Course Title: Writing the Memoir: The “Lighter” Moments  
Course Code: WSP 237  
Instructor: John W. Evans

Course Summary:

Learning Goals for the Course. My goal for your learning in this class is to do the following:

1. Review some literary writing strategies and concepts particular to writing personal essays about topics including everyday life, funny and romantic stories, family stories, and stories of travel.
2. Read and discuss examples from published authors who have written in this tradition.
3. Write 3-5 “starts” in this tradition: short essays or essay beginnings that you can take home and develop into stand-alone essays or book chapters for your own creative project.
4. Understand and practice some of the strategies those authors used.
5. Work-shop in small groups a short essay of 2-3 pages (700 words maximum).
6. Understand the range of traditions that inform the memoir genre.

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

Grade Options and Requirements:

• No Grade Requested (NGR)  
  o 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)  
  o Score will be determined by student attendance and participation.
• Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)  
  o Score will be determined by student attendance and participation.

*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.

Please contact the Stanford Continuing Studies office with any questions  
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continuingstudies@stanford.edu  
650-725-2650
Tentative Weekly Outline:

Day 1

[NOTE: Please come to our first class having completed the “First-Day Assignment,” which you can access via the enrollment confirmation email or through the course website.]

Morning (10am-12:30pm)
- Introductions (developed from “First Day Assignment”)
- Writing Toward and Away From the “Traditions” of Memoir
- Literary Writing Strategies and Concepts

Lunch (12:30pm-1:30pm)

Afternoon (1:30pm-4pm)
- Timed Writing Prompts
- Self-Reflection for Development of Writing Project

Homework
1. Write a 2-3 page (700 words maximum) short essay based on one of the prompts from the handout I distributed at the end of class.
2. Download and read the selected readings.

Day 2

Morning (10am-12:30pm)
- Small Group Short Essay Workshop.
- Discussion of Assigned Readings.

Lunch (12:30pm-1:30pm)

Afternoon (1:30pm-4pm).
- The “Rhetoric of Funny and Meaning” Across Genres and Media
- Making the “Plan” to Expand Your Short Essay into a Chapter, Long Essay, or Next Project.