

**City University of Hong Kong
Course Syllabus**

**offered by Department of English
with effect from Semester A 2016/2017**

Part I Course Overview

Course Title: Creative Non-Fiction Writing

Course Code: EN3574

Course Duration: 1 Semester

Credit Units: 3 credits

Level: B3

Proposed Area: Arts and Humanities
(for GE courses only) Study of Societies, Social and Business Organisations
 Science and Technology

Medium of Instruction: English

Medium of Assessment: English

Prerequisites: Nil
(Course Code and Title)

Precursors: Nil
(Course Code and Title)

Equivalent Courses: Nil
(Course Code and Title)

Exclusive Courses: Nil
(Course Code and Title)

Part II Course Details

1. Abstract

(A 150-word description about the course)

This course aims to introduce students to the techniques of writing creative non-fiction. Students will study the various elements of the essay, memoir and feature article, including voice, analysis, setting, characterization, dialogue, description, narration, exposition and explanation, research and veracity. The course will be taught in a ‘workshop’ format in which students will read and critique one another’s work.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

No.	CILOs	Weighting* (if applicable)	Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate)		
			A1	A2	A3
1.	Describe the elements and techniques of creative non-fiction including voice, analysis, setting, characterization, dialogue, description, narration, exposition and explanation, research and veracity, and identify these elements and techniques in creative non-fiction by published writers.		X	X	
2.	Evaluate and critique the creative non-fiction of others, pointing out strengths and weaknesses, giving reasoned arguments for their judgments and offering concrete suggestions for revision.		X	X	
3.	Apply their knowledge of creative non-fiction to the writing and revising of their own essays.		X	X	X
...					
		100%			

* If weighting is assigned to CILOs, they should add up to 100%.

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to self-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

(TLAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

TLA	Brief Description	CILO No.						Hours/week (if applicable)
		1	2	3	4			
Reading representative works of creative non-fiction in English and analyzing and critiquing them in class discussions and in written assignments.	Using relevant concepts and terms, students will analyse and reflect upon an array of texts in small group and whole-class settings.	X	X	X				
Listening to lectures on the elements and techniques of writing creative non-fiction	Students will actively engage with lecture materials by responding and discussing in various ways	X	X	X				
Participating in in-class writing exercises designed to develop the mastery of specific techniques.	Evaluating and critiquing the work of classmates and offering suggestions for improvement.	X	X	X				
Writing and revising a portfolio of essays	In small peer-review groups, students will read and respond to one another's writing as a way to reflect upon and develop various stages of the writing process.	X	X	X				

4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No.						Weighting*	Remarks
	1	2	3					
Continuous Assessment: 100%								
Class participation, especially in workshop sessions in which students are expected to present cogent arguments regarding their evaluation of classmates' work and offer concrete suggestions for revision.	X	X					20%	
Portfolio of three essays each of which has undergone revision based on suggestions of the instructor and classmates.			X				60%	
Written explication and critique of a published essay which describes and analyzes the various techniques used and the effectiveness of those techniques.	X	X	X				20%	
Examination: _____% (duration: _____, if applicable)								

* The weightings should add up to 100%.

100%

5. Assessment Rubrics

(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)

Assessment Criteria: Creative Nonfiction

Grade	
A	Writing demonstrates superior ability to combine the factual aspects of personal experience and research with creative work that applies elements of writing craft to meet the requirements of the specific form(s) and genres employed. This includes a clear focus on a central idea or incident; a seamless blending of facts and research into the writing; the ability to collapse time and storyline to the most urgent and necessary scenes as well as dialogue (if used) that serves the scenes dramatized; no excess language. Regardless of form, the prose must demonstrate a solid command of language, as well as a cadence suited to the chosen form and genre. With respect to genre, the writing must demonstrate a mastery of the traditions of the chosen genre or show innovation in a creative reworking or subversion of established traditions, which can be in terms of language or theme or elements of craft.
B	Writing demonstrates good ability to combine the factual aspects of personal experience and research with creative work that applies elements of writing craft to meet the requirements of the specific form(s) and genres employed.
C	Writing demonstrates average but competent ability to combine the factual aspects of personal experience and research with creative work that applies elements of writing craft to meet the requirements of the specific form(s) and genres employed.
D	Writing demonstrates weak ability to combine the factual aspects of personal experience and research with creative work that applies elements of writing craft to meet the requirements of the specific form(s) and genres employed.
F	Writing lacks competent ability to combine the factual aspects of personal experience and research with creative work that applies elements of writing craft to meet the requirements of the specific form(s) and genres employed.

Assessment Criteria: Class Participation

Grade	
A	Contributions to class discussions and workshop demonstrate a thorough and careful reading of the piece under discussion, the ability to insightfully apply knowledge of the craft of fiction in identifying strengths and weaknesses, and useful comments and suggestions for the author. The contribution is expressed in a clear, detailed, tactful and professional manner.
B	Contributions to class discussions and workshop demonstrate a careful reading of the piece under discussion, the ability to adequately apply knowledge of the craft of fiction in identifying strengths and weaknesses, and useful comments and

	suggestions for the author. The contribution is expressed in a clear, detailed, tactful and professional manner.
C	Contributions to class discussions and workshop demonstrate an adequate though not always careful reading of the piece under discussion, the ability apply knowledge of the craft of fiction in identifying some strengths and weaknesses, and moderately useful comments and suggestions for the author.
D	Contributions to class discussions and workshop demonstrate cursory or incomplete reading of the piece under discussion, and the ability apply some knowledge of the craft of fiction in identifying some strengths and weaknesses, though these may not be accurate, insightful or helpful.
F	Contributions to class discussions and workshop demonstrate little understanding of the piece under discussion, and little ability apply knowledge of the craft of fiction in identifying strengths and weaknesses. The contribution may be expressed in an unclear or unprofessional manner.

Assessment Criteria: Poetry Explication/ Critique

Grade	
A	The critique demonstrates a thorough knowledge of the elements, techniques and traditions of creative non-fiction and the ability to apply this knowledge in identifying and evaluating features in the piece. The analysis is insightful, convincingly argued and clearly expressed.
B	The critique demonstrates good knowledge of the elements, techniques and traditions of creative non-fiction and the ability to apply this knowledge in identifying and evaluating features in the piece. The analysis is relatively insightful, convincingly argued and clearly expressed.
C	The critique demonstrates some knowledge of the elements, techniques and traditions of creative non-fiction and the ability to apply this knowledge in identifying and evaluating some relevant features in the piece. There may be some problems with the way the argument is presented or the quality of the language.
D	The critique demonstrates little knowledge of the elements, techniques and traditions of creative non-fiction and little ability to apply this knowledge in identifying and evaluating some relevant features in the piece. There may be major problems with the way the argument is presented or the quality of the language.
F	The critique demonstrates no knowledge of the elements, techniques and traditions of creative non-fiction and no ability to apply this knowledge in any useful way. There may serious problems with structure, grammar or usage.

Part III Other Information (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

1. Keyword Syllabus

(An indication of the key topics of the course.)

Genres of creative non-fiction

Research and interviewing techniques

The writing and revision process

Dramatization

Diaries

Autobiography and memoir

Travel writing

Meditative essays

Cultural criticism

Reportage

Biography and profiles

2. Reading List

2.1 Compulsory Readings

(Compulsory readings can include books, book chapters, or journal/magazine articles. There are also collections of e-books, e-journals available from the CityU Library.)

1.	Gerard, P. (2001) <i>Writing creative non-fiction</i> . Story Press.
2.	
3.	

2.2 Additional Readings

(Additional references for students to learn to expand their knowledge about the subject.)

1.	Atwan, R. (2007) <i>The best American essays</i> . Wadsworth Publishing.
2.	Gutkind, L. (2004) <i>In fact: The best of creative non-fiction</i> . Norton.
3.	Kramer, M. and Call, W. (2007) <i>Telling true stories: An non-fiction writer's guide</i> . Plume.
4.	Lopate, P. (1997) <i>The art of the personal essay: An anthology from the classical era to the present</i> . Anchor.
5.	Reese Cheney, T. (2000) <i>Writing creative non-fiction. Fiction techniques for crafting</i>