

**CREATIVE NONFICTION 1
ENG 370-01**

INSTRUCTOR: JOSEPH CONLIN

Class Time : Tuesday and Thursday (12:30-1:45) Classroom: EW 005

Office Hours: Tues.: 11:15-12:15; Thurs. 2:00-3:00 First Floor Library

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Tentative Schedule

Week 1

Jan. 26, Tues: From Topic to Story

Reading: “[The Mattress Wars](#)” by Melanie Gideon, and “[Letter from Mexico](#)” by Michael Wolff.

Assignment: You will leave class today with three story ideas. Please pick one and write a one-paragraph summary of that angle and how you plan to structure your personal essay. Come prepared to discuss your ideas with a group.

Jan. 28, Thurs.: Refining Your Angle

Reading: Chapters One and Two in Philip Gerard’s book *Creative Nonfiction* and “[Consider the Lobster](#),” by David Foster Wallace

Assignment: Paper One Due February 2.: Keep your angle tight. Keep your paper to four pages or less. Submit to ConlinJoseph@gmail.com.

Week 2

Feb 2, Tues.: Finding the Narrative Spine in Your Material

Reading: Chapters Three and Four in Gerard

Assignment: Come prepared to conduct an in-class interview. You may bring a recorder or simply pen and paper.

Feb. 4, Thurs.: The Art of the Interview

I will stage a live interview in-class. Don't be late.

Reading: Sample Transcript. Come prepared to share what you feel is the best story angle in the sample transcript.

Assignment: Write up a transcript which does not have to precisely quote every word but MUST include some direct quotations (about 50 percent of the transcript). Read through your own transcript and in one paragraph write down what you feel is the strongest angle to take if you had to write a profile on your interview subject. This is the most important step in the assignment so please do NOT forget to execute this step. Due February 9.

Week 3

Feb. 9, Tues.: The Art of the Interview II

Discussion of Gerard's Chapters Three and Four.

Reading: “[The Pain Scale](#),” Eula Biss, *Seneca Review*, Spring 2005; Also read [Michael Pollan](#), [Tracy Kidder](#) and [Joan Didion](#).

Assignment: Bring in three startling facts—they do not have to be related to the same subject—to share with the class. Be able to identify your source. Avoid relying too heavily on sources that exist *only* on the Internet.

SAMPLE STARTLING FACT: A 2010 *New York Times* short news item summarized the results of a study that found that one in four Americans reports having no close friends, a shift from one in 10 in 1985. This sort of fact makes me think about all sorts of cultural trends (Facebook, for example) and could get me started on a feature that explores this shift. **I am looking for facts that generate story.**

	<p>Feb. 11, Thurs.: Using Creative Research to Power a Story Reading: “A Place Called Midland,” by Susan Orlean. Assignment due Feb. 16: Susan Orlean writes regularly for <i>The New Yorker</i> and is famous for <i>The Orchid Thief</i>. In “A Place Called Midland” she captures how dull looking places hide deep stories. Write a one-page portrait of a place you have visited (not your hometown or where you live now). Capture what you thought you would find versus what you did find. This is an exercise that should showcase your observational skills and creative thinking. Bring in <i>four</i> copies to class.</p> <p>HOLIDAY BREAK FEBRUARY 12-15</p>
Week 4	<p>Feb. 16, Tues: Creative Research II Reading: Chapters 6 through 9 in Gerard’s <i>Creative Nonfiction</i> Assignment: Quiz on Gerard on February 18.</p> <p>Feb. 18, Thurs.: Sorting Material; Establishing a Sound Structure Gerard Quiz Reading: Field Trip Packet Field Trip Notice: We will meet in the CCSU parking lot behind Willard and I will get you back within the scheduled class time. I will leave at EXACTLY 9:30 a.m.</p>
Week 5	<p>Feb. 23, Tues.: Field Trip to the Special Collections Section of the Library. Meet in the Special Collections Room of the library (second floor, first room on the right after entering the library). Be on time: 12:30. The “tour” will end by 1:45.</p> <p>Feb. 25, Thurs.: 12 Reporters, 12 Angles: Processing the Field Trip Assignment: Second Paper Due March 2</p>
Week 6	<p>March 2, Tues.. Crafting a Voice Reading: “Consumer Report,” Lauren Slater, <i>Sun Magazine</i>, August 2007. Assignment: After reading Slater’s essay, <u>craft a one-to-two-page first person piece</u> about some car story of your own. Bring in four copies to share with a group. Strive for a lot of voice in this piece. Don’t be afraid to be funny, to play with pacing, or experiment with tone. Due March 4. Read second papers chosen for workshop discussion.</p> <p>March 4, Thurs.: The Art of an Effective Workshop Workshop Car Stories and Select Second Papers</p>
Week 7	<p>March 9, Tues.: Review of Techniques/Mid-term/Meet One-on-One. Assignment: Read the Word Craft Packet and complete the exercises.</p> <p>March 11/, Thurs.: Voice and Pacing Assignment: Revisit the Creative Reporting Packet. Choose one of the authors—Pollan, Kidder or Didion—and rewrite two paragraphs of one of your papers using that author’s style. Really focus on how you must shift your pacing and voice to mimic the author’s prose. Study the way they handle transitions. Bring four copies to class to share with a group.</p>
Week 8	<p>March 16, Tues.: Mastering Transitions Assignment: Complete the exercises in the Point-of-View Packet. I want to walk you through how to shift from first person personal to third person personal.</p> <p>SPECIAL EVENT, Saturday, March 13, Mark Twain House: The Mark Twain House is celebrating the centennial of Twain’s death with all sorts of terrific readings,</p>

	<p>music, food and more. Our own Mary Collins will oversee various student readings (award winners from the journal's writing contest) etc. Take the time to participate and EARN EXTRA CREDIT POINTS.</p> <p>March 18, Thurs.: Choosing a Point-of-View</p>
Week 9	<p>SPRING BREAK MARCH 22-27 No Class March 23 and 25</p>
Week 10	<p>March 30, Tues.: Leads, Word Choice and Relevant Detail Reading: Read the "The Migration" by Edward Platt. Assignment: After reading Platt's essay, come up with your own road story. Write a paragraph that summarizes the general elements of your story. Be prepared to share it with a group.</p> <p>April 1, Thurs.: Workshop Third Paper Angles Reading: Read the first 111 pages of <i>A Dash of Style</i> by Noah Lukeman. Read Chapter 10 in Gerard. Assignment: Third Papers due April 6. Bring 12 copies to class.</p>
Week 11	<p>April 6, Tues.: Proper Sourcing and Creative Grammar Reading: Complete Lukeman's <i>Dash of Style</i> Assignment: Study for Lukeman Test. Read Third Papers assigned for workshop discussion. Be prepared to talk about the strengths and weaknesses of their work in detail. Each students must write at least a paragraph of commentary on each student submission. Lead Reviewers must type two paragraphs of commentary and lead a discussion for at least 5 minutes.</p> <p>April 8, Thurs.: Quiz on Lukeman/Assessing Grammatical Habits Workshop Third Papers Reading: Read the student papers assigned for discussion in next class.</p>
Week 12	<p>April 13, Tues.: Workshop Third Papers Reading: Read an excerpt from Tim Wendel's new book, <i>High Heat: The Secret History of the Fastball</i>. Write a one-page portrait of someone in your town.</p> <p>April 15, Thurs.: Using People to Power a Story Assignment: Bring in a list of the top three publications you look at weekly (print or online media; nothing X-rated please). Bring in a copy of one publication you read frequently and might even want to write for. Bring in a fourth paper topic.</p>
Week 13	<p>April 20, Tues.: Target Audiences and Query Vet Fourth Paper Topics Assignment: DRAFT of fourth paper due April 22. Read Chapter 11 in Gerard.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Special Event Tim Wendel Reading/Lecture</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>AUTHOR READING, CCSU, VANCE Room 105, 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. APRIL 21, Wednesday. Tim Wendel will from his new nonfiction book, <i>High Heat: The Secret History of the Fastball</i> from DeCapo Press. Wendel has published several novels and nonfiction books. He also writes regularly for <i>Esquire</i> and <i>GQ</i>. He also teaches creative writing at John Hopkins University.</p> </div> <p>April 22, Thurs.: Overview of Creative Nonfiction Forms Covered in CNF II (ENG 375). Workshop DRAFTS of Fourth Papers Assignment: Fourth Papers due April 27.</p>

	Look at the Ethical Scenarios sheet and decide how you would solve each of the problems. Be prepared to discuss your answers in Tuesday's class.
Week 14	<p>April 27, Tues.: Ethical Guidelines Developing Good Line Editing Habits Assignment: Read Fourth Papers Assigned for discussion. Revisions of fourth papers are due ONE week after we discuss your paper in class.</p> <p>April 29, Thurs.: Workshop Fourth Papers Assignment: Read Fourth Papers assigned for discussion</p>
Week 15	<p>May 4, Tues.: Workshop Fourth Papers Assignment: Identify which paper you wish to revise for the final and bring two copies to class.</p> <p>May 6, Thurs.: Review Papers You Chose to Rewrite for Final Exam Assignment: Bring two copies of a draft of your Final rewrite to class for discussion.</p>
Week 16	<p>May 11, Tues.: Workshop "Final" Submissions</p> <p>FINALS May 17-22 <i>ALL students must submit a revised paper for the final exam unless you receive a waiver from me.</i></p>