

# Writing in the Primary Genre II

**Student:** Emily Carney  
**Faculty Member:** Brian Clements  
**Course Number:** WRT576-01  
**Semester and Year:** Spring 2017  
**Credit Hours:** 4

**Subtitle for Course:** Professional and Existential Perspectives in Poetry

**Course Description:** This semester will be used to expand on the student's current artistic position; that is, it won't place heavy focus on altering the nature of the student's poetry, but, more broadly, on the consolidation and distribution of said work, in addition to the generation of new pieces. What are the implications of being a poet in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century (see: Trump's America) and how do existential concerns both motivate and hinder the creative process? While these questions may not be explicitly expressed through the student's own work, production will certainly be grounded with these challenges in mind. In addition to the generation of new poems, the student will also work on existing essays on poetry and submit standing poetry for publication.

## Requirements:

- At least one new poem produced per week (a minimum of 15 poems in total).
- Revision or merging of essays from Fall 2016's Reading in Primary and GHCT courses; one completed essay due on the 3rd of each month (four revised in total). Essays will be submitted for publication once every two weeks to one of the following publications (submissions are not limited to this list):
  - *LA Review of Books*
  - *Boston Review*
  - *The Writer's Chronicle*
  - *Village Voice*
  - *Slate*
  - *LitHub*
- Student will read/research literary journals and compose a pyramid/tier classification system based on her own impressions and research evidence of journal quality, desirability, and reputation. The pyramid will have at least three tiers, and the top tier will have at least five journals, a second tier will have at least 10 journals, and a third tier will also have at least 10 journals. Student will employ the pyramid/tier system in her poetry submissions (starting at the top tier).
- At least one batch of poems submitted for publication once every two weeks.

## Evaluation:

The student's final grade will be determined by a holistic view of the student's progress, work ethic (including on-schedule completion of the work described in the syllabus), and "success" (accomplished revisions and generation of new pieces) over the duration of the semester. No one assignment will receive an individual grade, but new poems (15) will receive substantial feedback during a bi-weekly meeting with the instructor (or by email, when needed). Updates on publication submissions will also be reported to the instructor and discussed during these meetings.

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious academic offenses and will be treated as such in this course. Please familiarize yourself with the university's policy on plagiarism in your academic catalogue and/or student handbook. Plagiarism is the use of another writer's words or ideas without

acknowledgment of their source. The penalty for plagiarism will be course failure and will be reported to the appropriate Dean(s) and other university officials.

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### **Accommodations**

Any student who needs accommodations of any kind to complete this course may make arrangement through AccessAbility Services, <http://www.wcsu.edu/accessability/>, (203) 837-8225.

### **Interactions:**

- ✓ Student and instructor will meet every other week beginning the week of January 30 to discuss the student's progress.
- ✓ Student and instructor will also correspond by email, as needed.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

- The student will learn to better manage time spent on production and submission of new poetry.
- The student will acquire knowledge about the professional demands and benefits of maintaining a revision and publication schedule.
- The student will gain insight into overlying style/themes to be attributed to the student's upcoming thesis collection.
- The student will gain insight into the challenges of writing poetry in a culture that hates poetry.
- The student will gain experience producing literary essays for publication.

## Writing in the Primary Genre II

**Student:** Melissa Johnson

**Faculty Member:** Don Snyder

**Course Number:** WRT 576

**Semester and Year:** Spring 2017

**Credit Hours:** 4

**Subtitle for course:** Refining the practice of literary journalism/narrative nonfiction.

### Course description

In her first WPG course, the student wrote personal pieces that could be categorized more as creative nonfiction. This time, the student will dip into writing more about others, depending on story timeliness and availability, so that more of her pieces can be categorized as literary journalism. She will also submit personal reflections analyzing how the different techniques outlined in the course books may be applied to her own writing and story-gathering. In addition, the student will complete selected exercises in the craft books as part of her work to be evaluated by the instructor.

### Requirements

The student will submit three to five pages of original writing every other Monday starting on Feb. 6, and two to three pages summarizing lessons learned from the craft books the second Friday of the month (except for the first one on Jan. 27) for a total of at least 35 pages. The student will submit one re-written essay at the end of the semester in which she uses the professor's comments on one of her earlier drafts to draft a revision. The student's creative work will draw from the following story ideas:

### Submission schedule

Original writing: Feb. 6 and 20; March 6 and 20; April 3 and 17; May 1.

Reflection papers: Jan. 27, Feb. 10, March 10, April 14, May 12. These papers will use MLA formats and rules.

### Evaluation

The instructor will provide feedback on the following factors, based on his own success in the field: Has the student shown she is able to generate publishable material?

The student will be evaluated on the quality and timely submission of academic work. Revisions will be graded on their substantial changes and evident care in their development from an original draft. All submitted work should be proofread, spell-checked and thoroughly edited. Stories will be returned for rewrite if they do not display these qualities. Student will receive a midterm grade if desired and a final grade will be determined by averaging grades on all submissions.

Grades will be based on lack of mechanical problems with the manuscripts submitted, and clarity, precision, and originality of ideas presented.

The professor will return drafts within two weeks, offering his changes and comments via the Track Changes feature in Microsoft Word.

### **Reading list**

**Address in Jan. 27 reflection paper:** *The Art and Craft of Feature Writing* by William E. Blundell with reference to *The Fiddler in the Subway* (collection of pieces) by Gene Weingarten

**Address in Feb. 10 reflection paper:** *Writing Feature Stories: How to Research and Write Newspaper and Magazine Articles* by Matthew Ricketson with reference to *Missoula: Rape and the Justice System in a College Town* by Jon Krakauer

**Address in March 10 reflection paper:** *To Show and to Tell: The Craft of Literary Nonfiction* by Phillip Lopate with reference to *Ghettoside: A Story of Murder in America* by Jill Leovy

**Address in April 14 reflection paper:** *Good Prose: The Art of Nonfiction* by Tracy Kidder and Richard Todd with reference to *Is Paris Burning?* by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre

**Address in May 12 reflection paper:** *Writer's Digest Handbook of Magazine Article Writing* edited by Michelle Ruberg with reference to *The Best American Magazine Writing 2016* by Sid Holt and The American Society of Magazine Editors

Supplemental text: *Literary Journalism and the Aesthetics of Experience* by John C. Hartsock, "Profiles" series in *The New Yorker* magazine.

### **Interactions**

- Two weeks after each submission, the instructor will submit his feedback via email. The student will receive a midterm grade from her instructor if desired and a final grade at the end of the course.
- The instructor and student will communicate either via phone or email as needed.

### **Learning outcomes**

During this course, the student will:

- Become well-versed in the different techniques of literary journalism/narrative nonfiction and which to use to best showcase a subject.
- Strive to use intelligent vocabulary while keeping her writing crisp, clean, simple, and engaging.
- Seek and develop interesting stories that will capture the interest of a variety of readers.

### **Copy Editing & Drafts**

The MFA in Creative and Professional Writing is based on developing writers who are emerging into the world of publishing, professional communications, and education. Each course is a graduate level course with expectations of high quality. All work

submitted to this class will be free of copy editing issues including typos, incorrect word choice, grammatical errors, punctuation errors, and other erroneous oversights. In this course, work that is viewed by the instructor as “First” or “Rough Draft” will receive an incomplete. Students should revise and resubmit for a grade. You may rewrite as often as you would like. If work is not resubmitted, incomplete work will be converted to zeros at the final grading period.

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# Writing in the Primary Genre II

This second required course in the primary genre will further develop the writer's skills. Again, with the guidance of a faculty mentor, the student will research, develop, and write a customized project or projects for the course.

**Student:** Christina Kinsella

**Faculty Member:** Tim Weed

**Course Number:** WRT576-03

**Semester and Year:** Fall 2016

**Credit Hours:** 4

**Subtitle for Course:** **Writing the First Draft of a Suspense Thriller**

**Course Description:** This class will focus on planning, developing and writing a novel length work of fiction. The reading will support the writing by providing examples of novel structures, writing strategies, and theme development.

## Requirements:

New work will be produced every two weeks. At least twenty to thirty pages will be produced per submission, with the goal of having 50,000 words of new material by the end of the semester. The work will be emailed to the instructor and discussed via email. The reading list will support the writing. The student may utilize index cards to plan out scenes to aid in writing process. The instructor will provide practical critical feedback and advice on macro issues such as narrative structure and character arc; however no editing or revising will be done during this course; the student is to focus purely on producing new work and keeping the writing flowing.

## Evaluation:

The mid-term and final grade will be determined according to the student's progress on the draft as defined by the goals stated above, on the quality of the work including evidence of a solid underlying narrative structure, and on the student's demonstrated ability to incorporate forward-looking advice and lessons from her reading into the work in progress.

## Reading List:

*Descent* by Tim Johnston

*I'm Thinking of Ending Things* by Iain Reid

*Everything I Never Told You* by Celeste Ng

*The Night Sister* by Jennifer McMahon

## Schedule:

Submissions on Aug. 27, Sept. 10 and 24<sup>th</sup>, Oct. 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, Nov. 5<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, and December 3<sup>rd</sup>. The August 27<sup>th</sup> submission will also include a preliminary outline or synopsis and an initial take on a concept, premise, and theme.

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**Interactions:**

- The student and mentor will communicate via email and phone, as needed.

**Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of the semester, the student will have improved her skills as a fiction writer by virtue of the intensive and sustained practice required to produce a significant body of first-draft material; the consideration and internalization of regular, practical, critical feedback on that material; the intensive thought and analysis required to apply lessons from her reading to the craft struggles she faces in her own work; and the forward-looking application of the above learning to the work in progress.

## **Writing in the Primary Genre II**

**Student:** Daniel Trock

**Faculty Member:** Erik Ofgang

**Course Number:** WRT576

**Semester and Year:** Spring 2017

**Credit Hours:** 4

**Subtitle for Course:** Practical Application of Video Game Criticism

### **Course Description:**

This course is designed to teach the student the discipline of writing and the habits of the writing life. The student will develop ways to constantly record insight and observations about the subjects for his reviews. They will study their creative process with the intention of making it more deliberate. Through this course the student will become a practicing writer, meaning he will write every day, will set concrete goals for his writing, and will carry out a structured plan to reach those goals. For the purposes of this class, the student will focus on gaming blog entries and pitching pieces to publications.

### **Requirements:**

#### **1. Primary Writing Assignments**

Assignments will be every two weeks for a total of 8. Each assignment will be about 5-10 pages. Total work contributed over the course of the semester will be 50 pages. These assignments will consist of:

- A. Blog entries
- B. Reviews (pieces intended to be a part of the student's thesis are permitted)
- C. One interview based story of about 500 words or more. It will either be a profile on someone in the gaming industry or a story with several interviews focusing on a specific trend in the industry.
- D. Two sample pitches will be written and pitched. One will be pitched to a video game publication. The other will be pitched to a general audience publication but will focus on a video game related topic.
- E. One or two revision packets of 10 pages or more.

## **2. Reading Responses**

The student will respond to each reading assignment either through an informal written response or through a phone conversation with the instructor.

### **Evaluation:**

Each assignment will receive a detailed written response from the instructor. The student will receive a grade at the midterm and final. If the student's work is not A quality the instructor will make that clear during the semester.

### **Reading List:**

Weekly readings from online game culture publications Destructoid

(<https://www.destructoid.com/>) and GamesRadar (<http://www.gamesradar.com/>)

*Overlord (Volume 1)* by Kugane Maruyama

*Up Up Down Down Left Write: The Freelance Guide to Video Game Journalism* by Nathan Meunier

*Many Lives, Many Masters* by Brian L. Weiss

### **Communication:**

Primary form of communication for this class will be email. The student and instructor will communicate at least once every two weeks via email. In addition the student and mentor will converse twice over the phone, once near midterms and once near the end of the semester, to discuss progress.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

- The student will study and learn the conventions of video game and Film reviewing
- The student will learn to write a professional freelance query letter and how to identify publications to pitch story ideas to.
- The student will further develop his voice as a writer.

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