WAYS OF TELLING THE STORY (3020)

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YOU’LL NEED
-A writer’s notebook
- *The Best American Nonrequired Reading 2003*, edited by Dave Eggers (order online)
- Course Packet (on reserve at the library; Xerox a copy for yourself)

WRITING
-You will be creating several different types of pieces in this class.
-Approximately every other week, I will give you a writing assignment that you will hand in.
-Unless I specify otherwise, everything you hand in should be typed, double-spaced, approximately three to five pages.
-If you are having trouble making three to five pages, spin off into another related topic in an accompanying piece.
-You will revise these pieces and perhaps add some of them to your final project.

WORKSHOPS
Because I think it is important for everyone to give and have plenty of feedback, we will have several in-class workshops. I will divide you into groups and you will exchange pieces with your group members. The next class, you will come with written comments on the essays of all your group members and you will discuss the pieces one at a time. We’ll talk about different ways to give feedback.

READING RESPONSES
In your journal and sometimes to be handed in, you will write a reaction/imitation/homage to every assigned reading. Imitate the style of the author, write about a similar topic, or do whatever the piece inspires you to do. Also, if it’s not obvious, you must explain how your work relates to the assigned reading. Many times over the course of the semester, you will all read these aloud.

READING DISCUSSIONS
Each of you, along with a partner, will be responsible for leading a class discussion on one of the readings from the course packet or one of the pieces from *The Best American Nonrequired Reading*. More on this later.
MULTI GENRE PROJECT
At the beginning of the semester, each of you will choose a topic that you will become obsessed with for the next few months. You will write about your topic in a mix of genres and forms. Sometimes, I will give you specific assignments. Other times, you are free to explore in any genre you choose. You might want to paint, draw, sculpt, take photographs, make collages. You may choose to write a poem about your topic, an editorial, a series of journal entries, letters, bumper sticker slogans you invent based on your research and thoughts. Write a scene. Make a list. Create a soundtrack. Write a few paragraphs that explain why you are drawn to your topic. Write haiku, found poems, anything you can dream up.

At the end of the semester, you will write a piece in which you reflect on what you have been doing all semester. Look critically at each piece you have done. What have you learned by looking at your topic from different angles? What are the advantages and disadvantages of writing in certain genres? What is gained by each and what is lost? What have you “figured out?” What gives you trouble?

The last week of class, each of you will present your project to the class.

WRITER’S NOTEBOOK
Your notebook will become a record of your thoughts, a place to record close readings of the world, and a sourcebook for essays. I encourage you to carry your notebook with you as much as possible. If it seems too cumbersome, carry index cards in your back pocket and glue them into your notebook later. (The poet Mary Oliver does this.) I will frequently ask you to do writing exercises in your writer’s notebook and to read sections of your choice aloud from it. I won’t collect your notebooks, though. I would not want anyone to read mine, so I feel strongly about not reading yours.

CLASS PARTICIPATION
It is very important for everyone to speak in class. If you are shy or just quiet, I urge you to push yourself. Usually, the more you speak up, the more comfortable you become doing so. Be careful not to monopolize the discussion, though. A balanced approach is best. Also, I encourage you to speak to each other rather than directing everything to the “teacher.”

CONFERENCES
At least once during the semester, I will meet with each of you to discuss your work.

ATTENDANCE AND PREPAREDNESS
- It is important to be in class during every session. If you are absent more than twice, your grade will drop a letter with each additional absence.
- **If you are not in class, it is your responsibility to get the phone number or e-mail address of one of your classmates so you may contact him or her about missed work.**
- I generally do not accept late or incomplete work.
- You will be penalized for chronic lateness; try to be here on time.
- I will not accept multiple page assignments that are not stapled or fastened with a paper clip. Buy a box of paper clips or carry a stapler in your backpack.

PLAGIARISM
Plagiarism is defined as the use of another’s ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement. If you hand in a piece of work that contains plagiarism, you will receive a failing grade for that assignment and perhaps even the course. Also, I will not accept papers that you have written for other courses.

GRADES
I will not grade individual assignments. This is a process course. I urge you to experiment; try new things; learn from “failures” as well as “successes.” I believe that an obsession with grades can undermine good writing because it often inhibits the desire to take risks. I also understand that grades are important to you. If you are getting less than a B-, I will let you know. If you are ever concerned about your grade, please come talk with me.
Your final grade will consist of:
50% multi genre project and presentation
30% writing assignments
20% quality of your presence in class

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities (303-492-8671, Willard 322, www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices).

_No method nor discipline can supercede the necessity of being forever on the alert. What is a course of history, or philosophy, or poetry, or the most admirable routine of life, compared with the discipline of looking always at what is to be seen? Will you be a reader, a student merely, or a seer?_

- Henry David Thoreau