Course Title: The Process Is Everything  
Course Code:   CNF - 62W  
Instructor:  Dr. Joshua Rivkin

Course Summary:

In this class we’re going to get lost together. We’re going to think about the wild beginnings, frustrating middles, and surprising ends of creative nonfiction, in particular essays (the definition of which we will, hopefully, question). We’re going to focus on risk and surprise and all of the unexpected possibilities that come from thinking as much about the process of writing, as the end result. At the same time, everyone in the class will work on a longer essay to be workshopped. Shorter writing assignments along the way, including lyric and hybrid forms, as well as more traditional creative nonfiction styles and structures, will help lead to this longer piece. To inspire our work, we will practice close reading of great nonfiction books and essays by Rebecca Solnit, Elisa Gabbert, and many more. From generation to revision, this course will be a place to experiment and explore creative nonfiction in a supportive community.

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

Grade Options and Requirements:

This course may be taken for No Grade Required, Credit/No Credit or a Letter Grade.

Because most students take these courses for personal enrichment, most students who choose Credit/No Credit or Letter Grade do so to help motivate themselves to get the most out the class. Whichever option you choose, the most important things are for you to enjoy yourself, try new things, give back to your fellow writers, and be part of the writing community.

So, with this in mind:

Students who take the course for Credit/No Credit need to finish their feedback to other writers, their own workshop submission, and at least two short writing assignments to receive Credit.

To receive an A as a Letter Grade, students must: complete all Writing Assignments and feedback to other writers on time, and respond to at least one discussion points post each week. All other work is recommended, but will not be used for grading purposes. Grades will be reduced by a third of a letter (i.e. A to A-) for each short response or writing assignment that is missing and one full letter grade for missing the longer assignment.

You will never be graded on the perceived quality of your creative work, just your getting it done in a timely manner! You can always change your grading option up until the last day of class by going to the Continuing Studies webpage.
*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.

Texts
REQUIRED
- *Touchstone Anthology of Contemporary Creative Nonfiction*, ed. Lex Williford and Michael Martone
- *The Word Pretty*, Elisa Gabbert
- *Field Guide to Getting Lost*, Rebecca Solnit
- *The Situation and The Story*, Vivian Gornick

**Tentative Zoom Schedule:**
Our Zoom schedule will be decided based on input from the members of the class and will rotate so that all class members have the possibility to attend. That said, Zoom sessions for my previous classes have often been around Thursday around lunchtime (PDT). Some weeks there might be shorter 1:1 Zoom meetings in place of a larger group conversation.

**Tentative Weekly Outline:**

**Week One: Getting Lost**
Reading: Readings from Solnit, *Field Guide to Getting Lost*; “On Keeping a Notebook”, Joan Didion
Writing: Moment of Change, Introductions

**Week Two: Legitimate Dangers, or the Risks of Lyric**
Reading: “Pain Scale” Biss; “Mr. Green Jeans” Moore; “Search for Marvin Gardens” McPhee
Writing: Scene #1

**Week Three: Making Scenes, Making Stories**
Writing: Tell, Show, Tell

**Week Four: Angles of Seeing**
Reading: “On Mercy” Johnson; “You Owe Me” Arnold; Gornick, “The Situation and the Story”
Writing: Juggling Assignment

**Week Five: Obsession**
Reading: Readings from *The Word Pretty*, Gabbert
Writing: (Mis)Education, Scene #2

**Week Six: Rituals and Patterns**
Reading: from Solnit, *Field Guide to Getting Lost* and *The Word Pretty*, Gabbert
Writing: Lyric Structures

**Week Seven: The Power of the End.**
Reading: “No Man’s Land” Biss, TBD
Writing: Workshop Essays
Week Eight: Revision, Reseeing  
Reading: “Considering the Lobster” Wallace, TBD  
Writing: Workshop Essays  

Week Nine: Publishing or What Happens at the End  
Reading: “Return to Sender” Doty, TBD  
Writing: Workshop Essays  

Week Ten: How to Keep Going, How to Keep Experimenting  
Reading: Journal Essays #2  
Writing: Workshop Essays