Course Title: Write a Novel in a Month: No Critics, No Fear
Course Code: NVL 02 W
Instructor: Scott Hutchins and Malena Watrous

Course Summary:

We will be using the crazy, fun, and spirited sprint of National Novel Writing Month (henceforth NaNoWriMo) as a structure for our writing in the first four weeks of this course. NaNoWriMo is a particular event with particular rules: notably that you must write 50,000 words by the end of the month (roughly the length of the Great Gatsby).

This is a typical rhythm to this process: first week is inspiration; second week is trepidation; third week is renewed exploration; fourth week is celebration. Some of you may have inspiration all the way through. Some may have trepidation for more than just week two. But the wonderful thing about this month is that you'll learn to work in and through all states of mind. The secret to a writing practice--the secret that we hope this month will underline for you--is that there is not some magical plane of enlightenment from which writing occurs. Writing happens when you write.

As the teacher and writer, Stephen Koch says: "The only way to begin is to begin, and to begin right now."

That will be our guiding phrase--today, tomorrow, and every day this month.

Course goals:

To build a daily writing practice
To capitalize on bursts of high inspiration
To learn to work through times of low inspiration
To learn to follow your writing's cues
To write 1667 words every day (on average) in the month of November
To finish a novel

*Please see course page for full description and additional details.
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)
  - Students must submit accountability checks 75% of the weekdays on weeks 1-4, for a total of at least 15 posts. This means posting the last paragraph of whatever they wrote that day in the discussion thread for that day, along with the word count for where they are in their novel.

Tentative Zoom Schedule*:

Thursday 12-1 pm, Pacific Time

*Please note that the Zoom schedule is subject to change.

Tentative Weekly Outline:

Week One: Inspiration

Assigned reading: “Write Here! Write Now!” in No Plot? No Problem!, pp 106-123
Daily Writing Prompts
Optional writing submission

Goals:
Reach 12,500 words by week’s end
Make your protagonist and antagonist meet at least once
Introduce a new character

Week Two: Trepidation
Daily Writing Prompts
Optional writing submission


Goals:
Reach 25,000 words by week’s end
Upset the apple cart: radically change the direction in the protagonist’s journey and/or life

Week Three: Renewed Exploration
Daily Writing Prompts
Optional writing submission


Goals:
Reach 32,500 words by week’s end
Deepen the protagonist’s problems
Get ready for the climactic scene

Week Four: Celebration
Daily Writing Prompts
Optional writing submission


Goals:
Reach 50,000 words by week’s end TK CHECK, aka FINISH!
Write the climax
Close every story, however quick and dirty.
Write the final scene.
Celebrate

Week Five: Reflection

Remainder of No Plot? No Problem!, pp 172-193

Goals:
Luxuriate in the success
Evaluate—what did you learn? What surprised you? What do you want to do with this manuscript?