



SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
WRT 114: Writing Culture:
Introduction to Creative Nonfiction
2014-2015

Instructor: Marie Leone Meyer, PhD.

Office: Room 37

Office Hours: M-Th 2:40—3:15

Contact Information: mmeyer@veronaschools.org

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Writing 114 provides an introduction to creative nonfiction (CNF), a genre that encompasses many kinds of prose: memoirs, biography, travel writing, science writing, and literary journalism, to name a few. CNF writers almost always—in some way or other—focus on the tensions that emerge between individuals and the world around them. Thus, the title of this course, “Writing Culture,” refers to writing about oneself and others in the context of a broader culture. How do we negotiate cultural norms, expectations, rituals, and practices? How does culture shape us as individuals? To what degree do we absorb or resist our cultural influences? And how do we, as individual actors and witnesses to our world, shape the culture in which we live? These are just a few of the many questions we’ll ask ourselves as we move through this course.

In this class, we’ll read and reflect upon a variety of creative nonfiction texts, as well as compose our own essays. You’ll have the freedom to explore a wide range of topics and experiment broadly with voice, style, form, and the use of research to enrich your writing.

Rather than present reality as a series of raw facts, CNF writers borrow techniques of fiction writing—description, anecdote, scene construction, characterization, and dialogue—to tell dynamic and compelling true stories. The crucial distinction between creative nonfiction and fiction is that nonfiction purports to tell the truth with very little embellishment, while fiction claims to be “made up.” Creative nonfiction also draws from poetic approaches to language, including imagery, metaphor, tone, and shifts in point of view and perspective. We’ll study these building blocks of creative nonfiction and use them in the composition process.

Since this is an intensive writing class, we’ll often engage in writing workshops in class, including brainstorming and freewriting activities, and structured peer critiques. You will need to come to class prepared to write. All students will need a dedicated notebook for this purpose.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Students will read and critically engage with creative nonfiction texts representing a diverse range of topics, subgenres, and perspectives.
2. Students will learn about, and put into practice, conventions and characteristics of creative nonfiction.
3. Students will compose a series of creative nonfiction texts, and take them through the processes of composing.
4. Students will explore relationships between research and creative nonfiction, and learn conventions for incorporating research into their texts.
5. Students will develop an awareness of audience, and work to construct an ethos and voice that responds to audience needs and expectations.
6. Students will experiment with voices, styles and forms.
7. Students will reflect on their writing processes.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- ***Tell It Slant: Creating, Refining, & Publishing Creative Nonfiction, 2E*** – Brenda Miller & Suzanne Paola (McGraw-Hill, 2012); referred to in syllabus as *TIS*
- ***In Short: A Collection of Brief Creative Nonfiction*** – eds. Judith Kitchen & Mary Paumier Jones (WW Norton, 1996); referred to in syllabus as *IS*
- ***In Fact: The Best of Creative Nonfiction*** – ed. Lee Gutkind (WW Norton, 2004); referred to in syllabus as *IF*
- ***In Cold Blood; Angela's Ashes; Zeitoun, The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, Eating Animals***
- Reading/response log
- Three-ring binder (to be kept in room 37)
- Writing handbook
- Supplementary materials as indicated in syllabus

MAJOR COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & GRADE REQUIREMENTS:

Unit 1 Portfolio (10-15pp., comprised of multiple shorter essays, & a reflective essay)	15%
Unit 2 Personal/Lyric essay (personal/lyric essay, 6-8pp., incl. reflective essay component)	15%
Unit 3 Culture essay (writing about culture, 6-8pp., incl. reflective essay component)	15%

Unit 4 Literary Journalism essay (literary journalism, 6-8pp., incl. reflective essay component)	20%
Unit 5 Culminating Portfolio (20+ pp., including at least one substantively revised CNF essay, preface/reflective essay, and showcase components, media essay)	15%
All other informal writing and class participation (incl. in-class writing exercises, notebook entries, workshop participation & peer review, research notes, critical reading responses, etc.)	20%

WORKSHOPS

Writing is about community and communication. Feedback is vital for writers to improve their craft. You also need to know how an audience perceives your work. A writing workshop is a supportive space where writers work together to enhance each other's work. At times, you may be asked to make your drafts available for peer critique before class so there will be time for your peers to read and comment on your work. See Ch. 15 of *Tell It Slant* on sharing your work for more information on the workshop process.

GENERAL COURSE POLICIES

Special Needs and Accommodations

Syracuse University welcomes people with disabilities and, in compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, does not discriminate on the basis of disability. Students who require special consideration due to a learning or physical disability or other situation should make an appointment to see me right away.

Use of Student Academic Work

It is understood that registration for and continued enrollment in this course constitutes permission by the student for the instructor to use for educational purposes any student work produced in the course, in compliance with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). After the completion of the course, any further use of student work will meet one of the following conditions: (1) the work will be rendered anonymous through the removal of all personal identification of the student(s); or (2) written permission from the student(s).

Academic Integrity

Syracuse University sets high standards for academic integrity. Syracuse University students are expected to exhibit honesty in all academic endeavors. Cheating in any form is not tolerated, nor is assisting another person to cheat. The submission of any work by a student is taken as a guarantee that the thoughts and expressions in it are the student's own, except when properly credited to another.

Those standards are supported and enforced by your instructor, SU faculty and Project Advance administrators. The presumptive sanction for a first offense is course failure (SU grade of F), accompanied by the transcript notation "Violation of the Academic Integrity Policy." Students should review the Office of Academic Integrity online resource "Twenty Questions and Answers About the Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy" and confer with your instructor(s) about course-specific citation methods, permitted collaboration (if any), and rules for examinations. The policy also governs the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verification of participation in class activities. Additional guidance for students can be found in the Office of Academic Integrity resource: "What does academic integrity mean?"

For a more detailed description of the guidelines for adhering to academic integrity in the College of Arts and Sciences, go to:
<http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>

Late Work Policy

Work is to be submitted on the date that it is due. Daily readings and assignments must be completed as assigned because class participation depends upon your being prepared. You will be graded on participation and preparedness. In the event of absence, you are responsible for making up any missed assignments.

COURSE CALENDAR

Note: This calendar is subject to change. It is your responsibility as a student in this class to be aware of any schedule changes.

UNIT I: Introduction: What Is Creative Nonfiction? / Flash Nonfiction Writing (6 weeks)

Questions to consider:

- **What is Creative Nonfiction?**
- **What ethical questions might the Creative Nonfiction writer encounter?**
- **How might the writer use elements of his or her life in writing Creative Nonfiction?**

Week 1: Introduction to creative nonfiction / genre, ethics, and craft

September 4-5

Day 1:

Name writing prompt: write, share, discuss

Distribute texts and syllabus. Review syllabus and assignment expectations. Read “Where to Begin” (TIS xiii-xvi). Generate a list of 20 things you would like to write about.

Reading for homework: “The Creative Nonfiction Police?” (IF xix-xxxii). Keep a reader’s log outlining major elements of assigned reading. You will be expected to do this for all your reading so that you may actively participate in class discussion about the readings. This reading log will be reviewed approximately every 3 weeks.

Day 2:

Discuss homework reading. Share major points from reading log. Writing in response: What guidelines would you establish for “creative nonfiction police”? List 5 specific “rules” the creative nonfiction writer must follow. Generate a class guideline list.

Portfolio requirements for Unit One.

Homework reading: TIS Chapter 1, “The Body of Memory,” 3-16.

Weeks 2-4: Exploring the craft of creative nonfiction / finding your material

September 8-12

Day 1:

“Why I write” prompt

HW due Day 3: read and log Chapter 13/TIS

Day 2:

Discussion of Chapter 1

Read and discuss “Hands” IS 128-130; relate to elements of Ch 1: how does scene emerge from memory?

Days 3 and 4: Introduction to “flash nonfiction”

Discussion of key elements of Chap. 13; focus on pp. 164-167 outlining scene. Distribute and read “Scenes” from *Keep It Real* (Gutkind 140-141).

HW writing prompt 2, p. 177 TIS: event from memory; read “Growing Up Game” IS 115-119.

September 15-19

Day 1: Practice with scenes: Identifying and Analyzing Scenes activity

HW: read log “Writing the Family” TIS chap 2, 17-24

Day 2: Discussion of “Writing the Family.” Read “My Children Explain the Big Issues” by Will Baker, IS 133-135. Journal writing: what is revealed about family dynamics in these four vignettes?

Identify a “big issue” a family member has “explained” to you. Write in single vignette.

HW: read and log “Dinner at Uncle Boris’s” by Charles Simic IF, 85

Day 3: Discussion of “Dinner at Uncle Boris’s.” Nonfiction 101: Write a flash nonfiction scene about a memorable meal with someone in exactly 101 words.

HW: read and log “On the Necessity of Turning Oneself into a Character” by Philip Lopate.

Day 4: Student-generated discussion of major points of Lopate essay.

Writing prompt: Choose one of the things you’d like to write about that involves a conflict. Write a flash nonfiction piece that resolves the conflict. Then, re-write the piece, this time choosing to resolve the conflict in a way that reflects a different aspect of your personality. Complete for homework. Type the final copy, but do not put your name on it.

Notebooks due for review by 3:00 on Friday, September 19.

September 22-26

Day 1: Share a flash nonfiction piece, “shedding ink.” Put a post-it note on your paper, indicating whether you’d like your classmates to “bless, press, or address” something in the writing. Circulate papers, so that each student responds to the others on a post-it note. In addition, reader should articulate the dominant characteristics of each of the narrators.

HW: "Crazy Horse" IS 237 and "Interlude" IS 123

Day 2

Introduction to character sketch. Review pp. 169-170 of *TIS*. Write: Divide class in two, each group assigned one of the readings. Identify what details give "a sense of the essence of the individual"? Present to class and lead discussion of reading.

HW: Writing prompt: *TIS* 178 #4 (first part of prompt; complete in class)

Day 3

Complete prompt #4 with class share. Read and discuss "On the Street" IS 144.

Begin draft of flash nonfiction: Write a description of someone else that reveals something about yourself, or choose a prompt from Character Sketch handout. HW: Complete draft; for day 2 of week 5, read Chap 15 of *TIS* "Sharing Your Work: the Writing Group and Workshop."

Weeks 5-6: Cultivating a voice and writing for an audience / revision work

September 29—October 10

Day 1: Point of View mini-lesson: *TIS* 171-173 and *Keep It Real* Gutkind 119-125

Choose one of the twenty topics you'd like to write about that involves more than one character. Draft a scene from the point of view of one of the characters; choose another character, and write a draft from the point of view of that character. Complete for homework.

Days 2-4: Establish class guidelines for the writing workshop. Workshop two short pieces per writer.

Days 5-8: Writing and revision: flash nonfiction for Unit 1 assignment. Meet in computer lab.

Unit 1 Assignments: writing portfolio of flash non-fiction, approximately 10-15 pp.; separate reflective essay (2-3 pp.) Due: October 10

Homework for next meeting: Read and log Chapter 9 of *TIS*, "The Tradition of the Personal Essay" 89-105

UNIT II: Personal Essay / Lyric Essay (5 weeks)

Questions to consider:

- What aspects of my life do I want to examine?
- How can the lyric essay allow for introspection?

Week 7-8: What is the Personal Essay?

October 13-17

Day 1: Lecture/discussion of chapter 9. Each student reads significant notes from log to facilitate discussion. Choose from either prompt 5, 6, or 8 from end of chapter 9 (page 105) and write.

HW: Read "Shunned" *IF*, 49-70. Write two questions to open discussion.

Day 2: "Shunned" discussion/elements of personal essay.

HW for Day 3: Read "Stonehenge and the Louvre Were Cool" *IS*, 253-258. Write 2 questions to open discussion.

HW for Day 4: Read "Three Spheres" *IF*, 3-23. Write 2 questions to open discussion.

Day 3: "Stonehenge . . ." discussion. Writing prompt: When you look in the mirror, what do you see? (see *IS*, 257). Begin "Three Spheres." Complete for HW.

Day 4: "Three Spheres" discussion. Write 5 questions that you still have about yourself (see p. 22 *IF*). Read chapter and log 11 of *TIS*, 89-105, "Playing with Form: The Lyric Essay and Mixed Media."

October 20-24

Day 1: Characteristics of the Lyric Essay: see also *Keep it Real*, 95-96 and *Creating Nonfiction*, 20-23.

Read and discuss: "Three Fragments" by Charles Simic, *IS*, 191-192. Establish relationship among sections.

HW: Read "Fourth State of Matter" by Joanne Beard, handout.

Day 2: Discussion of "Fourth State." HW: Read "A Braided Heart: Shaping the Lyric Essay" by Brenda Miller, *TIS*, 234-244. Annotate in preparation for critical writing.

Day 3: Critical writing on "A Braided Heart": what is the piece "about"? How does Miller braid the essay so that each section complements/extends the other.

HW: *TIS*, 123-124: Choose either prompt 1, 3, 5, 6, or 7 OR Brainstorm response to one of the questions you have about yourself or choose from list of 20 topics. Commit to topic and form of personal essay.

Day 4: Read around and discussion of critical essays. Begin draft of personal/lyric essay.

Notebook due for review.

Weeks 9 and 10: Researching the self and Developing the Personal Essay

October 27-31

Day 1: Writing exercise: character transformation.

Days 2, 3, and 4: Drafting the Personal Essay (6-8 pages): meet in computer center.

November 3-7

Day 1: Workshop the Personal Essay draft to date in pairs. Exercise on using cueing lines.

Day 2: Meet in computer center; draft the personal essay, conference with instructor.

HW: read chapter 14, "The Writing Process and Revision," *TIS*, 181-193.

Week 11: Writing and Revision

November 10-14

Day 1: Elements of global revision; writing prompt 3, *TIS*, 192.

Days 2: Workshop drafts of personal essay using handout on early drafts of personal essays as resource.

Days 3-4: Revising personal essay with instructor feedback.

Unit 2 Assignments: Select one piece of flash non-fiction from your Unit 1 portfolio and develop the piece into a personal essay OR choose a topic from your list of potential CNF topics, and compose a personal essay from scratch (6-8 pp.); separate reflective essay (2 pp.). Due November 17.

UNIT III: Writing About Culture (10 Weeks)

Questions to consider:

- How does the writer's experience of the larger world shape his/her sensibility?
- How does the writer's sensibility shape his/her view of the larger world?
- How do the customs of a place shape its identity?

Weeks 12-13: What is culture? / Writing About Place

November 17-21

Resource for writers: Chapter 8, "Using Research to Expand Your Perspective," *TIS*, 71-86

Day 1: Preview Unit III essay assignment.

Chapter 7, "Writing the Larger World," *TIS*, 63-68

Kitchen exercise

HW: Chapter 3, "'Taking Place': writing the Physical World," *TIS*, 25-34

Day 2: Discuss "Taking Place" and "Place Writing" from *Creating Nonfiction*, 23-24

Writing prompt: *TIS*, 37, prompt 6: a place that defines childhood

HW: Read "France in 25 Exposures" by Christine Buuck, PDF

Day 3: Discussion of "25 Exposures"

Writing: "_____ in 5 Exposures"; Complete for HW

Day 4: "Into the Storm" *IS*, 233 and "Rain" *IS*, 221. Journal prompt: how does the rain function in each of the pieces? Handout from *Now Write* on "Using Place in Your Nonfiction." Complete for homework.

November 24-28

Days 1 and 2: Handout *Now Write*: Sense of Place; Workshop on one piece about place; expand draft

Weeks 14: Writing About the Environment, Science, and Food

December 1-5

Day 1 Virginia Woolf, "The Death of a Moth," and Annie Dillard, "Death of a Moth." Journal writing: how does each writer use the same image to arrive at a different point?

HW: "Children in the Woods" *IS*, 284

Day 2: Discussion of "Children. . .". Writing prompt 5, *TIS*, 36-37, both on nature and "urban nature." Complete for homework.

Day 3: "A Match to the Heart" by Gretel Ehrlich, *IS*, 219-220. Explore the relationship between the natural world and the writer's consciousness.

HW: "Enough Jam for a Lifetime" by Maxine Kumin, *IS*, 39-43. Log: What is the writer's tone towards her mother? Find examples of language that convey tone.

Day 4: "Afternoon Tea" by Emily Hiestand, *IS*, 65-67. Think-pair-share: what is the significance of ritual/food in each of these essays?

HW: describe a food ritual that you've experienced or witnessed.

Weeks 15-16: Writing About Identity

December 8-12

Day 1: Notebook review. Read student sample of subculture: "Bodega." Write: What is your subculture?

Day 2: Share pieces. Read "Sunday" by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. *IS*, 92-93. How is identity asserted in this essay?

Preview focus on Arts for possible Culture Essay topics. Inform students that they must begin a draft of Culture Essay over winter break, so might consider Arts as a possible choice.

HW: read "Why I Ride" by Jana Richman, *IF*, 395-417.

Day 3: "Why I Ride" discussion. Prompt: Identify a time in which you defined yourself in contrast with others in your life.

HW: "Growing Up Game" by Brenda Peterman, *IS*, 115-119. Identify a representative paragraph from the essay to share with the class.

Day 4: Presentation and discussion of representative passages. Journal writing: describe an aspect of your personality that might seem contradictory to an outsider.
Homework: “Researching Your Own Life” by Michael Pearson, PDF.

December 15-19/December 22

Day 1: Discuss “Researching.” In-class writing on prompt. Complete for Day 4 of week.

Days 2 and 3: “Leaving Babylon: A Walk Through the Jewish Divorce Ceremony” by Judyth Har-Even, *IF*, 269-287. Analysis of structure and form in relation to expression of identity.

Day 4: Workshop “Researching” activity.
For January 5, read and log *TIS* chapter 5, 48-54, “Writing the Arts.”

Assignment over winter break:

1. **HW:** decide on topic for Culture essay. Do any necessary research. Begin draft. **Due: January 9**
2. *Angela’s Ashes* by Frank McCourt. Read and log for elements of place, identity, myth, history, and religion. **Due: February 2**

Weeks 17-18: Writing About the Arts

January 5-9

Day 1: Student led discussion of each aspect of chapter on arts.
“One Human Hand” by Li-Young Lee, *IS*, 293-294. Focus on revelation and how art informs characterization.

Day 2: “Museum Piece” by David Huddle, *IS*, 183-184. Gallery walk activity. Focus on Speculative Narrative.
HW: Handout “Writing About Images” by Tom Lutz

Days 3 and 4: Distribute postcards of visual art; draft a speculative narrative. Workshop drafts.

Share beginning drafts of Culture Essay.

HW: Read and log chapter 14 of *TIS*, the revision process. Bring “discovery drafts” from this unit to next class.

January 12-16

Day 1: Discuss elements of revision; apply to one discovery draft.
HW: *TIS*, 54, prompt 8: important music

Day 2: Discovery draft of music prompt. Complete for hw.

Days 3 and 4: *TIS*, 54, prompt 10: reading life. Discovery draft.

Choose one of the discovery drafts for “shedding ink.” Send around a copy with a post-it indicating whether you’d like your peers to “bless,” “press,” or “address” something in the draft.

Notebook review.

Weeks 19-20: Developing the culture essay / revision

January 19-30

Week 1: Drafting the culture essay

Week 2: Workshop and revision of culture essay.

Unit 3 Assignments: sustained essay (6-8 pp.) that engages with an aspect of culture that you are either part of or witness to; writing portfolio that showcases two drafts of Unit 3 essay; separate reflective essay (2 pp.) Due: January 30, 3:00 pm.

Week 21: Memoir and culture

February 2-6

Days 1 and 2: student pairs on assigned topics in *Angela’s Ashes*: place, identity, myth, history, and religion. Prepare work for facilitating discussion.

Days 3 and 4: student facilitated discussion of topics related to culture in *Angela’s Ashes*. Response paper (2 pages): how does the memoir reveal more than the memoirist’s life?

UNIT IV: Literary Journalism (8 Weeks)

Questions to Consider:

- What are the elements of literary journalism?
- How does the genre affect the reader’s understanding of events?
- What topics are appropriate for literary rendering?

Weeks 22 and 23: What is literary journalism? / finding your material

February 9-20

Includes February break, 13th through 17th.

Read *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote for class discussion beginning March 23.

Day 1: review *TIS* 97-99 on “Literary or New Journalism”
“(Narrative) J School for People Who Never Went” Adrian Nicole LeBlanc
HW: *TIS*, chapter 6 “Gathering the Threads of History” 55-60.

Day 2: Review Unit IV assignment; discussion of chapter 6 and relationship between individual and history

Days 3 and 4: Meet in computer lab: Dating a significant event writing, *TIS*, 61. Discovery draft due February 18.

Day 5: workshop discovery draft. Read “Being Brians” by Brian Doyle, *IF*, 163-173.

Day 6: Discussion of “Being Brians.”
HW: Read “Looking at Emmett Till” by John Edgar Wideman, *IF*, 24-48.

Weeks 24-25: Researching, interviewing, and reporting

February 23-27

Day 1: Respond to Wideman’s statement at end of “Till” p. 47: “Does a photo document or fabricate an event? Is life composed of facts or a constructed fiction? . . . Good writing reminds us everyone’s responsible for dreaming a world, and the dream, the point of view embodied by it, within it, is as close to fact, to reality, as we ever get.”
Begin discussion of essay.

Day 2: Complete “Emmet Till” discussion. Ch. 8, *TIS*, “Using Research to Expand Your Perspective.”
Complete for homework.

Day 3: Chapter 8 discussion; Prompt 1 page 84—extracting facts from previous piece.

Begin reading “The Search for Marvin Gardens” by John McPhee, from *Contemporary Creative Nonfiction* (handout). Complete for homework.

Day 4: “Marvin Gardens” discussion.

HW for day 2 of next week: Read “Bill Clinton: Public Citizen” by George Saunders (PDF).

On-going: read *In Cold Blood* for March 23.

March 2-6

Day 1: Distribute news articles. Create interview questions that might be asked to develop article into Literary Journalism. Read “Interviewing: Accelerated Intimacy” by Isabel Wilkerson (PDF). Interview practice activity.

Complete Bill Clinton profile for hw (assigned last week).

Days 2 and 3: Discussion of George Saunders's profile of Bill Clinton in relation to "Reporting for Narrative: Ten Tips," by Mark Kramer, *TTS*, 22-24. Focus on how the profile of Bill Clinton conforms to Kramer's suggested tips.

Day 3: "A Story Structure" by Jon Franklin in *TTS*, 109-111 and "Endings" by Bruce DeSilva in *TTS*, 116-121.

Day 4: Read "Consider the Lobster" by David Foster Wallace in *Creating Nonfiction*, 755-769
Complete for Day 1 of next week.

Weeks 26-27: Addressing Ethical Issues in Literary Journalism

March 9-13

Days 1 and 2: Discussion of text; analysis of tone and structure. How does the text shift?
Read interview with Wallace. How does the interview inform understanding of the text?
HW: read "Household Words" by Barbara Kingsolver in *Creating Nonfiction*, 471-478. Write two questions about essay to facilitate discussion.

Day 3: "Household Words" discussion.

Day 4: Meet in computer lab: Research topic; conduct interviews .

March 16-20

Days 1 and 2: Meet in computer lab: Continue research, interviewing and drafting Literary Journalism essay.

Days 3 and 4: Draft Literary Journalism essay.

HW: on-going reading

March 23-27

Days 1 and 2: Workshop Literary Journalism essay.

Days 3 and 4: Conference with instructor and revise Literary Journalism essays; reflective essay.

Unit IV Assignments: researched personal essay or a piece of literary journalism, 6-8 pp.; separate reflective essay (2 pp.) April 3.

Weeks 28-30 Full-Length Literary Journalism: *In Cold Blood* and *Capote*

March 30—April 3

Day 1: Background of *In Cold Blood*. Rhetorical analysis of opening page. How does Capote establish tone of the text?

Days 2 and 3: Analysis of character in nonfiction. Identify what is fact v. what is speculation and how the speculation contributes to the text.

**Day 4: Collect Unit IV assignment
Trace structure, motifs, and symbolism throughout the text.**

Assign outside reading for Literature Circle from choices: *Zeitoun*, *Eating Animals*, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*: Due April 27

April 6-10

**Day 1: Structure, motif, and symbolism continued
HW for Day 3: read *New Yorker* article on Capote (handout)**

Day 2: Critical Writing: compare two scenes of same event from different viewpoints. How does this technique contribute to the overall text?

Day 3: *New Yorker* article: how does it inform your reading of the text?

Day 4: Elements of film review

April 13-20

Days 1 and 2: Collect notebooks for review. Watch *Capote*, making notes on relationship of film to text and how viewing informs text.

**Days 3 and 4: complete viewing; write film review. Due next meeting.
HW: continue reading individual texts.**

Weeks 32-33: Literature Circles: outside reading on ethical issues

April 27—May 8

Days 1-5 Work within individual circle for *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, *Zeitoun*, or *Eating Animals*.

Days 6-7 Jigsaw: report to other circles on the conclusions reached about each book in circles; share representative passages with class to facilitate discussion.

Day 8: Critical Writing: Choose one of the books discussed: How did the style contribute to an analysis of the ethical issues addressed? How does this conform to the genre of Literary Journalism?

UNIT V: The Graphic essay/mixed media (2 weeks)

Question to consider:

- How can form be used to convey content?

Weeks 34-35

May 11—May 15

Day 1: Review *TIS* pp. 117—124, “Thinking Beyond the Page” addressing alternate forms of essays. Begin excerpt of *Blankets* by Craig Thompson (handout). Complete for homework.

Day 2: Discussion of *Blankets* addressing the relationship between visual and written elements and “Postcards from Birobidzhan: The Life & Death & Life of the Jewish Autonomous Republic” by Shelley Salamensky, handout.

Days 3 and 4: Selected radio essays from Radio Lab and/or This American Life. HW Choose topic and approach for Media essay.

May 18—May 22: Experimentation with Form

Days 1, 2, and 3: Meet in computer lab: Experiment with graphic, media, or radio essay. Begin a draft that will be included in final portfolio, but does not need to be in publishable form. Consult with peers and instructor through process.

Day 4: Share progress on essay.

UNIT VI: Revision and Reflection (2 Weeks)

Weeks 36-37: Final Portfolio: Comprehensive revision of a creative nonfiction piece and student readings

May 25-29

Days 1 and 2: Workshopping

Days 3 and 4: Revision

June 1-6

Days 1 and 2: Revision and reflection piece; reflection on others’ portfolios.

Days 3 and 4: Sharing student work.

Unit 5 Assignments: comprehensive revision of a selected piece of writing from the course; final showcase portfolio; separate reflective essay; media essay. Due June 6.