Course Title: Creative Writing for People with Day Jobs
Course Code: EGL 128 W
Instructor: Rita Mae Reese

Course Summary:
Some things you might like to know about the course:

- Generally, the introduction should take no more than an hour or so to read.
- The reading from the Pushcart Anthology each week should also take about an hour each week.
- Writing assignments are designed to take anywhere from one to four hours each week. (The time required will depend largely upon you as a writer, and how much time you spend letting the project simmer in your mind before you begin. I find that if you think for a few minutes about your writing for a night or two before going to sleep, your unconscious mind will do a good part of the work for you and sitting down and writing will come much more easily. I would advise you to not spend more than four hours on individual assignments.)
- You will be working toward a portfolio piece to turn in at the end of the course. This should be a group of poems, an essay or a story that you’ve begun in response to an assignment and that you revise during our final weeks. This will be in the place of new assignments during our final two weeks.
- We will also be participating in class discussion via our online discussion board, which should take about an hour or so. This is an important part of the class and your voice matters. It is my goal to make the discussions engaging and fun and useful but I’ll need your help to make that happen.
- The reading load will lighten toward the end of the course in order for you to spend more time on writing.
- Finally, we’ll be having an office hour via video chat for one hour each week.

You will be spending approximately 8 hours per week completing all of the assignments, discussion and reading.

Required Books:
- *What It Is* by Lynda Barry
  ISBN 978-1897299-35-7
- *The Pushcart Prize XXXIX: Best of the Small Presses 2015 Edition* by Bill Henderson
  ISBN: 978-1-8888-8973-4
- A notebook (a composition book would be ideal)
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 Written work, as assigned by the instructor, will determine a student’s grade.

*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 Weekly Outline:

WEEK ONE: WHAT YOU NEED TO BE A WRITER
To Read This Week:
“The Fiction Writer” by Maribeth Fischer, pg. 187-207 (PP) 40 minutes
“Albion,” pg. 208-209 (PP) 5 minutes
“Say,” pg. 135-137, (PP) 6 minutes
from WII (TBA)
Total time:

Writing Assignment:
One of two options—a 500 word scene or a 1-2 page poem, plus writing in your notebook. Remember, start with anything you can make real.

WEEK TWO: IMAGES
To Read This Week:
“Breaking It,” (essay), p. 129-132 (PP) 6 minutes
“City Horse,” pg. 115 (PP) 5 minutes
from WII (TBA)
Watch Lynda Barry’s TED talk at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hmT4wLWksOw (15 minutes)
Total time:

Writing Assignment
1-3 pages developing an image

WEEK 3: ONE GOOD TURN AND CREATING LIVING CHARACTERS THROUGH EMOTIONS
To Read This Week:
“The Zen Thing,” p. 19-30 (PP) 22 minutes
“Blue,” p. 279-299 (PP) 40 minutes
Writing Assignment:
Writing emotion. Limit 750 words of prose or 2 pages of poetry.

WEEK 4: DIALOGUE
To Read This Week:
“Animals,” p. 310-332 (PP) 44 minutes
TBA from WII

Writing Assignment:
Dialogue with subtext and shifting power. Limit 500 words.

WEEK 5: POINT OF VIEW AND MAKING A SCENE
To Read This Week:
“Annie Radcliffe, You Are Loved,” p. 87-114 (PP) 54 minutes
(or “Madame Bovary’s Greyhound,” p. (PP)

Writing Assignment:
Write a scene. Limit 750 words.

WEEK 6: PERSONAL ESSAYS
To Read This Week:
‘The Last Days of the Baldock,” pg. 240-262 (PP) 44 minutes (journalistic)
or “My White House Days,” p. 140-157 (PP) 34 minutes (personal essay) or both from WII

Writing Assignment:
Limit 1000 words of prose.

WEEK 7: SHORT (and shorter) STORIES
To Read This Week:
“The Ice Committee,” p. 116-128 (PP) 24 minutes
from WII

WEEK 8: POETRY
To Read This Week:
“Monologue During a Blackout,” pg. 133-134 (PP)
“Why We Must Support PBS,” pg. 45-46 (PP)
“Pigmeat,” pg. 508-509 (PP)
“The Rape Joke,” pg. 533-537 (PP)

Writing Assignment:
1-2 pages of poetry.

Please contact the Stanford Continuing Studies office with any questions
365 Lasuen St., Stanford, CA 94305
continuingstudies@stanford.edu
650-725-2650
WEEK 9: DEVELOPING & REWRITING
To Read This Week:
“A Tab of Iron on the Tongue,” pg. 80-81
PDF of revision examples

Writing Assignment:
Write and revise your material for your portfolio.

WEEK 10: CONTINUING YOUR WRITING LIFE: WHAT TO DO NEXT
Writing Assignment:
Final portfolios due on the last day of class