Course Title: Your Life, Your Lens: The Power of the Daily Memoir  
Course Code: CNF 71W  
Instructor: Monique Wentzel

**Course Summary:**

The practice of writing a brief daily personal essay, or micro-memoir, lies at the heart of our time together over the ten weeks of this course. This is the practice that students should be willing to commit to: writing around 200-500 words daily. We will take our inspiration from Ross Gay, author of *The Book of Delights*, who chooses an organizing theme for his brief daily essay. You, too, will choose a single theme that will focus your own daily writing. Each week there will be readings and other material meant to offer inspiration and writing tactics to try in your daily work. There will be an online Zoom discussion each Wednesday evening during which we’ll explore various craft topics, and at the end of each week students will post one of their daily essays for the class to read. Everyone will receive feedback from the instructor and other students on the writing they share, and will give feedback to fellow writers. Because the focus is on cultivating the daily writing habit, there is no formal workshop component to this course. The daily writing that you do does not have to cohere as a whole, or build to a longer piece, but you’ll likely find this class wonderfully generative, so prepare to be surprised!

*Please see course page for full description and additional details.*

**Grade Options and Requirements:**

- No Grade Requested (NGR)  
  - This is the default option. No work will be required; no credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided.
- Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)  
  - Credit will be determined by regular participation. Must turn in at least 50% of written assignments and participate in approximately 50% of discussions to receive credit.
- Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)  
  - Students must participate in at least 70% of weekly Zoom sessions and/or discussions, and you will be expected to respond to other students’ work, according to assigned groups. The primary factor determining letter grade will be consistency in completing and submitting your own writing.
Please Note: If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose either the Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.

Tentative Zoom Schedule*:

Wednesday, 6 PM, PDT

Tentative Weekly Outline:

Week 1: Choosing Your Theme/Developing the Daily Writing Habit
  Reading/Inspiration: The Situation And The Story, selections
  The Book of Delights, selections
  Ted Talk: BJ Fogg “Start With a Tiny Habit”

Week 2: A Brief History of Brief Nonfiction: What the Short Form Can Do
  Reading/Inspiration: The Situation And The Story, selections
  The Book of Delights, selections
  Ted Talk: Eve Bridburg “We’re All Writers Now”

Week 3: The Situation and the Story
  Reading/Inspiration: The Situation And The Story, selections
  The Book of Delights, selections
  Essays by Renee Gladman (online)

Week 4: Authentic Voice in Creative Nonfiction
  Reading/Inspiration: The Book of Delights, selections
  Brief Encounters, selections
  Interview with Dinty Moore (online)

Week 5: Writing In Scene
  Reading/Inspiration: Brief Encounters, selections
  Essay by Kent Kosack (online)

Week 6: The Objective Correletive and The Perfect Sensory Detail
  Reading/Inspiration: Brief Encounters, selections
  Chelsea Biondolillo (online essays)
Week 7: Embracing Brokenness: Vulnerability as a Way of Connecting With Audience
Reading/Inspiration: *Brief Encounters*, selections
Ted Talk by Brene Brown on vulnerability
Hannah Gadsby

Week 8: Lyricism in short writing
Reading/Inspiration: Essays by Maggie Nelson, Sun Yun Shin (online)

Week 9: Reflecting on How Your Theme Operates in Writing and Life
Reading/Inspiration: Onbeing Podcast with Ross Gay
Gratitude Project

Week 10: Publishing Short Creative Nonfiction, and What We Learned From our 10-Week Project
Reading/Inspiration: List of resources for submitting for publication

Required Texts:

- *The Situation and the Story, 1st Ed.* Vivian Gornik. 978-0374528584
- *The Book of Delights, 1st Ed.* Ross Gay. 978-1616207922
- *Brief Encounters.* Kitchen and Lenney. 978-0393350999