Creative nonfiction focuses on writing real world experiences with personality and style. In this workshop, you’ll write creative nonfiction and respond critically to the work of others. Focus is on the art that distinguishes literary nonfiction from other forms of nonfiction. As such, we’ll discuss the tools available to creative writers, regardless of genre, including language, dialogue, scene, structure and form, tense/POV, details, and sensory descriptions. Because the work is taken from life, the challenge (and thrill) is to explore those threads of memory, observation, and/or research that most intrigue you and mine them for their riches. Through the use of sample essays, peer review, and writing prompts, we’ll discuss the limits and opportunities unique to this genre. The primary focus is on discussing creative work while exploring nonfiction in a respectful and productive workshop environment.

A Note on the “Dual Instructor” Class
This syllabus is meant to offer you a clear idea of the aspects of the course that are continuous and unchangeable (deadlines, formatting guidelines, ethical expectations, etc.) While these aspects of the course are immutable, the benefit of having two different instructors is that we won’t proceed in the exact same pedagogical fashion. We may run the workshop differently and we will certainly have different ways of approaching and responding to both your work and the work of established writers. We believe this is the benefit of this course—but it may also take a bit of adjustment and flexibility on your part. In turn we will try to be as clear as possible about differences in our routines and expectations.

Required Texts
A packet of essays (as PDF documents) will be sent via e-mail, along with the full schedule, as soon as enrollment is solidified.
**Learning Outcomes**

At the conclusion of this course, you’ll be able to:

- Critically review works of literary nonfiction.
- Understand key components considerations in the craft of creative nonfiction.
- Formulate and share feedback effectively with fellow writers, while strengthening the critical eye you bring to your own work.
- Demonstrate increasingly proficient writing and editing skills through the submission of creative work.

**Routine**

Although the majority of class time will be spent discussing work your classmates produce, we will also respond to writing prompts and discuss the work of established writers.

**Assignments**

**ESSAYS:** Each student will submit four essays: two long essays (6-8 pages) and two short essays (3-5 pages). Each student is responsible for printing copies of his/her own essay to distribute on the due date. Essays must be typed, double-spaced, stapled, in a standard 12-point font, with one-inch margins, numbered pages.

Long Essay #1: Due **Thursday, June 22nd** (bring hard copies to class)
Short Essay #1: Due **Monday, July 3rd** (requirements will be discussed in Cork)
Long Essay #2: Due **Monday, July 3rd** (hard copies distributed in class, Word doc of essay e-mailed to schwehnk@stolaf.edu)
Short Essay #2: Due **Monday, July 17th** (bring hard copies to class)

**FEEDBACK:** For each workshopped essay, students will write 1-2 pages of feedback for the writer. Expectations for how this feedback should be structured will come from Livingston and Schwehn and will be reviewed on the first day of the session (Livingston) and explained via an e-mailed handout (Schwehn).

**PROMPTS:** Students will also offer 2 writing prompts (one for each session) based on an excerpt from the assigned texts and/or objects or other found inspiration. These may be completed in class as time allows, but are intended to inspire writing outside of class.

**READINGS:** All students are required to attend evening readings. Undergraduate students are encouraged to read but may substitute a written response to a reading if desired.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Final Grade %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four Creative Essays</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Reviews/Feedback</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation/Attendance</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prompt/Object Inspiration</td>
<td>10%</td>
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</table>
**Policy on Absences**
Attendance is essential. Because of the intense nature of this class, you cannot pass if you miss too many days; no matter how brilliant your writing. Two absences will bring your grade down. You are responsible for submitting work on time and for obtaining work and any updates if you miss class. While there may be rare occasions when it can’t be helped, your grade will be lowered if you are frequently tardy. The same policies apply to leaving early.

**Policy on Late Work**
This course requires you to conduct yourself as an advanced writing student. You can’t miss deadlines without consequences. Should there be circumstances that prevent you from submitting an essay by its due date, you can work with another student to change dates, but check with us to be sure the schedule will support such a shift.

**Policy on Academic Honesty**
A description of academic honesty, plagiarism and its consequences can be found on the Office of Judicial and Ethical Programs website.

**Policy on Classroom Conduct**
Except for writing prompts, electronic devices are not permitted because they distract, interrupt and show disrespect for the group. See Livingston or Schwehn before class if you have a special need for a device. Do not record a class or critique without permission.

**A Note on Content**
Do not submit nonfiction pieces about anyone in the class or the program as issues of respect, privacy and slander may arise. Take care with inflammatory, overly vulnerable, or traumatic topics. If you cry or swear when you write it, it’s likely too emotionally charged for workshop. A good writer can handle any topic, but some topics make it tougher to focus on craft than others. *In this class, how you write is the primary focus.* In CNF especially, it can be tough to separate the writing from the writer, but in workshop we have to strive to do so.

**Students with Disabilities**
Any student who needs class accommodations is encouraged to speak with us privately to discuss your needs.