Writing True: An Introduction to Creative Nonfiction (CNF 45)
Instructor: Kimberly Grey

“The universe is made of stories, not of atoms.” — Muriel Rukeyser

Welcome to Writing True: An Introduction to Creative Nonfiction!

Grading
You have three options:
1) 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.
2) Credit/No Credit (CR/NC): Your attendance will determine your grade.
3) Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass): Your attendance, participation, and submitted work will account for 100% of your grade. Over the course of the quarter you should plan to turn in one significant piece for workshop, complete all in-class exercises, and write short workshop letters to your peers.

*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.

Course Work
Reading: Over the span of 10 weeks, students will read one memoir and a variety of personal essay, portraits, and essays of place and participate in lively discussions on the assigned text. Students should expect to read approximately three-four essays or half of a memoir a week.

Writing
Students will have the opportunity to turn in one significant piece of writing in their preferred genre. New work will be generated by in-class exercises and assigned prompts. Writing will be done both inside and outside of the classroom, with class time also used for discussion and workshop. Students should come prepared each week with pen and paper (a notebook or journal is best) and the required texts. By the end of the course, students should have completed two short essays (3-4 pages) or one longer essay (8-10 pages).

Workshop
A writing workshop is meant to support one another’s efforts with positive and critical feedback. Students will gain knowledge about their own work by listening to feedback and through their own careful consideration of the work of others. On scheduled workshop weeks, students will post their new work to Canvas where the rest of the class can access and print them for workshop. Each student will receive written comments back from their peers and instructor.
Weekly Schedule

Week 1

Introductions to each other!
Introduction to Craft Elements
Experimenting with Language: Writing Exercises

Week 2
“The Body of Memory” pg. 3
*The Year of Magical Thinking* by Joan Didion (pg. 3-106)

Week 3
“Writing the Family” pg. 17
*The Year of Magical Thinking* by Joan Didion (pg. 106-227)

Week 4
“The Personal Essay” pg. 91
“Standing By” by David Sedaris, “Once More to the Lake,” by E.B. White, “The Death of the Moth” by Virginia Woolf

Week 5
“The Basics of Good Writing in Any Form” pg. 135
“Notes of a Native Son” by James Baldwin, “Pain Scale” Eula Biss, “Seeing by Annie Dillard

Week 6
“Goodbye to All That” by Joan Didion
CLASS WORKSHOP

Week 7
“Against Joie de Vivre” by Phillip Lopate
CLASS WORKSHOP

Week 8
The Ethics of Creative Writing (Handout)
CLASS WORKSHOP

Week 9
“The Writing Process and Revision” pg. 151
Revision and Re-Visioning Lecture and Exercises

Week 10
Final Class/ Celebratory Reading / Celebration!