

## General Education Course Proposal

Proposed Course: Engl 44 Creative Nonfiction Writing 4  
Prefix No. Title

Department: English School: Arts & Humanities

**GE Category (Indicate one category only):**

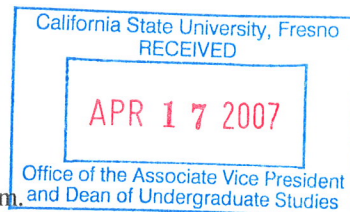
Foundation: A1\_\_\_; A2\_\_\_; A3\_\_\_; B4\_\_\_  
 Breadth: B1\_\_\_; B2\_\_\_; C1 ; C2\_\_\_; D\_\_\_; E\_\_\_  
 Integration: B\_\_\_; C\_\_\_; D\_\_\_; International/Multicultural\_\_\_

Existing Course\_\_\_; Revised Cours ; New Course\_\_\_

Course Included in Current GE Program\_\_\_

New courses require the Undergraduate Course Proposal form in addition to this form.

Revised courses require the Undergraduate Course Change Request in addition to this form.



**Proposed catalog description:** Limit course description to 40 words using succinct phrases. Include prerequisites, limitations, lecture/lab hours. Indicate former course number, e.g., (Former Biol 105)

**ENGL 44. Creative Nonfiction Writing [formerly Prose Writing](4).**  
 Beginning workshop in the writing of lyric essay, memoir and other forms of creative nonfiction writing; appropriate readings and analyses. G.E. Breadth C1.

**Enrollment limit per section:** 25

**Expected number of sections per semester – Year 1** 2 ; **Year 3** 3

**Attachments:**

1. A statement presenting the ways in which this course meets the Specifications provided in the appropriate section of the General Education Policy as well as in the Policies for Inclusion and Evaluation of General Education Courses.
2. A statement of elements common to all sections of this course, identifying content, objectives, required student activities, grading policy, representative texts, and an approximate schedule for the course. Required student activities include such things as papers, research projects, homework, laboratory and/or studio performance, recitations, participation, attendance, and exams.
3. A typical syllabus for a particular offering of the course.
4. Any special cost factors associated with this course.

**Approval for Inclusion in General Education**

James E. Wake 3/12/07  
 Department Chair Date

[Signature] 4.12.07  
 School Dean Date

[Signature] 12/07  
 Associate Provost Date

[Signature] 4/12/07  
 School Curriculum Committee Date

[Signature] 12/07  
 General Education Subcommittee Date

**Forward Original and TWELVE copies to:**  
 Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, M/S TA 54

## GE Course Proposal Statement

**ENGL 44. Prose Creative Nonfiction Writing (4)** Prerequisite: ENGL 5B and 10. Beginning workshop in the lyric essay, memoir and other forms of creative nonfiction prose-writing; appropriate readings and analyses. G.E. Breadth C1.

This is an existing course, parallel to English 41 and English 43 (both listed in GE Area C1). The English Department has revised the title and updated the course description (above) to conform to current professional terminology, and to reflect more accurately what is actually being taught in the course.

Like its companion courses in creative writing, this is an arts course, in this case focused on the art of creative nonfiction (arguably the most widely read of contemporary literary arts) rather than poetry or fiction. Like the other two courses, the goals and practical aspects of the course are very much in line with the stated purpose and specifications of GE Breadth area C1.

### I. Goals/Purpose of course:

English 44 is a workshop course in creative writing. It includes both intensive study of various forms of creative nonfiction by significant writers in the genre, and beginning practice in the writing of creative nonfiction. Because this is a course in imaginative or creative writing, students are asked to develop their skills as artistic thinkers, to study appropriate models and to create their own works of art in a workshop setting.

The creative writing program is based on the philosophy that art is one of the most powerful means toward understanding human experience, and that art has always been a profound and necessary aspect of human existence. By means of careful analyses of professional contemporary and historical work, substantial instruction and exercises in the craft, and class critiques of original student work in process, students gain an understanding and appreciation of this specific art form and a larger understanding of how imaginative arts enhance human experience and enrich our lives.

### II. Objectives and elements common to all sections

Objectives: Students will gain an acute awareness of patterns of sound and patterns on the page; of physical and sensory imagery as presented in language; of received forms and invented structures; and of the powerful aural qualities of written language. They will study and practice various structures and forms, and develop an awareness of (and acquire practice in) the uses of image, typography, dialogue, and various other tools employed by language artists.

The concept that art can be--and often is--both specific and universal is particularly stressed in this course. As students read and analyze professional personal memoirs from a culturally diverse group of authors, they will begin to understand how one person's private and personal experience can be made (through art) to speak to the experience of an entire culture and beyond. They

will also become aware of ways in which a particular piece can speak effectively to a reader who might have similar experiences to the author's—and speak equally effectively to a reader from an entirely different time and place.

Students in this course will gain familiarity with and appreciation for the cultural functions of art, and begin to develop an understanding of how art might function in their own individual lives and cultures. The course addresses basic questions of purpose, of audience, of the place of art in a given culture, and students gain significant experience in creating their own works, attempting to involve or address these very questions.

Specific common requirements and other elements:

- A. Through close reading and discussion of a variety of major writers with differing styles and approaches, and from a wide variety of cultures, students in English 44 become aware of and develop their capacity to experience art at many levels of response including intellectual, emotional, physical and cultural.
- B. Substantial written work required. Students create original works of their own (at least 2-4 revised creative nonfiction essays (at least 20 total pages in length) in addition to appropriate smaller written responses, exercises, and drafts.
- C. Students present their works-in-progress to the class for critique and discussion. This enhances their skills and leads to the beginnings of an individual aesthetic approach as they discover the multi-faceted and complex responses that art is capable of engendering.
- D. Students read widely from the course text(s) and also from literary journals and magazines to be found online, at the library or in bookstores. They also read and critique each other's work on a regular basis.
- E. Students complete appropriate focused exercises and provide written as well as oral comments on the work of their peers.
- F. Students are assigned to read and discuss appropriate theoretical writings to gain a basic understanding of the ways that art can create, reveal, or even shape meaning in our lives.
- G. Students are asked to present at least some of their work out loud to the class.
- H. Students receive substantial instructor feedback on their writing (both in writing and out loud in class or conference).

ENGLISH 44 (4 Units)  
*Creative Nonfiction Writing*

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <u>Course Information</u><br>Room: ED 173<br>Time: Tuesday, Thursday 2:00 – 3:50<br>Office Hours: TBA | <u>Instructor Information</u><br>James. Espinoza<br>Office: IT 115<br>Email: nozal7@hotmail.com |
|---|---|

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

- *Fourth Genre: Contemporary Writers of/on Creative Nonfiction*, Robert L. Root Jr. and Michael Steinberg
- *In Cold Blood*, Truman Capote
- Peer manuscripts
- Handouts and various pieces published in literary journals and magazines

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

In this class we will be studying the literary genre of creative nonfiction. We will do this by reading a variety of contemporary (and not so contemporary) authors and analyzing their technique, craft, etc. You will also have the opportunity to practice the craft of creative nonfiction writing and to develop an appreciation for the art of literary writing as it relates to individual readers as well as the culture as a whole. By practicing craft I am referring to the process of writing as an art--from brainstorming or notebooking ideas to creating drafts, workshopping, incorporating feedback and revising.

**PRIMARY LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

My goal for this class is that you walk away with an understanding of creative nonfiction as a literary genre not necessarily defined by rigid borders. You will become familiar with terms associated with nonfiction such as memoir, personal essay, narrative, literary journalism, reflection, and lyric essay. You will also become familiar with some of the debates about the nonfiction genre, from the discussion over terminology to the argument over memory and "truth." All of this, naturally, will make more sense as class carries on. You will gain substantial practice in analyzing and evaluating works of creative writing and in generating your own creative work.

**GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES (Arts, Area C1):**

**Purpose:**

Through reading, discussion and substantial practice of the art of creative nonfiction, you will

gain a specific understanding of this art form and a more general understanding of how the imaginative and creative arts enhance human experience and enrich our lives. Projected outcomes to meet university GE specifications for area C1 are as follows:

**1. Awareness and understanding of shape, surface, mass, pattern, and/or sound as elements in art:**

- a. Through close examination and discussion of selected significant works of creative nonfiction, students will develop an awareness and understanding of prescribed (or received) structures and patterns involved in creative writing as well as more innovative or experimental structures and patterns and their effects.
- a. Students will be able to identify patterns of sound, rhythmic patterns, patterns of sensory image, patterns of rhetoric and sentence structure, and other structural elements of the art. Students will be expected to recognize and explain deliberate uses of and departures from structural and spatial convention (typography, grammar, punctuation, etc.).

**2. Development of the capacity to experience art at many levels of response including intellectual, emotional, physical and cultural through studying significant works of the human imagination (the study may include active participation in individual aesthetic, creative experience).**

- a. Students will demonstrate the ability to respond to a variety of works of creative writing in oral reports, class discussion and written responses which consider emotional, physical and intellectual appeals of the works of art under discussion.
- b. Students will be expected to recognize and distinguish between an aesthetic approach that appeals primarily to the intellect and one that appeals primarily to the emotions, and will be able to demonstrate an understanding of how the written and spoken word can create meaning on many levels at the same time.
- c. Through substantial practice in creating their own creative nonfiction pieces, students will demonstrate an awareness of how the above patterns and structures are used to create complex levels of meaning.
- d. Students will become aware of how cultural context helps to shape both creation of and responses to a work of creative nonfiction, and how cultural aspects of a specific memoir or other work might contribute to the cultural awareness of the reader.

**3. Awareness of the universality of art, as well as the understanding of art in a cultural context.**

- a. Students will be expected to be able to articulate in writing and in discussion the cultural and universal human significance of the literary arts, specifically how a particular human story can be understood as relevant for a universal audience.
- b. Students will be expected to understand ways in which cultural context affects aspects of creation and purpose in specific works of literary art.
- c. Students will be expected to create work of their own which attempts to universalize a specific personal or observed experience.

## **MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS:**

### **Essays**

You will write three major essays for this class. Each essay has a minimum page requirement of seven pages. There are no length limitations. You will receive more details regarding these essays as the semester unfolds. **In order to pass this class you need to turn in all essays.**

*Each essay will be thoroughly critiqued and commented on in workshop by your peers and instructor, as well as in writing by the instructor. After your initial revision, the essay will be handed in to the instructor for further written feedback before the final draft is completed. In addition, the instructor will schedule midterm conferences to discuss general and specific writing problems with individual students (and will be available for individual conferences at other times as needed).*

### **Reading Responses**

You will be responsible for turning in responses for assigned readings. Usually, there will be a prompt to guide your one page response.

### **Final**

The final in this class will consist of you revising one of the three essays you wrote and workshopped during the semester.

### **Discussions**

It is imperative that you participate in our discussions. My hope is that through the semester we build a comfortable, respectful, and easy-going classroom culture where we can all express our opinions and ideas freely. I will do my best to create such an atmosphere.

### **Late Assignments**

Late assignment will not be accepted.

## **GRADING/EVALUATION:**

Final Grades will be based on the following:

|                           |           |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| Memoir Essay              | 20 points |
| Personal Essay            | 20 points |
| Literary Journalism Essay | 20 points |
| Reading Responses         | 10 points |
| Class Participation       | 10 points |
| Final Revision            | 20 points |

## **GRADING SCALE:**

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| 90-100 | A |
| 80-89  | B |
| 70-79  | C |
| 60-69  | D |
| 0-60   | F |

**Attendance:**

This course is discussion and activity driven. A good deal of time is spent discussing, modeling, working in groups, and workshopping essays. It is in your best interest to attend class. After all, you are paying for it. If you are not in class, you are losing points from missed homework assignments and in-class assignments. There is no make-up work allowed.

**Religious Observances:**

Students who will be absent from class due to religious observance must provide notice of the date(s) to me, in writing, by the end of the second week of classes.

**Cell Phones**

Please turn off your cell phone before each of our classes.

### **University Policies**

**Students with Disabilities:** Upon identifying themselves to the instructor and the university, students with disabilities will receive reasonable accommodation for learning and evaluation. For more information, contact Services to Students with Disabilities in Madden Library 1049 (278-2811).

**Honor Code:** "Members of the CSU Fresno academic community adhere to principles of academic integrity and mutual respect while engaged in university work and related activities." You should:

- a) understand or seek clarification about expectations for academic integrity in this course (including no cheating, plagiarism and inappropriate collaboration)
- b) neither give nor receive unauthorized aid on examinations or other course work that is used by the instructor as the basis of grading.
- c) take responsibility to monitor academic dishonesty in any form and to report it to the instructor or other appropriate official for action.

**Cheating and Plagiarism:** "Cheating is the actual or attempted practice of fraudulent or deceptive acts for the purpose of improving one's grade or obtaining course credit; such acts also include assisting another student to do so. Typically, such acts occur in relation to examinations. However, it is the intent of this definition that the term 'cheating' not be limited to examination situations only, but that it include any and all actions by a student that are intended to gain an unearned academic advantage by fraudulent or deceptive means. Plagiarism is a specific form of cheating which consists of the misuse of the published and/or unpublished works of others by misrepresenting the material (i.e., their intellectual property) so used as one's own work." Penalties for cheating and plagiarism range from a 0 or F on a particular assignment, through an F for the course, to expulsion from the university. For more information on the University's

policy regarding cheating and plagiarism, refer to the Class Schedule (Legal Notices on Cheating and Plagiarism) or the University Catalog (Policies and Regulations).

**Computers:** "At California State University, Fresno, computers and communications links to remote resources are recognized as being integral to the education and research experience. Every student is required to have his/her own computer or have other personal access to a workstation (including a modem and a printer) with all the recommended software. The minimum and recommended standards for the workstations and software, which may vary by academic major, are updated periodically and are available from Information Technology Services (<http://www.csufresno.edu/ITS/>) or the University Bookstore. In the curriculum and class assignments, students are presumed to have 24-hour access to a computer workstation and the necessary communication links to the University's information resources."

**Disruptive Classroom Behavior:** "The classroom is a special environment in which students and faculty come together to promote learning and growth. It is essential to this learning environment that respect for the rights of others seeking to learn, respect for the professionalism of the instructor, and the general goals of academic freedom are maintained. ... Differences of viewpoint or concerns should be expressed in terms which are supportive of the learning process, creating an environment in which students and faculty may learn to reason with clarity and compassion, to share of themselves without losing their identities, and to develop and understanding of the community in which they live . . . Student conduct which disrupts the learning process shall not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action and/or removal from class."

**Copyright policy:** Copyright laws and fair use policies protect the rights of those who have produced the material. The copy in this course has been provided for private study, scholarship, or research. Other uses may require permission from the copyright holder. The user of this work is responsible for adhering to copyright law of the U.S. (Title 17, U.S. Code). To help you familiarize yourself with copyright and fair use policies, the University encourages you to visit its copyright web page:

<http://www.lib.csufresno.edu/libraryinformation/campus/copyright/copyrtpolicyfull.pdf>

### Tentative Course Schedule

| Date       | Topic(s)   | Assignment Due                  |
|------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Tu, Aug 29 | Introduction to course<br>Icebreaker                                     |                                 |
| Th, Aug 31 | Discussion<br>Defining nonfiction<br>The memoir<br>Memory exercise pt. 1 |                                 |
| Tu, Sep 5  | Discussion<br>Memory and "truth"<br>Video<br>James Frye on <i>Oprah</i>  | Memory exercise pt. 2           |
| Th, Sep 7  | Group reading  | "Memory and Imagination," Hampl |



|            |   |   |
|------------|---|---|
|            | “The Art of Memoir,” Cleary<br>Discussion<br>Comparing Hampl and Cleary                               | 1 page response   |
| Tu, Sep 12 | Discussion<br>Dillard<br>Finding meaning and developing the story                                     | “To Fashion a Text,” Dillard<br>1 page response         |
| Th, Sep 14 | Group reading<br>“Composing “Teacher Training,””<br>Discussion<br>Revision and developing the story   | “Teacher Training,”<br>1 page response                  |
| Tu, Sep 19 | Reflection exercise<br>“Black Hair,” Gary Soto  | “Finding the Inner Story,” Steinberg<br>1 page response |
| Th, Sep 21 | Discussion<br>Reflection in “ “<br>Group reading<br>“Collage, Montage, Mosaic, Vignette . . .”        | “ ,” David Sedaris<br>1 page response                   |
| Tu, Sep 26 | Brainstorming and freewriting<br>Sign-up for workshop   | Work on memoir  |
| Th Sep 28  | Workshop  | Memoir due  |
| Tu, Oct 3  | Workshop  | Memoir due  |
| Th, Oct 5  | Workshop  | Memoir due  |
| Tu Oct 10  | Discussion<br><i>In Cold Blood</i>  | <i>In Cold Blood</i> , Capote – pages 1-150             |
| Th, Oct 12 | Discussion<br>The personal essay<br>Group reading<br>“What Happened to the Personal Essay,”<br>Lopate | “On Friendship,” Montaigne<br>1 page response           |
| Tu, Oct 17 | Group reading<br>“Sick Fuck”<br>Discussion<br>Comparing Montaigne and Oates                           | “On Mike Tyson,” Joyce Carol Oates<br>1 page response   |
| Th, Oct 19 | Group reading<br>“Pendejismo,” Burciaga<br>Brainstorming and freewriting                              | “Portrait of My Body,” Lopate<br>1 page response        |
| Tu, Oct 24 | No Class – Work on personal essay   | Work on personal essay                                  |
| Th, Oct 26 | Workshop  | Personal essay due                                      |
| Tu, Oct 31 | Workshop  | Personal essay due                                      |
| Th, Nov 2  | Workshop  | Personal essay due                                      |
| Tu, Nov 7  | Discussion<br>Literary journalism<br>Group reading<br>“Courting the Approval of the Dead,”<br>Kidder  | “East Side Story,” Espinoza<br>1 page response          |

|            |   |   |
|------------|---|---|
| Th, Nov 9  | Film<br><i>Capote</i>                       | Finish reading <i>In Cold Blood</i> , Capote    |
| Tu, Nov 14 | Documentary                                 | "Where Worlds Collide," Iyer<br>1 page response |
| Th, Nov 26 | Discussion<br>Brainstorming and freewriting | Plan of action for literary journalism essay    |
| Tu, Nov 21 | Discussion                                  | Work on literary journalism essay               |
| Th, Nov 23 | No class - Holiday                          | Work on literary journalism essay               |
| Tu, Nov 28 | Workshop                                    | Literary journalism essay due                   |
| Th, Nov 30 | Workshop                                    | Literary journalism essay due                   |
| Tu, Dec 5  | Workshop                                    | Literary journalism essay due                   |
| Th, Dec 7  | No Class                                    | Work on revision                                |
| Tu, Dec 12 | Discussion<br>Final comments                | Turn in final revision                          |