

University of Chicago, Graham School, Writer's Studio

Intermediate Creative Nonfiction – WRIT 42633
Spring, 2017

Tuesdays, 6-8:30 p.m., May 2 – June 6
Location: Gleacher Center

Instructor: Kevin Davis
kevday@sbcglobal.net

Course Description

How do we enhance our work into polished, powerful prose? In this six-week course, we'll combine writing workshops with reading assignments that illustrate a variety of creative nonfiction techniques. We will focus on structure, revision, and adding depth to your work. While most of the course will be dedicated to doing workshops for stories in progress, we will occasionally do writing exercises in class.

Important: Students in this course are required to bring a work in progress or a section of a work in progress (5,000 words or less) to the first class session. Students will be expected to email copies of their works to their classmates a week in advance of workshop sessions.

The class is designed to be interactive and discussion based. Each week we'll talk about the assigned readings, breaking down stories, analyzing them and figuring out how and why they work or don't. This is a demanding class, and it's important that you keep up with the writing assignments and develop the discipline and time commitment required. Because the class has a workshop component, your fellow students will be depending on you to bring in your work as scheduled for discussion.

Readings: I will email readings to students one week in advance of each class. You'll be expected to critique and discuss readings in class.

Class Schedule

May 2

Building on your first and early drafts. Examining themes and big picture questions in your stories and essays. Where do you want to go?

May 9

Great beginnings. Getting the right start to your stories and essays. Trying new approaches and points of view. Workshop stories.

May 16

Constructing and deconstructing. Focus on the framework and foundation of your pieces and experimenting with different structures. Workshop stories.

May 23

Building and refining your characters – whether it’s yourself as narrator, or others in your work, we’ll examine ways to make real characters come alive. Workshop stories.

May 30

Voice lessons. Finding the right voice and tone and making sure it’s consistent throughout your piece. Staying on key with tone. Workshop stories.

June 6

Looking at the narrative arc. Does your story fulfill its promise and take readers (and yourself) from one place to another. The story as a journey. Workshop stories.