

ENGL314 : NONFICTION WORKSHOP

WED. 4-6:50 ARMSTRONG 123.

“The very first thing I tell my new students on the first day of a workshop is that good writing is about telling the truth. We are a species that needs and wants to understand who we are. Sheep lice do not seem to share this longing, which is one reason they write so very little. But we do. We have so much we want to say and figure out.”

— Anne Lamott

The writing of a non-fiction narrative is a very personal and extremely rewarding undertaking. With a focus on memoir, this course will provide students with the tools it takes to make a larger sense of what happened through visual narrative, writing prompt and storytelling techniques that make the reader sit up and take notice. Because if you lose the reader, you lose the ballgame.

This class provides a structured and encouraging but honest environment wherein writers can get feedback on their pieces and read and critique the work of seasoned writers who have mastered their craft. Students will also listen to the storytelling techniques contained in podcast narratives for the purpose of learning how to utilize narrative moves that are compelling the reader or the listener.

An emphasis on “visual writing”, structure and storytelling. This is a course that relies on the fact that one cannot become a good writer unless one reads good stories and knows the techniques that good storytellers use. Everything from humorous writing to horror writing will be explored for the student to employ in their writing of personal narratives that are honest, theme-oriented, and evocative. The teachings of Vivian Gornick will be instrumental in helping students write about their personal experiences and the experiences of others. There will also be a section on “Fake News”. How to spot it and what purpose it serves in society .