

**SYLLABUS**  
**ENG 112: English Communications II**  
**Section 10, TR 8:00-9:20, CHA 103**  
**Section 14, TR 12:30-1:50, CHA 116**  
**Spring 2009**

Professor: Gabriel Scala  
Email: [scala@lvc.edu](mailto:scala@lvc.edu)  
Office: 208D Humanities  
Office Phone: X6158  
Office Hours: M 11-12, W 8-10, F 8-10, and by appointment  
Writing Center: Bishop Library – Lower Level

**ENG 112: A CRITICAL LOOK AT CREATIVE NONFICTION**

In this course we will read numerous creative nonfiction essays and collections. We will begin to ask questions such as: What is creative nonfiction? What is the role of truth in such works? And why should we read creative nonfiction? Answers to these questions will be put forth in three critical essays and an ongoing discussion of the works we read will take place on Blackboard.

**REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS AND MATERIALS**

Didion, Joan. *We Tell Ourselves Stories in Order to Live: Collected Nonfiction*. Everyman's Library, 2006.  
Dillard, Annie. *An American Childhood*. Harper Perennial, 2008.  
Gutkind, Lee, ed. *The Best Creative Nonfiction*. Vol. 2. W.W. Norton & Co., 2008.  
Minot, Stephen. *Literary Nonfiction: The Fourth Genre*. Prentice Hall, 2003.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND INFORMATION**

English 112 is designed to teach you to write essays about literature that clearly and effectively communicate a central idea and argument to college-educated readers. To be successful in most college classes and professional careers, you will need to have well-developed skills for written communication.

Because many people find it difficult to write essays, English 112 introduces you to ways of making essay writing more comfortable and useful to you. One of the best ways to improve your writing skills is to treat an essay as the result of a process of several steps rather than as something that happens all at once. By writing an essay in stages, you allow your ideas to develop and mature. You'll learn how to present ideas fully and coherently.

In order to accomplish these goals, we will work closely throughout the semester. You will write three fully developed essays using the literature from the course. You will learn to analyze your audience; to decide which of the various pre-writing techniques work best for you; to organize and develop your ideas in a coherent, unified way; and to draft, revise, and edit your own work so that you can have confidence in your ability to communicate through writing.

In addition to writing essays, we'll write weekly responses to our readings and present one oral presentation. The readings and class discussion should also help you generate ideas for your own essays and develop and reinforce your critical reading and thinking skills.

### **Attendance**

Daily attendance is required for this course. If you are excessively absent, for any reason, you will not pass the course. Students are allowed a maximum of two (2) absences during the semester. If you miss more than two (2) classes, your final grade will be dropped a full letter grade. More than four (4) absences is cause for failing the course. Students who miss a class are responsible for any assignment due at the next class meeting. There is no such thing as an "excused" absence; therefore, absences due to illness are the same as absences due to sporting events or other extra curricular activities. Please see me immediately with your schedule if you are on an athletic team and anticipate missing class for team events.

### **Conferences**

You are required to meet with me outside of class at least twice during the course of the semester. It is your responsibility to schedule these meetings and to bring with you whatever you are currently working on or relevant questions pertaining to our class.

### **Late Work**

All work must be turned in on time. I will not accept late work unless you have made a personal arrangement with me; essays turned in to my mailbox will not be accepted. If you are unable to turn in an assignment for emergency reasons, please inform me personally and as soon as possible. Please make use of my email if you are unable to contact me by phone. The decision of whether or not I accept late work, regardless of excuse, is solely mine.

### **Turnitin**

In this course you may be asked to submit some or all of your assignments for review by an on-line plagiarism service. This service will compare the content of your work to content found on the internet and several proprietary databases. Any work submitted to this service may become part of the service's permanent collection of submitted papers. After your work is submitted, the service will generate an originality report which will be sent to your instructor. Any student who submits plagiarized work, whether submitted to turnitin or not, will be subject to the penalties outlined in LVC's Academic Honesty Policy found in the Student Handbook.

### **Disabilities Services**

If you have a physical, mental, psychological, or learning disability that is going to impact your attendance or require accommodation, please let me know. In order to ensure that your learning needs are appropriately met, you will need to provide documentation of your disability or medical condition to the Director of Disability Services in Humanities 206-D, 867-6071. The Office of Disability Services will then provide a letter of verification of disability that describes the accommodations needed for this class.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS & THE GRADING SYSTEM**

### **Essays**

You will write three fully developed and revised essays this semester. All final copies of essays must be typed or printed from a computer.

Please follow this format for all of your essay final copies:

- Final drafts should follow the MLA format.
- Essays must be typed, double-spaced, on one side of the paper, and with standard margins on both sides, top and bottom of the page.
- The font used for all drafts should be **12-point Times New Roman**.
- Pages must be numbered with your last name and page number in the upper right-hand corner.

- Your essays must have a title, but please do not make a separate title page.
- When you submit a final copy of an essay, please include with it a rubric, the assignment sheet, all of your drafts, and your prewriting.

### Essay Grades

- **An A essay** demonstrates a superior command of the subject matter and presents that information so effectively that the reader enjoys reading the essay and learns from it. The A essay shows a clear pattern of organization which captivates the audience and keeps readers involved through all stages of the essay. Moreover, the A essay reveals a sophistication in style and an original voice; sentences are appropriately varied in length and construction; transitions and metadiscourse are used to produce a smooth flow for the reader; connections between sentences and ideas are clear. In addition, individual sentences are concise, clear, and highly specific. The A essay is the work of a writer who is able to deal comfortably with complex material and can present that material effectively for others. As a result of its careful organizational structure and development by example, all factors, both in content and style, combine to form a unified whole.
- **A B essay** contains few mechanical errors (none of which impede communication), and it effectively delivers a substantial amount of interesting information. The specific points are logically ordered, well-developed, and unified according to a clear organizing principle. The introduction and conclusion are effective, but not as engaging as in the A essay. The essay exhibits an understanding of metadiscourse, and transitions are adequately smooth and logical. Sentence structure is sufficiently varied in both length and construction, and the choice of words has been made selectively. The writing in a B essay is organized, clear, coherent, and correct.
- **A C essay** is generally competent and reasonably well-developed and organized. The C essay demonstrates an average knowledge of the subject matter, but the presentation of that information is often vaguely stated and superficially connected. The essay may lack adequate transitions and use of metadiscourse. The sentence structure is often not varied in either length or construction. It may contain some mechanical or grammatical errors, but they do not interfere significantly with meaning. Though the C essay fulfills the assignment, it is not especially engaging or enlightening.
- **A D or F essay** has serious flaws in organization, development, syntax, word choice, and/or mechanics and grammar.

### Readings and Reading-Response Assignments

We will be reading three collections of creative nonfiction and one critical work. You will be required to prepare a reading-response assignment in addition to our regular essay work and to post these weekly responses to blackboard. These assignments are designed to reinforce what you are learning in class and to help you understand the writing process. Your responses may be used for class discussion or for small-group discussion. **You must turn in at least 11 of the 13 blackboard responses required. Every blackboard response missed after the allotted 2 will result in a deduction of one letter grade in your final grade. PLEASE NOTE: though you are allowed to miss up to 2 blackboard responses, you will still receive a zero (0) grade for that response.**

## Letter Grade/Point Scale for English 112

Your final grade in English 112 will be based on the following point scale. Each assignment will be worth a varied amount of points as is noted below:

Essay One	15
Essay Two	20
Essay Three	25
Oral Presentation	10
Blackboard Responses	20
Participation	10

Once all points have been awarded, add the total together and use the following scale to determine your final grade for the course:

100-94 points = A  
90-93 points = A-  
87-89 points = B+  
84-86 points = B

80-83 points = B-  
77-79 points = C+  
74-76 points = C  
70-73 points = C-

67-69 points = D+  
64-66 points = D  
60-63 points = D-  
59 and below = F

## DAILY ASSIGNMENTS

### Week 1

Tuesday, January 20

**Assignment:** Purchase the required texts. Bring *Literary Nonfiction: The Fourth Genre*, a three-ring binder with paper and pen to the next class and to every class afterwards. Read part one in Minot's book (pp 1-54) – come to class prepared to discuss.

Thursday, January 22

**Assignment:** Read chapters 9 through 12 in Minot's book (pp 55-93). Come to class prepared to discuss.

### Week 2

Tuesday, January 27

**Assignment:** Finish reading Minot's book, chapters 13-16 (pp 94-135). Respond to the reading on Blackboard, due Thursday, 1/29. Come to class prepared to discuss.

Thursday, January 29

#### Blackboard #1 due by 10 AM

**Assignment:** Read the following essays in Gutkind's collection: "Spite," "Final: Comprehensive, Roughly," "Here I Am in Bergdorf Goodman," "Instead of the Rat Pack," and "The Art of Writing a Story about Walking across Andorra" (pp 1-53). Respond to the reading on Blackboard by 10 AM. Come to class prepared to discuss.

### Week 3

Tuesday, February 3

#### Blackboard #2 due by 10 AM

**Assignment:** Read the following essays in Gutkind's collection: "Pursuing the Great Bad Novelist," and "Moby-Duck" (pp 54-130). Respond to the reading on Blackboard by 10 AM on Thursday. Come to class prepared to discuss.

Thursday, February 5

#### Blackboard #3 due by 10 AM

**Assignment:** Read the following essays in Gutkind's collection: "The Egg and I," "Figurines," "The Writers in the Silos," "My First Fairy Tale," "A Sudden Pull behind the Heart," and "The Suicide Murder? Of Joseph Kupchik" (pp 131-188). Respond to the reading on Blackboard by 10 AM on Tuesday. Come to class prepared to discuss.

#### **Week 4**

Tuesday, February 10                      **Blackboard #4 due by 10 AM**

**Assignment:** Complete the reading of Gutkind's collection by reading the following essays: "...By Any Other Name," "Ceremony," "Anti-aliasing," "Everything That's Wrong with Facebook," "It Was Nothing," "Shrinks Get It Wrong Sometimes," "George," and "Errands in the Forrest" (pp 275-326).. Respond to the reading on Blackboard by 10 AM on Thursday. Come to class prepared to discuss.

Thursday, February 12   **Blackboard #5 due by 10 AM**

**Assignment:** Create a working thesis statement for essay #1 and determine which essay(s) you will use to support your thesis statement. Due Tuesday.

#### **Week 5**

Tuesday, February 17

**Assignment:** Write the rough draft of essay #1, due Tuesday – bring two copies of your draft to class. Bring your Bedford handbook to our next class.

Thursday, February 19   **Rough Draft of Essay #1 due at the beginning of class**

**Assignment:** Begin revising your rough draft, complete the works cited page.

#### **Week 6**

Tuesday, February 24

**Assignment:** Read pp 3-44 in Dillard. Come to class prepared to discuss. Complete the final revisions and editing of essay 1, final draft due Thursday.

Thursday, February 26   **Final Draft of Essay #1 DUE**

**Assignment:** Read part one of Annie Dillard's *An American Childhood* (pp 3-69). Respond to the reading on Blackboard by 10 AM on Tuesday, March 10. Come to class prepared to discuss. Have a great break!

#### **Week 7**

**SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS**

#### **Week 8**

Tuesday, March 10                      **Blackboard #6 due by 10 AM**

**Assignment:** Read pp 73-125 of part II in Dillard's book. Respond to the reading on Blackboard by 10 AM on Thursday. Come to class prepared to discuss.

Thursday, March 12                      **Blackboard #7 due by 10 AM**

**Assignment:** Finish part II in Dillard's book (pp 126-204). Respond to the reading on Blackboard by 10 AM on Tuesday. Come to class prepared to discuss.

#### **Week 9**

Tuesday, March 17                      **Blackboard #8 due by 10 AM**

**Assignment:** Finish reading Dillard's book, part III and the epilogue (pp 207-255). Respond to the reading on Blackboard by 10 AM on Thursday. Come to class prepared to discuss.

Thursday, March 19                      **Blackboard #9 due by 10 AM**

**Assignment:** Write a rough draft of essay #2 – due Tuesday. Remember to bring two copies of your draft to class.

**Week 10**

Tuesday, March 24

**Rough Draft of Essay #2 DUE**

**Assignment:** Continue revising your rough drafts – final drafts due Tuesday, March 31.

Thursday, March 26

**Assignment:** Read Didion's *Salvador* (pp 346-410). Respond to the reading on Blackboard by 10 AM on Tuesday. Come to class prepared to discuss. Finish your final draft of essay #2 – due Tuesday.

**Week 11**

Tuesday, March 31

**Final Draft of Essay #2 DUE / Blackboard #10 due by 10 AM**

**Assignment:** Read Part I of Didion's *Where I Was From* (pp 953-1009). Respond to the reading on Blackboard by 10 AM on Thursday. Come to class prepared to discuss.

Thursday, April 2

**Blackboard #11 due by 10 AM**

**Assignment:** Read Part II of Didion's book (pp 1013-1053). Respond to the reading on Blackboard by 10 AM on Tuesday. Come to class prepared to discuss.

**Week 12**

Tuesday, April 7

**Blackboard #12 due by 10 AM**

**Assignment:** Read Parts III and IV of Didion's book. Respond to the reading on Blackboard by 10 AM on Thursday. Come to class prepared to discuss.

Thursday, April 9

**Blackboard #13 due by 10 AM**

**Assignment:** Begin drafting essay #3 – due Thursday, April 16. Remember to bring two copies of your rough draft to class. Also, begin preparing your oral presentation. No Class on Tuesday.

**Week 13**

Tuesday, April 14

**WORK DAY – NO CLASS**

Thursday, April 16

**Rough Draft of Essay #3 DUE**

**Assignment:** Begin revising your rough draft and continue work on your oral presentation.

**Week 14**

Tuesday, April 21

**Assignment:** Finish the final draft of essay #3 – due Thursday. Continue to work on your oral presentation.

Thursday, April 23

**Final Draft of Essay #3 DUE**

**Assignment:** Finish your oral presentation and practice in front of a mirror. Oral presentations start Tuesday.

**Week 15**

**Oral Presentations**

**Week 16**

**Oral Presentations**

## English 112: Essay #1

Using the text *Literary Nonfiction: The Fourth Genre* and the excerpts we've read in addition to our class discussions, formulate an argumentative stance that deals with the question "what is literary nonfiction?" (Keeping in mind the loosest possible interpretation of that question)

Review the four argumentative styles to help guide the direction you take for this first essay. Depending on which style you adopt, you may develop a thesis statement that:

1. Takes a stand (literary nonfiction has earned the right to have its own genre)
2. Speculates about causes (the most likely cause for the recent interest in literary nonfiction is...)
3. Proposes solutions (the best possible solution to Derrida's "law of genre" which delegitimizes certain nonfiction authors and not others is...)
4. Justifies an evaluation (Dillard's "Pilgrim at Tinker Creek" proves to be (does not prove to be) a fine example of literary nonfiction when held up to the criteria that determine the genre)

You may use additional outside sources if you choose; however, there are to be no online sources for this essay. This essay is to be 5-7 pages in length with standard MLA formatting. All information taken from outside sources is expected to be properly cited. The works cited page does not count toward the length requirement.

Don't forget: I am interested in YOUR ideas, YOUR arguments and YOUR thoughts on the topic. While it is important to back up your statements with quotes and paraphrases, this essay should NOT be made up of someone else's ideas. I've already read the book and know what it says. I want to know what YOU think about what it says. I suggest you spend some time thinking about your topic before you begin drafting your essay. Good luck!

### IMPORTANT:

- Consider your intended audience and your subsequent purpose.
- Identify examples from a reputable source that illustrate each point you make.
- You must include at least one counterargument paragraph in this essay—this needs to include your answer (concession or refutation) to the counterargument.
- Remember to cite all sources in your paper AND to include all sources in your works cited page.

### Do's and Don'ts for Acknowledging Sources

*Attribution:* Give appropriate credit to the originator of ideas and words

*Accuracy:* Represent others' words, ideas and positions as realistically as possible

*Credibility:* Represent the factuality or authoritativeness of source ideas appropriately

*Reader Convenience:* Make it as easy as possible for readers to follow up on words or ideas cited

### What MUST be Acknowledged:

12. Any direct quotation that may be attributed to a specific source
13. Paraphrases of another's ideas or words
14. Summaries of another's ideas or words
15. Statistics, charts, tables and graphs from any source
16. Co-authored or collaborative works

**Rough Draft Due: Monday, February 21st**

**Final Draft Due: Friday, February 25th**

## English 112: Essay #2

As you reflect on Annie Dillard's collection, *An American Childhood*, begin to consider the role of "truth" in such works. Thinking back on Linda Anderson's discussion of "intention" and "subjectivity," formulate an argumentative stance that begins to deal with this question: what is the role of truth in literary nonfiction? For this second essay, use Dillard's collection as a starting point (or point of reference) for this discussion.

Again, review the four argumentative styles to help guide the direction you take for this next essay. Depending on which style you adopt, you may develop a thesis statement that:

5. Takes a stand (Truth plays no role at all (a great role) in the writing of literary nonfiction)
6. Speculates about causes (Authors who stretch the truth in the literary nonfiction most likely do so because...)
7. Proposes solutions (The best gauge of truth-telling in literary nonfiction is...)
8. Justifies an evaluation (Annie Dillard's *An American Childhood* is (is not) judged to be "truthful" based on these criteria...)

You may use additional outside sources if you choose; however, there are to be no online sources for this essay. This essay is to be 5-7 pages in length with standard MLA formatting. All information taken from outside sources is expected to be properly cited. The works cited page does not count toward the length requirement.

Don't forget: I am interested in YOUR ideas, YOUR arguments and YOUR thoughts on the topic. While it is important to back up your statements with quotes and paraphrases, this essay should NOT be made up of someone else's ideas. I've already read the book and know what it says. I want to know what YOU think about what it says. I suggest you spend some time thinking about your topic before you begin drafting your essay. Good luck!

### IMPORTANT:

- Consider your intended audience and your subsequent purpose.
- Identify examples from a reputable source that illustrate each point you make.
- You must include at least one counterargument paragraph in this essay—this needs to include your answer (concession or refutation) to the counterargument.
- Remember to cite all sources in your paper AND to include all sources in your works cited page.

### Do's and Don'ts for Acknowledging Sources

*Attribution:* Give appropriate credit to the originator of ideas and words

*Accuracy:* Represent others' words, ideas and positions as realistically as possible

*Credibility:* Represent the factuality or authoritativeness of source ideas appropriately

*Reader Convenience:* Make it as easy as possible for readers to follow up on words or ideas cited

### What MUST be Acknowledged:

17. Any direct quotation that may be attributed to a specific source
18. Paraphrases of another's ideas or words
19. Summaries of another's ideas or words
20. Statistics, charts, tables and graphs from any source
21. Co-authored or collaborative works

**Rough Draft Due: Monday, March 28<sup>th</sup>**

**Final Draft Due: Friday, April 1<sup>st</sup>**



### English 112: Essay #3

For this final essay, consider the question: why should we read literary nonfiction? As you develop your thoughts on the matter, take into consideration Joan Didion's *We Tell Ourselves Stories in Order to Live* as well as any other readings we've covered this semester. As usual, consider the question a starting point rather than a strict objective. The idea is to get you thinking in the general direction, not to lock you in to a stiff assignment.

Again, review the four argumentative styles to help guide the direction you take for this next essay. Depending on which style you adopt, you may develop a thesis statement that:

- Takes a stand (The fact is, we should (should not) read literary nonfiction)
- Speculates about causes (The recent rise (decline) in literary nonfiction sales can be attributed to...)
- Proposes solutions (Reading literary nonfiction is the best possible solution to...)
- Justifies an evaluation (Joan Didion's collection is a fine example (bad example) of why we should read (should not read) literary nonfiction...)

You may use additional outside sources if you choose; however, there are to be no online sources for this essay. This essay is to be 5-7 pages in length with standard MLA formatting. All information taken from outside sources is expected to be properly cited. The works cited page does not count toward the length requirement.

Don't forget: I am interested in YOUR ideas, YOUR arguments and YOUR thoughts on the topic. While it is important to back up your statements with quotes and paraphrases, this essay should NOT be made up of someone else's ideas. I've already read the book and know what it says. I want to know what YOU think about what it says. I suggest you spend some time thinking about your topic before you begin drafting your essay. Good luck!

#### IMPORTANT:

- Consider your intended audience and your subsequent purpose.
- Identify examples from a reputable source that illustrate each point you make.
- You must include at least one counterargument paragraph in this essay—this needs to include your answer (concession or refutation) to the counterargument.
- Remember to cite all sources in your paper AND to include all sources in your works cited page.

#### Do's and Don'ts for Acknowledging Sources

*Attribution:* Give appropriate credit to the originator of ideas and words

*Accuracy:* Represent others' words, ideas and positions as realistically as possible

*Credibility:* Represent the factuality or authoritativeness of source ideas appropriately

*Reader Convenience:* Make it as easy as possible for readers to follow up on words or ideas cited

#### What MUST be Acknowledged:

22. Any direct quotation that may be attributed to a specific source
23. Paraphrases of another's ideas or words
24. Summaries of another's ideas or words
25. Statistics, charts, tables and graphs from any source
26. Co-authored or collaborative works

**Rough Draft Due: Friday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>**

**Final Draft Due: Monday, April 25<sup>th</sup>**

## **English 112: Oral Presentation**

This semester we have taken a critical look at three collections of literary nonfiction: one from a collection of authors; two others from single authors. For the oral presentation component of this course, you are to select a collection of literary nonfiction essays of your choice to present during the final days of this semester. Any collection is acceptable – whether it be by a single author or many – you may even choose another collection by one of the same authors we have read this semester.

The oral presentation is to be 5 minutes and should include the following:

1. An introduction to the author of your book (Who is this person? Why is s/he important?)
2. A brief synopsis of the book
3. An evaluation of the book which you support with evidence (I didn't like it, it sucked, it rocked, it's really righteous, etc. are unacceptable evaluations). This is the most important part of the oral presentation. It is during this part of the presentation that you demonstrate your knowledge of literary nonfiction, criticism and a varied assortment of nonfiction texts.

You may use note cards; however, you are not to bring in a written speech which you read from during your allotted time. Think of this as a round table discussion – try to not get stressed out about it. 😊

**Outline Due: Friday, April 29th**

**Presentations: Monday-Friday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup>**