

English 314

Mark Brazaitis, ENGL 314, Spring 2003, Creative Writing: Non-Fiction

ENGLISH 314/001

Creative Writing Workshop: Non-Fiction

Professor Mark Brazaitis

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Class Hours: MWF, 2:30-3:20

Office Hours: Mondays (3:30-5:00), Wednesdays (3:30-6:30) and by appointment

Objective: In this class, you will learn how to become a better writer of non-fiction prose. To become a better non-fiction writer, you must dedicate yourself to both writing and reading non-fiction, and this class will allow you (read: require you) to do both.

Requirements: Over the course of the semester, you will read selections from four books that address four major areas of non-fiction prose writing: criticism, travel writing, profile and memoir. You will also write one piece in each of these areas. (The profile will be a collaborative effort between you and two of your classmates.)

Quizzes: Whenever a reading is assigned, you will be quizzed on it. This brief, objective quiz is designed to give credit to students who do the reading and to encourage everyone to participate in class discussion about the works we read. Although there will be no make-up quizzes, your worst quiz score, including a quiz you might have missed, will be eliminated.

Texts: *For Keeps: Thirty Years at the Movies* (Pauline Kael); *In the Mountains of Heaven* (Mike Tidwell); *Life Stories: Profiles from The New Yorker* (David Remnick); and *The Kiss* (Kathryn Harrison).

Grades: Grades in this class will be based on the following: attendance (20 percent), quizzes (20 percent), writing assignments (60 percent).

Class Schedule and Day-to-Day Assignments

Monday, January 14: Getting acquainted

Wednesday, January 16: What is non-fiction prose?

Friday, January 18: Lecture: Film criticism. **Read:** "Atlantic City" (page 889) and "On Golden Pond" (page 916) in *For Keeps*.

Monday, January 21: Martin Luther King Day—no class

Wednesday, January 23: **Read:** "Diner" (page 930), "E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial" (page 939) and "Blade Runner" (page 944) in **For Keeps**.

Friday, January 25: **Read:** "The Road Warrior" (page 949), "Return of the Jedi" (page 983), "The Right Stuff" (page 1002); "Fatal Attraction" (page 1149); and "Goodfellas" (page 1234) in *For Keeps*.

Monday, January 28: Assignment: Write a rough draft of a movie review (1000 words). Bring three copies of it to class.

Wednesday, January 30: Assignment: Bring to class a copy of a movie review from a newspaper or magazine. Be prepared to read it aloud and discuss whether it's an effective review.

Friday, February 1: Lecture: Other kinds of reviews.

Monday, February 4: Lecture: Travel writing: Assignment: Hand in a final draft of your movie review (1000 words). (This version will be graded.)

Wednesday, February 6: **Read:** Part I ("Around the World") in *In the Mountains of Heaven*.

Friday, February 8: **Read:** Part II ("Outdoors in America") in *In the Mountains of Heaven*.

Monday, February 11: **Read:** Part IV ("North of the Border, South of the Border") in *In the Mountains of Heaven*.

Wednesday, February 13: **Read:** Part V ("Planes, Trains, Cars") in *In the Mountains of Heaven*.

Friday, February 15: Assignment: Write a rough draft of a travel essay on Morgantown (1000 words). Bring three copies of it to class.

Monday, February 18: Lecture: Profiles.

Wednesday, February 20: In-class assignment: Interview instructor; write a brief profile of instructor. Assignment: Write a final draft of a travel essay on Morgantown (1000 words). (This version will be graded.)

Friday, February 22: **Read:** "A Pryor Love" in *Life Stories*. Group planning for profile.

Monday, February 25: **Read:** "Dealing with Roseanne" in *Life Stories*. Group planning for profile.

Wednesday, February 27: **Read:** "Secrets of the Magus" in *Life Stories*. Group planning for profile.

Friday, March 1: **Read:** "Delta Nights" in *Life Stories*. Group planning for profile.

Monday, March 4: Writing day—no class—happy writing.

Wednesday, March 6: Assignment: Write a final draft of a profile (at least five pages in length). Note: This will be a group project.

Friday, March 8: Lecture: Memoir.

Monday, March 11: **Read:** *The Kiss*.

Wednesday, March 13: Lecture: Memoir. First workshop piece due.

Friday, March 15: Workshop

Monday, March 18: Workshop

Wednesday, March 20: Workshop

Friday, March 22: Workshop

Saturday, March 23-Sunday, March 31 SPRING BREAK RECESS

Monday, April 1: Workshop

Wednesday, April 3: Workshop

Friday, April 5: Workshop

Monday, April 8: Workshop

Wednesday, April 10: Workshop

Friday, April 12: Workshop

Monday, April 15: Workshop

Wednesday, April 17: Workshop

Friday, April 19: Workshop

Monday, April 22: Workshop

Wednesday, April 24: Workshop

Friday, April 26: Workshop

Monday, April 29: Workshop

Wednesday, May 1: Workshop

Friday, May 3: Workshop