaluate the role of the audience in the development of style and content.
- Conduct interviews and use electronic tools in order to explore various topics.
- Submit a query for a manuscript to a publisher.

REQUIRED MATERIALS & RECOMMENDED PREPARATION / INFORMATION

Required Text:

Jack Hart, *Storycraft: The Complete Guide to Writing Narrative Nonfiction*, 2nd edition, University of Chicago Press, 2021. (available at the Lansdowne campus bookstore)

Optional Expense:

Ticket/price of admission to a cultural or sporting event (there will also be free options available).

Online-access (free) weekly readings: short features, personal, and creative essays, as well as excerpts from long-form creative nonfiction by authors who have diverse backgrounds and who work in a range of creative nonfiction forms, including memoir, true crime, the braided essay, the hermit crab essay, and arts journalism.

As this is an online asynchronous class, you do not need to be on campus or available at any particular time, with the exception of our final week (and even then, a recorded presentation option is available). You do, however, need reliable online access to read many of the course materials, including class members' work, and to share your own work.

For the course interviewing tasks, access to functional sound recording equipment will be needed, and your phone's voice recorder is likely to be adequate.

COURSE SCHEDULE, TOPICS, AND ASSOCIATED PREPARATION / ACTIVITY / EVALUATION

The following schedule and course components are subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

WEEK or DATE RANGE	ACTIVITY or TOPIC	TASKS AND ASSIGNMENTS
January 6-12 Week 1	Introduction to Creative Nonfiction: Forms and Origins Introduction to the writing workshop as theory and practice <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to the Course (D2L Week 1 Lecture)	Discussion Post 1: Defining the genre (due Wednesday) Learning Activity (LA) 1: Reverse

WEEK or DATE RANGE	ACTIVITY or TOPIC	TASKS AND ASSIGNMENTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robert Julius, "A Reverse Chronology of the Body in Motion" What Is "Creative Nonfiction"?: Ep. 3 of Nonfiction Podcast by David Leach and Deborah Campbell OR Lee Gutkind, "What Exactly Is Creative Nonfiction?" Hart, <i>Storycraft</i>, Ch. 1 Story 	chronology on an autobiographical theme (due Friday)
January 13-19 Week 2	UNIT ONE MEMOIR AND THE PERSONAL ESSAY Memoir: Ethics and Aesthetics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing in a Personal Mode: The Memoir and the Essay (D2L Week 2 Video Lecture) <i>Storycraft</i>, Ch. 5 Character Zadie Smith, "The Fall" (D2L library link) Ann Patchett, excerpt from Truth & Beauty (Ch. 1) Suellen Grealy, "Hijacked by Grief" <i>Storycraft</i>, Ch. 2 Structure 	Discussion Post 2: Writing about family and friends (without losing them) LA 2: Character sketch
January 20-26 Week 3	Writing about Difficult Topics Content Warning: the readings this week and next address challenging topics. Please select the ones that are appropriate for you; feel free to reach out for support. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing and Reading Trauma (D2L Week 3 Lecture) Dylan Landis, "Going Cold: Writing Emotion, the Earley Scale, and the Brilliance of Edwidge Danticat" (CW: bodily violation) <i>Storycraft</i>, Ch. 8 Dialogue Revision Checklist (D2L) Please select two to read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desmond Cole, "The Skin I'm In" (CW: anti-Black racism) Antonio Michael Downing, excerpt from Saga Boy: My Life of Blackness and Becoming Alicia Elliott, "A Mind Spread Out on the Ground" (CW: depression and anti-Indigenous racism) Daniel Scott Tysdal, "How TIFF Helped Save My Life" (CW: depression and suicidal ideation) 	Assignment 1 Draft DUE January 24th: Short Critical Essay OR Book Review (Peer Feedback DUE January 26^h)
January 27-February 2 Week 4	The Essay and Speculative Memoir <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leslie Jamieson, "How to Write a Personal Essay" Randon Billings Noble, "Consider the Platypus: Four Forms—Maybe—of the Lyric Essay" 	ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE JANUARY 31 Discussion Post 3: Analyzing memoir, writing about

WEEK or DATE RANGE	ACTIVITY or TOPIC	TASKS AND ASSIGNMENTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why Adding Monsters and Fairies to a Memoir Can Make It Even More Real <p>Please select one additional text of your choice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leslie Jamieson, "The Empathy Exams" (CW: abortion and medical exams) Lydia Yuknavitch, "Woven" (CW: homophobic violence) Carmen Maria Machado, excerpt from In the Dream House (CW: intimate partner violence) 	<p>craft, OR progress report</p> <p>Learning Activity 3: Hermit crab or braided essay vignette</p>
February 3-9 Week 5	<p>The Lyric Essay (continued): Voice and Point of View</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Storycraft</i>, Ch. 3 Point of View <i>Storycraft</i>, Ch. 4 Voice and Style Laurie Easter, "Searching for Gwen" (CW: addiction) Brenda Miller, "We Regret to Inform You" 	<p>Assignment 2: Personal/Lyric Essay</p> <p>DRAFT DUE February 9</p>
February 10-16 Week 6	<p>UNIT TWO: THE FEATURE AND JOURNALISM</p> <p>Reporting and Interviewing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Storycraft</i>, Ch. 7 Action <i>Storycraft</i> Ch. 10 Reporting Interviewing: Episode 5 of Nonfiction Podcast by David Leach and Deborah Campbell <p>Please read both, if time permits, or select one:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tanya Talaga, Excerpt from Seven Fallen Feathers: "The Death of Kyle Morrisseau" (CW: violence) Duncan McCue, "On Ethics and Indigenous Representation in the Media" 	<p>ASSIGNMENT 2 Peer Feedback DUE February 12</p> <p>Assignment 2 DUE February 18</p>
February 17-23	READING WEEK	<p>Discussion Post 4: Reporting on Indigenous issues due February 23</p>
February 24-March 2 Week 7	<p>Writing to Persuade and Influence: From the Op-Ed Page, to New and Social Media</p> <p>Select one effective example of persuasive writing of your choice, from a print, podcast, or social media format; you will be analyzing its use of the rhetorical appeals (logos, ethos, and pathos) in Discussion Post 5.</p>	<p>Learning Activity 4: Interview or opinion piece</p> <p>Discussion Post 5: Rhetorical appeals</p>

WEEK or DATE RANGE	ACTIVITY or TOPIC	TASKS AND ASSIGNMENTS
March 3-9 Week 8	Cultural Journalism Site visit: Art Gallery of Greater Victoria or Legacy Art Gallery ; Chinese Canadian Museum or Royal B.C. Museum (free on Family Day, the Monday of Reading Week); or theatre, dance, music or other live (not recorded) performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Artful Crimes” by Joshua Knelman • “Can Choreography Help Us Understand the Refugee Crisis?” By Martha Schabas 	Learning Activity 5: Reporting on site visit
March 10-16 Week 9	UNIT THREE: WRITE WHAT YOU LOVE Sports, Music, and Food Writing Select two : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Singer, “Watching Baseball with Roger Angell” • Michael Lewis, “The No-Stats All-Star” (basketball; request link from your instructor) • Kyo Maclear, “Singing in December” • Jen Lin-Liu, excerpt from On the Noodle Road 	Proposal meetings with the instructor Discussion Post 6: Choice of sports, hobby, arts, travel, or food writing
March 17-23 Week 10	True Crime All of the readings this week depict violent criminal acts. If this material is not appropriate for you, please select two readings from previous weeks that you have not yet completed. The Discussion Post will focus on the ethics of writing true crime; references to texts are not required. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It May Be Entertaining and Thrilling, But Is True Crime Ever Ethical?” by Amanda Knox Select one additional work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excerpt from Under the Bridge by Rebecca Godfrey (CW: assault and murder) • Excerpt from In Cold Blood by Truman Capote • A true crime podcast of your choice 	Discussion Post 7: The ethics of true crime writing and podcasting
March 24-30 Week 11	Travel and Nature/Science Writing Select two : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Vaillant, excerpt from <i>Fire Weather</i>, “When the Fire Came for Fort Murray” • Annie Dillard, “Total Eclipse” 	Discussion Post 8: Using imagery, metaphor, and symbolism

WEEK or DATE RANGE	ACTIVITY or TOPIC	TASKS AND ASSIGNMENTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> David Foster Wallace, "Consider the Lobster" 	
March 31-April 6 Week 12	<p>The Literary Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creative Nonfiction Contests (D2L) Malahat Review Creative Nonfiction Contest submission guidelines CBC Nonfiction Prize submission guidelines <i>Globe & Mail's</i> First Person submission guidelines "Writing a Query Letter: Nonfiction and Memoir" by Jane Friedman <p>Workshop Week for the Final Project</p>	<p>Draft of Assignment 3: Final Project DUE April 2 for Workshopping</p> <p>Peer Feedback DUE April 4</p>
April 7-12 Week 13	Final Project Presentations: Tuesday or Thursday	Final Project DUE April 11

ACCOMMODATION

Students registered with the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) who complete quizzes, tests, and exams with academic accommodations have booking procedures and deadlines with CAL where advanced notice is required. Deadlines can be reviewed on the [CAL exams page](https://camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/accessible-learning/academic-accommodations-exams). <https://camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/accessible-learning/academic-accommodations-exams>

EVALUATION OF LEARNING

DESCRIPTION	WEIGHTING
Workshops: Sharing drafts and responding to peers (5% for each assignment x 3: 15%)	15%
Learning Activities (minimum of 4 x 5%, including LA 1 & LA 2); grade based on timely posting and adherence to rubric	20%
Discussion Posts (8): Responses to readings and course topics; grade based on timely posting, thoughtful and carefully edited writing, and constructive peer responses	15%
Assignment 1: Short Critical Essay or Book Review (700-800 words)	10%
Assignment 2: Personal or Lyric Essay (1000-1200 Words)	15%
Assignment 3: Final Project (1500-2000 words):	25%

DESCRIPTION	WEIGHTING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposal (meeting with the instructor or written proposal: 3%) and presentation (2%): 5% Final Version: 20% 	
<p>If you have a concern about a grade you have received for an evaluation, please come and see me as soon as possible. Refer to the Grade Review and Appeals policy for more information.</p> <p>https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-1.14.pdf</p>	<p>TOTAL</p> <p>100%</p>

COURSE GUIDELINES & EXPECTATIONS

Welcome to CRWR 152! I look forward to working with all of you this term.

(a) What you can expect from me: an inclusive and respectful learning environment that supports diverse needs:

- I will offer a respectful response to the ideas you express verbally and in writing.
- I will strive to offer learning resources that are productive, interesting, and useful.
- I will supply feedback to help you develop your academic reading, writing, and research proficiency.
- I will be accessible via email to answer brief questions or to set up appointments; expect a response within 24 hours Monday to Friday.
- I will meet with you to discuss your work: in-person and online conversation are always welcome.
- I welcome the participation of students with diverse learning needs. Please let me know how I can help support your learning.

(b) I am seeking your active participation and respectful engagement through your:

- Timely and consistent participation online;
- Thorough preparation: please complete readings in advance of each week's discussions; be prepared to discuss the works and topics with enthusiasm and rigour;
- Engagement in course activities, including discussion, writing, editing, and peer review;
- Willingness to be open to diverse opinions and views and to respond thoughtfully.

Academic integrity:

- Creative and academic writers are expected to present original work and to be scrupulous in attributing credit for any ideas and quotations that are drawn from research sources. We will review Camosun's policies on academic integrity in class and we will review how to select, integrate, and cite your sources. You are always welcome to check with me if you have questions about how to ensure that you are using sources appropriately.
- We will also discuss the appropriate use of generative AI in creative and academic writing; there are challenges with the ethics and accuracy of the current iteration, and while there are instances where it's a useful tool, your assignments must be **composed and edited entirely by you**; with

the exception of the Writing Centre and the use of computer spelling/grammar checks (which can be faulty), outside assistance is not permitted.

Assignment submission and completion; late and missing assignments:

- Assignments are to be posted (on Discussions) or submitted online (for graded Assignments) by midnight on the due date through our class D2L site. I will review with you how to upload your work and access your feedback files.
- The Learning Activities and Discussion Posts **must** be posted online by the due date: they are part of our class-wide learning process and timely posting is needed so that your class members can respond and engage with your ideas. In the event of illness or other extenuating circumstances, you may ask to submit your work directly to the instructor, but forums will not be re-opened for late participation, because this impedes the flow of the course for your classmates.
- Late **Major assignments** will be penalized at the rate of 5% per day and will not be accepted after one week unless there are serious extenuating circumstances, such as illness or emergency.
- All course work must be completed by the final day of the term in order to receive credit.
- To complete the course, you must submit all of the assignments worth 10% or more.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

Enrolment at Camosun assumes that the student will become a responsible member of the College community. As such, each student will display a positive work ethic, assist in the preservation of College property, and assume responsibility for their education by researching academic requirements and policies; demonstrating courtesy and respect toward others; and respecting expectations concerning attendance, assignments, deadlines, and appointments.

SUPPORTS AND SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

Camosun College offers a number of services to help you succeed in and out of the classroom. For a detailed overview of the supports and services visit camosun.ca/services.

Support Service	Website
Academic Advising	camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/academic-advising
Accessible Learning	camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/accessible-learning
Counselling	camosun.ca/services/health-and-wellness/counselling-centre
Career Services	camosun.ca/services/co-operative-education-and-career-services
Financial Aid and Awards	camosun.ca/registration-records/financial-aid-awards
Help Centres (Math/English/Science)	camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/help-centres
Indigenous Student Support	camosun.ca/programs-courses/iecc/indigenous-student-services

Support Service	Website
International Student Support	camosun.ca/international
Learning Skills	camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/help-centres/writing-centre-learning-skills
Library	camosun.ca/services/library
Office of Student Support	camosun.ca/services/office-student-support
Ombudsperson	camosun.ca/services/ombudsperson
Registration	camosun.ca/registration-records/registration
Technology Support	camosun.ca/services/its
Writing Centre	camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/help-centres/writing-centre-learning-skills

If you have a mental health concern, please contact Counselling to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. Counselling sessions are available at both campuses during business hours. If you need urgent support after-hours, please contact the Vancouver Island Crisis Line at 1-888-494-3888 or call 911.

COLLEGE-WIDE POLICIES, PROCEDURES, REQUIREMENTS, AND STANDARDS

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to comply with all College policy regarding academic integrity; which is about honest and ethical behaviour in your education journey. The following guide is designed to help you understand your responsibilities: <https://camosun.libguides.com/academicintegrity/welcome>
Please visit <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-1.13.pdf> for Camosun's Academic Integrity policy and details for addressing and resolving matters of academic misconduct.

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Camosun College is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging appropriate academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a documented disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) and register as early as possible. Please visit the CAL website for more information about the process of registering with CAL, including important deadlines: <https://camosun.ca/cal>

Academic Progress

Please visit <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2023-02/e-1.1.pdf> for further details on how Camosun College monitors students' academic progress and what steps can be taken if a student is at risk of not meeting the College's academic progress standards.

Course Withdrawals Policy

Please visit <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-2.2.pdf> for further details about course withdrawals. For deadline for fees, course drop dates, and tuition refund, please visit <https://camosun.ca/registration-records/tuition-fees#deadlines>.

Grading Policy

Please visit <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-1.5.pdf> for further details about grading.

Grade Review and Appeals

Please visit <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-1.14.pdf> for policy relating to requests for review and appeal of grades.

Medical / Compassionate Withdrawals

Students who are incapacitated and unable to complete or succeed in their studies by virtue of serious and demonstrated exceptional circumstances may be eligible for a medical/compassionate withdrawal (see [Medical/Compassionate Withdrawals policy](#)). Please visit <https://camosun.ca/services/forms#medical> to learn more about the process involved in a medical/compassionate withdrawal.

Sexual Violence

Camosun is committed to creating a campus culture of safety, respect, and consent. Camosun's Office of Student Support is responsible for offering support to students impacted by sexual violence. Regardless of when or where the sexual violence occurred, students can access support at Camosun. The Office of Student Support will make sure students have a safe and private place to talk and will help them understand what supports are available and their options for next steps. The Office of Student Support respects a student's right to choose what is right for them. For more information see Camosun's Sexualized Violence Policy: <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-2.9.pdf> and camosun.ca/services/sexual-violence-support-and-education.

To contact the Office of Student Support: oss@camosun.ca or by phone: 250-370-3046 or 250-370-3841.

Student Misconduct (Non-Academic)

Camosun College is committed to building the academic competency of all students, seeks to empower students to become agents of their own learning, and promotes academic belonging for everyone. Camosun also expects that all students to conduct themselves in a manner that contributes to a positive, supportive, and safe learning environment. Please review Camosun College's Student Misconduct Policy at <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-2.5.pdf> to understand the College's expectations of academic integrity and student behavioural conduct.

Looking for other policies?

The full suite of College policies and directives can be found here: <https://camosun.ca/about/camosun-college-policies-and-directives>

Changes to this Syllabus: Every effort has been made to ensure that information in this syllabus is accurate at the time of publication. The College reserves the right to change courses if it becomes necessary so that course content remains relevant. In such cases, the instructor will give the students clear and timely notice of the changes.

