Course Title: Writing Toward Mindfulness: A Creative Journey  
Course Code: EGL 57  
Instructor: Sara Michas-Martin  

Course Summary:  

Watering the Horse  
By Robert Bly  

How strange to think of giving up all ambition!  
Suddenly I see with such clear eyes  
The white flake of snow  
That has just fallen on the horse's mane!  

Dear Fellow Writer,  

Years ago I had the privilege of taking a course with the poet Jane Hirschfield. I had completed an MFA and was working intently on completing a collection. At one point, Jane pointed out that it seemed I was treating my writing like a heavy block I was dragging around... I might think of writing more like a colorful balloon, something lighter, buoyed by my own sense of play... something set out ahead of me, that I moved toward. This was an awakening. I had become so determined to be correct or “finished” that I was shutting down opportunities for inventiveness and greater depth. Moreover, somewhere along the way I had lost sight of the value and joy in just writing, a practice that brought me more fully into the world. Anne Lamott says it best: “It’s like discovering that while you thought you needed the tea ceremony for the caffeine, what you really needed was the tea ceremony. The act of writing turns out to be its own reward.” My role in this class is to help create a space for you to appreciate the ceremony!  

Please note this class emphasizes process or product, and also welcomes writers of all genres. Your role as a writer will be to tap the charged energy of the world around you as you fill pages of a notebook with musings, observations and writing experiments. Plan to share something from your writing excursions each week without the expectation of completing a polished draft. As a class participant your role will be to encourage the work of others as an engaged listener as we develop a conversation around what it means to “write awake.”  

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

Please contact the Stanford Continuing Studies office with any questions  
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650-725-2650
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)
  - Since this is only a 5-week course, to receive credit students may not miss more than one class.
  - Students receive credit by completing most of the readings and writing assignments, and must participate actively in class meeting.

- Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)
  - Since this is only a 5-week course, to receive credit students may not miss more than one class.
  - Students will never be evaluated on the quality or quantity of their creative work. To receive an A means completing all of the reading and writing assignments, and actively participating in in-class discussions.

*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 1: What is Mindful Writing?**
  {topics: setting intention, kicking the critic}

- **Week 2: Staying Open to Flow**
  {topics: the art of noticing, the breath, pacing}

- **Week 3: The Unfolding of Experience Moment to Moment**
  {topics: senses, image & abstraction, patience}

- **Week 4: Questioning & Contemplative Thinking**
  {topics: inquiry, risk & monkey mind}

- **Week 5: Compassion and “Otherness”**
  {topics: embracing “otherness,” dynamic knowing}