Eng 454/554—Studies in Nonfiction: Identity and Form  
Class Time/Place: T, Th 2-3:40 pm in L and L 358

“Writing nonfiction means I tell people's stories for them, not because they're special but because we all are.”— Jo Deurbrouck

"The reason I read nonfiction is to follow an interesting mind."--Philip Lopate

Instructor Info

Lisa Norris  
Office L and L 404  
Office phone: 509-963-1745  
NorrisL@cwu.edu  
Office hours 3:50 pm-5 pm T, Th and by appointment

Course Description

What is nonfiction, and more particularly, what is literary nonfiction? In this senior-level course, we will consider how contemporary literary nonfiction uses a variety of forms—e.g., narrative, lyrical, digital, and graphic—to offer answers to the questions, "Who am I?" and "Who are my people?" Together we will identify literary techniques by reading and discussing anthologized essays, online forms and book-length works (see Texts below) by diverse writers who explore these questions and more. Close analysis of these works not only will improve your thinking, speaking and writing skills but also will offer perspectives on identity through the lens of contemporary problems involving the environment, popular culture, family relationships, religion, art, history, ethnicity, nationality, love, loss and more.

Graded work to assess your progress on Learning Outcomes given below (see the last subheading on the handout) will include quizzes, group presentations, oral class participation, written homework and two longer essays. Given the advanced nature of the class, and its required prerequisites of 302 and 303, I expect that you already have sound writing and research skills.

Texts


Norris/Eng 366/Fall 2014


**Assignments and Grading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percent of Final Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes (including final exam quiz)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One LRVWS Response</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Participation (includes individ. pres. from hw)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Pres.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Note that presentations for grad students will have different requirements</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close Literary Analysis (500 words due at time of group pres.)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reader Response/LNF Essay (1000-2000 words) DRAFT and FINAL</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTE that failure to turn in the draft on time will result in a 5 percent deduction from the final draft grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative Lit. Essay</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOTE that</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>DRAFT and FINAL (1250-2500 words)</td>
<td>failure to turn in the draft on time will result in a 5 percent deduction from the final draft grade</td>
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<td>----------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra credit (one extra LRVWS response)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
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**Oral Class Participation**

The class participation grade is based on your “performance” in our general class discussions. Typically, a bad grade can be earned in one of three ways: 1) by not taking part in our discussions, 2) by not preparing enough to take part, and/or 3) by not being in class enough to take part in a substantive way. *Please note* that any time homework is due, you may be asked to present your responses, and the manner in which you do so will be counted toward your oral class participation grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Grading Narrative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Someone who has been a reliable and constant positive force in class and who likely has never missed more than one class and whose comments reflect excellent consideration of the class readings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>A reliable and constant positive force who may have missed two classes and whose comments reflect a good, but not thorough, consideration of the readings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>A mostly positive force in class, but sometimes unprepared to fully engage us. Someone who has likely missed more than two classes and whose comments reflect some familiarity with the readings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Someone who has not contributed enough to be a positive force through poor attendance, poor participation, or poor preparedness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assignment sheets for each of the other assignments, including rubrics, are given on Canvas ➔ Assignments.

"On Time" Policy
• ALL work MUST be in by the BEGINNING of class on the date it is due. Otherwise, it is counted LATE.

• NO LATE WORK, except the final exam scheduled during exam week, will be accepted after the beginning of the final class.

• Everyone is allows ONE "mulligan"--that is, ONE late paper for the following types of assignments ONLY--Homework, LRVWS Response, Synthesis, Reader Response Essay. To receive this ONE mulligan, you must write me an email requesting permission to turn in the late paper and explaining why it is late. Please attach both your request and my response to the request to the paper when you submit it.

• NO "mulligans" are allowed for quizzes, group presentation, or the comparative lit. essay.

• Missed course requirements are entered into grades as “0” points.

The due date and time associated with each quiz, discussion, exam and assignment are stated clearly on the Course Schedule and changes will be announced in class and on the Canvas site. Extra credit is offered to make up for missed work. You can attend and respond to an extra live literary performance or lecture on creative nonfiction (such as the Lion Rock Visiting Writers Series) for up to one percent of extra credit.

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**Revision Policy**

One revision of the Synthesis and/or Reader Response Essay is allowed. If you decide to revise, I will AVERAGE the two grades. Thus, it is probably only worth doing if you are either a perfectionist or someone who originally received a C or below. NOTE that in order to raise the grade, you will have to do SUBSTANTIVE revision--not just correct grammar and citations but REWRITE and RETHINK. There should be NEW writing, highlighted to call attention to itself, and you should include a paragraph explaining the changes.

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**Learning Commons**

Tutors are available to help people at any level--even faculty. For more info, go to: http://www.cwu.edu/learning-commons/

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**Diversity**
In my classroom, diversity is welcomed and celebrated. I will not tolerate any forms of prejudice or discrimination, including those based on age, color, disability, gender, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status. We are here to learn in a climate of civility and mutual respect.

_We all live with the objective of being happy; our lives are all different and yet the same._—Anne Frank

To find out more about diversity, contact the Diversity Education Center at X1685 or see the website at:

www.cwu.edu/diversity

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**Integrity**

**Academic Integrity** is expected of you. See the Student Code of Conduct if you are uncertain about what behaviors are considered unethical. Your work in this class should be original, unless I give you permission to work with others. Plagiarism—presenting the words of others as if they’re your own—is unethical. I may assign an F to any test, quiz or paper you turn in as your own work that is, in fact, *not* your own work.

The University catalog defines the term “academic dishonesty” in all its forms including, but not limited to:

- cheating on tests;
- copying from another student’s test paper;
- using materials during a test not authorized by the person giving the test;
- collaboration with any other person during a test without authority;
- knowingly obtaining, using, buying, selling, transporting, or soliciting in whole or in part the contents of an unadministered test or information about an unadministered test;
- bribing any other person to obtain an unadministered test or information about an unadministered test; substitution for another student or permitting any other person to substitute for oneself to take a test; plagiarism" which shall mean the appropriation of any other person’s work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one’s own work offered for credit;
- "collusion" which shall mean the unauthorized collaboration with any other person in preparing work offered for credit.
Documented incidences of Academic Dishonesty will be referred to Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs.

### Special Needs

If you have a disability that may prevent you from meeting course requirements, contact the instructor immediately to file a Student Disability Statement and to develop an Accommodation Plan. Course requirements will not be waived but reasonable accommodations will be developed to help you meet the requirements. You are expected to work with the instructor and the CWU Disability Support Specialist to develop and implement a reasonable Accommodation Plan. For contact information at Center for Disability Services (CDS) please visit [http://www.cwu.edu/~dss/cms/](http://www.cwu.edu/~dss/cms/).

### Learner Outcomes/Assessments

The following table of learner outcomes and assessment has been approved for Eng 454 by the university:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learner Outcomes</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Students will be able to identify the formal elements and generic conventions of literary nonfiction and explain how formal choices contribute to meaning.</td>
<td>Classroom discussion, quizzes, exams and papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Students will be able to compare and contrast works of nonfiction based on theme, subgenre, historical context, and/or historical context.</td>
<td>Formal and informal writing assignments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Analyze and discuss the development of a genre in relations to specific historical, material, or cultural conditions.</td>
<td>Classroom discussion, presentations and/or papers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Students will be able to discuss and analyze the thematic concerns of works of nonfiction.</td>
<td>Classroom discussion, quizzes, exams and papers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Write formal and informal responses to works of nonfiction that demonstrate engagement, reflective thought about the writer's own assumptions, effective inquiry, and responsible interpretation.</td>
<td>Formal and informal writing assignments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply theoretical approaches to the analysis of nonfictional texts.</td>
<td>Classroom discussion, exams and papers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CLASS SCHEDULE

WEEK 1
Th/9/25: Introduction: Definitions, History and Forms of Literary Nonfiction:
handouts

WEEK 2
T 9/30: "Talk to Me" (Sedaris), "Son of Mr. Green Jeans" (Moore), "The Beautiful City of Tirzah" (Fletcher in Touchstone; small groups form to plan; HW 1 due
Th 10/2: Graphic Literary Nonfiction: Personal, Religious/International Narratives: Persepolis (Sartrapi); Quiz 1

WEEK 3
T 10/7: Persepolis (Sartrapi); HW 2
Th 10/9: Persepolis (Sartrapi); "Mother Tongue" (Tan in Touchstone);
Group 1 presents; Quiz 2

WEEK 4
T 10/14: Memoir: Locations and Dislocation: Refuge (Williams); HW 3 due
Th 10/16: Refuge (Williams); "High Tide in Tucson" (Kingsolver in Touchstone);
Group 2 presents; Quiz 3

WEEK 5
T 10/21: Another Bullshit Night (Flynn); "Fourth State of Matter" (Beard In Touchstone; Group 3 Presents; Kalfopoulou excerpt
Th 10/23: Essay 1 DRAFT due for online peer review (peer review counts for HW 4 and 5). No physical class. Live meetings w/peer reviewers is optional.

7:30 pm LION ROCK VISITING WRITERS SERIES presents Adrainne Kalfopoulou in the Wildcat Shop
WEEK 6

T 10/28: Another Bullshit Night (Flynn); Homework 6 due

Th 10/30: Another Bullshit Night (Flynn); Essay 1 FINAL due

WEEK 7

T 11/4: Popular History: Cultural/National Stories: Worst Hard Times (Egan); "Consider the Lobster" (Wallace in Touchstone); Group 4 presents; Quiz 4; Marquart excerpt

W 11/5: 7:30 pm LION ROCK VISITING WRITERS SERIES presents Debra Marquart in the Wildcat Shop

Th 11/6: Worst Hard Times (Egan)

WEEK 8

T 10/11: VETERANS DAY. No class.

Th 10/13: Worst Hard Times (Egan); Homework 7 due; "Imelda" (Selzer in Touchstone); Group 5 presents

WEEK 9

T 11/18: Lyric: Cultural, Metaphysical and Personal Stories: Still Life (Doty); Quiz 5

Th 11/20: Still Life (Doty)

WEEK 10

T 11/25: Essay 2 DRAFT due for online peer review workshop (peer Counts for HW 8)

Th 11/27: Thanksgiving Holiday. No class.

WEEK 11

T 12/2: Digital forms and Identities
TBA (see Canvas Announcements for links)

**Th 12/4:**  
**Final Visions of Selves:** "This is not Who We Are" (Nye in *Touchstone*) and "Leap" (Doyle in *Touchstone*); Essay 2 FINAL draft due

*FINAL EXAM (Quiz 6)* opens at 4 pm Saturday, Dec 6, 2014 and closes 4 pm Monday, Dec. 8, 2014. You will have two attempts, 15 minutes each, to complete the quiz.