



# ENG 273N Creative Writing & Literature: Creative Nonfiction

" The unexamined life is not worth living. " - Socrates

**Spring 2020**  
**Instructor: Beau Ewan**  
**Office: Kalia 229**

**Kapi'olani Community College**  
**Email: beauewan@hawaii.edu**  
**Office Phone #: (808) 734-9408**

## SPRING 2020 SCHEDULE

<b>CRN</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>DAY</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
33613	ENG 100	MW	10:45-12:00	Kalia 109
33614	ENG 100	TR	12:15-1:30	Kalia 110
33523	ENG 273N	TR	1:45 - 3:00	Kalia 109

## OFFICE HOURS

MONDAY: 12:00 - 1:30  
WEDNESDAY: 12:00 - 1:30  
or by appointment

## Required Texts and Supplies

- *You Can't Make This Stuff Up: The Complete Guide to Writing Creative Nonfiction--from Memoir to Literary Journalism and Everything in Between*, by Lee Gutkind (provided for you in pdf).
- *The Geography of Bliss: One Grump's Search for the Happiest Places in the World* by Eric Weiner

-Students Essays (submitted to the workshop by your peers)  
- Various essays will be uploaded to Lualima and/or links to the essays will be sent to you via email. These readings may include but are not limited to the following:

- “The American Male at Age 10” by Susan Orlean
- "The Kentucky Derby Is Decadent and Depraved" by Hunter S. Thompson
- “Six to Eight Black Men” by David Sedaris
- “Death by Harry Potter” by Chuck Klosterman
- “So What If Mountain Dew Can Melt Mice?” by Chuck Klosterman

-Film (clips) shown in class include but are not limited to the following:

- Gonzo: The Life and Work of Dr. Hunter S. Thompson* directed by Alex Gibney
- Bad Writing* directed by Vernon Loft

-A Journal (notebook/composition book, etc). We will be doing a number of free-writing exercises throughout the semester, all of which are designed to get us grounded in the discourse and have us thinking about our writing in meaningful ways. Keeping a journal is one of the most basic practices of creative writing. Use it inside and outside of class as you work on your essays.

Additionally, in order to be successful in this course, students must:

- 1) Have full regular access to a computer and to the Internet
- 2) Have basic computer skills,
- 3) Be familiar with a standard word processor (MS Word),
- 4) Be proficient in navigating the WWW and downloading files,
- 5) Have a UH email address and know how to attach files to an email message,
- 6) Be familiar with navigating LauLima

### **Course Description (from the KCC catalog)**

ENG 273N focuses on introducing creative nonfiction as a literary genre, critical analysis and writing of various kinds of creative nonfiction, such as autobiography, biography, nature and travel writing, writing on historical and scientific subjects, and cultural criticism. Emphasis will be on logical, rhetorical, stylistic, and aesthetic concerns of the genre.

### **Course Description (from the instructor)**

F. Scott Fitzgerald once said that “Genius is the ability to put into effect what is on your mind.” I believe that as writers, we should always strive towards perfecting this ability. The content we create with that ability, however, will be different for everyone. Each of us in this workshop has a unique voice, yet despite the many differences that may shape it—be it gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, age, birthplace, political affiliation, socioeconomic status, etc—we are now united by the fact that we’ll be sharing our unique voices with one another, through the written word. The goal of the writing workshop, then, is to help each other strengthen our voices, to portray our “genius,” with clarity, creativity, and originality.

As a published writer, I can tell you that criticism is simply part of the writing process. Receiving the support and guidance of other writers, however, is a rare opportunity, and one that I hope each of you take advantage of here. Just as every writer will share their creative work, every reader will face the responsibility of sharing their interpretation of that work. Again, each of you has a voice to share, both as writers, and as readers. Each of these voices should be regarded as the opportunity to strengthen your writing.

F. Scott Fitzgerald’s dear friend, Ernest Hemingway, once said: “There is nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and bleed.” Writing, he was telling us, is never easy. I’m a firm believer that powerful prose—the kind of writing that triggers an emotional response in its readers—is never haphazardly written in the final hours before a deadline. This craft takes hard work, dedication, and devotion. Hemingway, if he were here with us today, would probably say that writing takes some blood, sweat, and tears. And while that might make this practice sound somewhat grueling, I can promise you that working with a community of aspiring writers offers rewards well worth your devotion. My best advice to you is to work hard on your writing, and to never sell yourself short, or one another, of meeting your potential genius. Shall you ever need my assistance, never forget that I’m here, that we’re all here, to help you along the way.

### **Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes**

- Identify and analyze the basic elements of imaginative writing in one's own work and in the creative work of others.
- Produce creative writing of recognizable form and acceptable quality.
- Produce clear and effective responses to literature, well-written creative work, and the artistic achievements of writers.
- Identify and use writing processes -- planning, drafting, critiquing, revising, and editing.
- Provide critiques and editorial advice to other writers.
- Distinguish the characteristics of various sub-genres of creative nonfiction.

- Analyze language, point-of-view and style in various texts and in own writing.
- Analyze ways in which background, values and beliefs may affect the composition of and reaction to a text.
- Produce clear and effective writings in various forms of creative nonfiction.

**Grading**

Grades Will Be Based on the Following Percentages:

90-100% - A    80-89% - B    70-79% - C    60-69% - D    50% - lower – F

**Course Requirements**

*See specific descriptions for each category below chart*

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
<b>Participation/Verbal Workshopping</b>	10%
<b>Written Workshopping (Letters and Quizzes)</b>	20%
<b>Literary Roundtable Presentations</b>	10%
<b>Essay Submission # 1</b>	20%
<b>Essay Submission # 2 (Including Translation/Adaptation Assignment)</b>	20%
<b>Final Portfolio</b>	20%

**Participation/Verbal Workshopping**

If you have not done the reading or writing assignment for class, or if you are not present to participate, then it will be difficult for you to contribute to class in a meaningful way. If you are called on and clearly have not read the assignment, if you are absent, and/or if you have not completed a writing assignment, you will lose classroom participation credit for that day.

**Written Workshopping (Letters or Quizzes)**

Feedback is an essential part of the workshop model. Therefore, there must be measures in place to assure that each person is doing the reading. For each person being workshopped, you will write a letter (approximately 250 words) to the writer and/or you will be required to take a quiz on the day’s reading.

### **Literature Responses & Group Work**

These short writing reflections will ask you to engage a published reading that correlates with a prompt. The detailed prompt for each reflection will be distributed to you. Keep in mind that reflections will often ask you to recreate—using your own style and voice—some of the techniques you’ll encounter in the readings. Therefore, many of your reflections can be developed into longer pieces that you can submit to workshop.

Also, I am a BIG proponent of TEAMWORK! Therefore, you may be called upon to complete group assignments over the course of the semester. While class time will be allotted to working on these assignments, should you not take advantage of that time, you may have to meet with one another outside of class. Detailed directions and grading rubrics for these assignments will be available to you.

### **Essay Submissions**

During the course of the semester, you will write two 2,000 word essays to turn in for workshop (please, no more than 12 pages—remember the amount of work the class will need to do). In order to receive a passing grade, each essay MUST MEET THE MINIMUM WORD COUNT OF 2,000 WORDS. Each essay will then be read and commented on by all the members of the workshop.

Each essay must also include an author’s note (of approximately 150-250 words). The author’s note should describe your (the writer’s) intentions for the essay. Questions to consider: Why did you choose to write in this style? How did you want the reader to respond? What lasting image did you seek to create for the reader? This is your chance to let your readers know what you tried to do in your work, and allow your instructor to evaluate if that attempt was successful or if, perhaps, the piece communicated something else more effectively. This is also an opportunity to think about your vision and strategy for your writing.

### **A Note on Essay Quality**

All essays should be thoroughly proofread for grammatical and structural errors. Remember, an entire class will be reading, commenting, and discussing your writing at length. The last thing you want to do is submit an essay that is filled with careless errors, as such writing is not only distracting for your readers, but will also result in a significantly lower grade. If you aren’t confident with your grammar, then be sure to bring a copy of your essay to me during my office hours BEFORE your submission date so that together, we can go through it and fix any careless errors. You can also bring a copy to The Study Hub and ask a tutor to check the writing for any surface-level grammatical errors.

### **A Note on Essay Content**

You’ll learn early in the semester that creative nonfiction is a wide and interesting field, one that allows its writers to focus on a wide breadth of subjects and genres (from memoir to literary journalism). As a writer, pick a subject that will interest your readers, one that will grab their attention and grant them access into some kind of unknown. Do not, as many amateur writers

mistakenly do, immediately focus on writing about some dramatic part of your life (a breakup, the death of a loved one, a failure of some kind, etc). You are certainly allowed to write about such moments, but don't fall into the mindset that a dramatic event will automatically produce intriguing writing for your audience. On the contrary, sometimes it's the everyday things about your world (your interests, perspectives, everyday experiences) that prove to be the most engaging for your audience.

### **Literary Roundtable Presentation**

As a writer, your skill set must include not only your ability to craft quality prose, but also your ability to analyze, criticize, and theorize about the creative works of other authors. As we begin workshoping each other's essays, you will be called upon to practice these skills. Furthermore, a section of this course has been designated for you to showcase these skills in the form of a short but meaningful discussion—a discussion that you will lead—about a major work of creative nonfiction.

### **Final Portfolio**

For your final portfolio, you must significantly revise one of the essays that you submitted to the workshop. Also, your final essay **MUST MEET THE MINIMUM WORD COUNT OF 3,000 WORDS**. You should have at least considered—though not necessarily incorporated—all of the instructor and student feedback you received on one of your drafts.

You must write a reflection letter of approximately 300 - 500 words. In the reflection letter, you should be explaining the following: 1) How you used the feedback from your workshop to improve your essay; 2) How you feel that your writing has grown or improved this semester (if you feel that it has).

When it comes time to submit the final portfolio, please keep the following in mind:

- Late submissions will receive a full letter grade deduction for each calendar day they are late.
- I will be happy to meet with you to look at and discuss revisions prior to their due date. Always feel free to make an appointment or come to office hours.
- Final drafts for the portfolio should be substantially revised. This does not mean making revisions for the sake of revising, but making artistic choices to allow your story to continue to grow and improve. If you only make minimal changes to your draft, your revision grade may not be a passing one.

## **Course Policies**

### **ADD/DROP**

**Friday, March 27th** is the last day to withdraw online with a “W” grade from full-semester classes, to change to credit/no credit grade option, and to request audit grade option.

### **Attendance Policy**

Our collective experience as teachers of writing suggests that students who miss more than two weeks' worth of class are unable to produce passing work and ultimately fail the class. That fact reflects both the rigorous pace of this course and the fact that what students learn in this class they learn in the classroom through lectures, group work, discussion, and writing activities (work that cannot be made up). More than two week's worth of absences, excused or unexcused, will likely have a negative impact on your grade. It is your responsibility to find out from your classmates what you missed if you were not in class. "Work" and "no parking" are not valid excuses for being absent or late. I try my best to arrive to class on time. With that said, if I am 15 minutes late for class, you may leave.

**3 lates = 1 absence**

**5 absences = failing participation/verbal workshopping grade (59%)**

**6 absences = total loss of participation/verbal workshopping grade (0%)**

### **Assignment Policy**

*NOTE: This may sound somewhat complex and confusing, though once we begin workshopping, you will see that I have a rather straightforward and practical protocol for disseminating and collecting all of your writing. Also, I am giving you the option to go paperless.*

- Workshop responses should be typed, printed out, and submitted to your instructor. If you are absent, they should be emailed when due AND printed out and brought to the next class.
- Because the workshopping section of this course is dependent upon you submitting your essays on time, **I HAVE A ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY FOR LATE ESSAYS!** Late submissions will result in the loss of a letter grade for each day that they're late. This is a strict policy, as we all need ample time to comment on your work. Please send your work in Microsoft Word format. If you do not have Microsoft Word, then copy and paste your essay into the body of an email.
- The instructor will be responsible for uploading student essays to Laulima folders or emailing essays so that the workshop is able to access them.
- For workshop days, one paper copy of your workshop letter must be printed out and submitted to the instructor after the writer is workshopped. This is so that each writer receives a copy of your feedback. The instructor will then check the feedback and submit it to the writer on the following class.
- You are also encouraged to comment in the margins of each essay that you read. Therefore, you can either print out each essay and comment in pen/pencil, or you can comment electronically and email it to the writer.
- When you come to class, you must have access to each essay that we are discussing with you. You can either print the material out or bring a laptop to class. However, should I find that you are abusing this policy—i.e. shopping online or scrolling through social media during a writing workshop—I will require you to print out every essay for the duration of the course.

### **Students with Disabilities Statement**

Please read the following official statement:

"If you are a student with a documented disability and have not voluntarily disclosed the nature of your disability so that we may coordinate the accommodations you need, you are invited to contact the Disability Support Services Office in 'Ilima 107, ph.734-9552, or email [kapdss@hawaii.edu](mailto:kapdss@hawaii.edu) for assistance. For students whose primary disability is deaf or hard of hearing, contact the KCC Deaf Center in Manono 102, ph. 734-9210 (V) or 447-1379 (videophone)."

### **Student Conduct Code (from KCC Catalog)**

Student Conduct Code Conduct expected of students at Kapi'olani Community College is defined in the University of Hawai'i Board of Regents' Statement on Rights and Responsibilities of the University of Hawai'i Student Conduct Code. Kapi'olani Community College has a Student Conduct Code that defines expected conduct for students and specifies those acts subject to University sanctions. Student Conduct Committee: Students should become familiar with the Student Conduct Code. As University of Hawaii/Kapi'olani Community College students, their conduct is subject to the policies and regulations of the University and its duly constituted bodies. Disciplinary authority is exercised through the Student Conduct Committee. The committee follows procedures for hearing allegations of misconduct. Copies of the Student Conduct Code are available at the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, 'Ilima 205.

### **Academic Integrity**

The college does not condone plagiarism, which means passing off someone else's work as your own (please see the General Catalog for a more specific definition). Documentation mistakes in a paper can be corrected, but passing off as your own a whole essay or substantial sections of an essay (or other work) from the Internet or other third party will result in failure of the course. If I find clear evidence of academic dishonesty for ANY assignment, I will record a 0 for the assignment. If a second incident of academic dishonesty occurs, I will record an "F" for the course grade.

**Disruptive Behavior:** Kapi'olani Community College defines disruptive behavior as speech or action that

- is disrespectful, offensive, and/or threatening;
- interferes with the learning activities of other students;
- impedes the delivery of college services; and/or
- has a negative impact in any learning environment – including department and staff offices, the library, the Computing Center, the Learning Assistance Centers, labs, clinical sites, service-learning sites, etc.

Disruptive behavior includes physically or verbally harassing, threatening, or abusing or acting abusively toward an instructor, staff member, or student in any activity authorized by the college.

In general, please adhere to the Student Conduct Code on classroom behavior and **please turn off cell phones**, pagers, beepers, iPod's, PSP's, GBA's, and other devices as they constitute distractions. If you must have your cell phone on for specified medical reasons, please let me know beforehand. If you are in a lab environment, checking Facebook, using AIM, YahooChat, etc. does not constitute a legitimate use of the computer unless it is class-related. **Using your cell phone during class, including texting, will negatively impact your participation grade.**

Disciplinary actions that the college may impose include a formal warning, probation, suspension, and dismissal. An instructor referring a student for disciplinary action does so under provisions of the Student Conduct Code. The code stipulates that the Chancellor may impose disciplinary sanctions upon a student only after a Student Conduct Committee hearing has taken place. However, disruptive students may be subject to immediate disciplinary action in an emergency situation. In such cases, the Chancellor may impose the sanction of suspension prior to a hearing. For further information, refer to the Student Conduct Code available at the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, 'Ilima 205.

### **Title IX Information**

Kapi'olani Community College is committed to maintaining and promoting a safe and respectful campus environment that is free from sex discrimination and gender-based violence, this including sexual and gender based violence, sexual assault or harassment, sexual discrimination, dating violence, stalking, verbal or physical abuse, and even pregnancy and parenting discrimination. The College's Title IX program, provides all students, faculty and staff of any gender or gender identity, with a mechanism within which to address potential actions that fall within this purview. The goal is to provide due process and fairness to anyone potentially involved in a complaint. All reports are taken seriously by the College and information is confidential and on a need to know basis.

