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CRWR 512.01: Nonfiction Workshop

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This semester, our nonfiction class will study the art and craft of nonfiction, both as readers and as writers. The workshop is our primary focus in this class, and to that end students will write at least 40 pages of nonfiction, at least three pieces of which will be offered for review in workshop. No more than 20 pages per workshop, please. One of the essays must be significantly revised or expanded by the end of the course. Present all work in standard format, \textit{with a title and page numbers}. I require a single-side reading copy, but you can make double-sided copies for the group.

Our workshop format is that of a community of writers working to give the most useful feedback on the fundamental issues of memory, meaning and method in writing from the first-person point of view. The focus of the workshop will be to assist in revision with an eye toward creating publishable works. Writers scheduled for workshop will provide sufficient copies of their work one week in advance. There are no exceptions to this rule, so plan ahead. Readers will turn in two signed copies of their written comments – one page minimum length – at the time of the workshop. The writer will keep one copy and I will keep the other. Constructive criticism of the story, its diction, organization, development and voice are welcome, but individuals are responsible for fully editing and proofreading work so we are not forced to sideline issues of content and style for those of grammar, syntax and spelling.

**Reading Assignments:**
In addition to your writing this semester, select four nonfiction books for a self-directed reading project. You can explore a genre, an author, a theme or a topic—but there should be a cohesive idea behind your choices and the project should speak to your own interests or goals. You’ll be asked to give a thumbnail synopsis of your project and the four books at our first class. An annotated bibliography of the books is due with your final portfolio. In addition to your self-guided reading, as a group we will read and discuss Peter Stark’s \textit{Last Breath} in preparation for his visit in November.

**Attendance and participation:**
There is no way to make up a missed class. More than two absences and you may be asked to drop the course. Attendance—whether tardy or absent—will affect your grade, as it’s a significant part of your class participation. If you know you will be absent for one or more classes, meet with me well in advance to make arrangements. All students, both the shy and the bold, are required to participate in our class discussion. If you’re shy, make a determined effort. If you’re bold, limit yourself to give others room to jump in.

**Grades:**
At our final class meeting, I’ll collect your portfolios, which shall include your revised essay, annotated bibliography—and any new materials you submit to meet the page requirement. Attendance issues aside, high grades will be earned by all students who complete assignments on time; who pull their weight in workshop with respectful, honest, well-reasoned written and spoken comments; whose contribution to classroom discussions shows thought and preparation; and who turn in a final portfolio that reflects a mastery of nonfiction writing, craft and style.

\textit{Plagiarism is defined in the UM Student Conduct Code as representing another person’s words, ideas, data, or materials as one’s own. In this course it will result in a failing grade. Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course. Please come and see me. Be prepared to provide a letter from your DSS Coordinator. As the semester progresses, we, as a class, may agree to alter or amend this syllabus/schedule to suit our changing needs.}
CRWR 512—Nonfiction Workshop Schedule
Autumn 2018  J. Blunt

September 10
Book projects

September 17
1 Barry Maxwell
2 Kelly Schirmann
3 Jenny Sheets

September 24
1 Abby Seethoff
2 Miranda Morgan
3 Suzanne G. P.

October 1
1 Stacia Hill
2 Joe Kirk
3 Rebecca Swanberg

October 8
1 Abby Seethoff
Book Discussion

October 15
1 Peggy Pabustan
2 Stacia Hill
3 Barry Maxwell

October 22
1 Jenny Sheets
2 Kelly Schirmann
3 Suzanne G. P.

November 5
1 Abby Seethoff
2 Stacia Hill
3 Peggy Pabustan

November 12
No class
Veterans Day

November 19
1 Suzanne G. P.
2 Barry Maxwell
3 Book Discussion

November 26
1 Joe Kirk
2 Miranda Morgan
3 Jenny Sheets

December 3
1 Rebecca Swanberg
2 Kelly Schirmann
3 Peggy Pabustan

December 8
Thesis Reading
Fact and Fiction Books, 6 p.m.

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