WAYS OF TELLING THE STORY (3020)

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TEXTS
(available in the West Room of the basement of Boulder Book Store on the Pearl Street Mall)
- What is the What by Dave Eggers
- A Thousand Years of Good Prayers by Yiyun Li
- Stop Time by Frank Conroy
- A writer’s notebook (your choice, must be hard-covered and contain unlined pages)

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, at least five pages.
- If you are having trouble making 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 portfolio.

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 DISCUSSIONS
Each of you, along with a partner, will be responsible for leading a class discussion on a section of one of the class texts. More on this later.

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.

MULTI GENRE PROJECT
Because this is a course about “ways of telling the story,” you will choose a topic that interests you and you will research and write about that topic in a variety of genres and forms. Sometimes, I will give you specific assignments. Other times, you are free to explore any genre you choose. You might want to write an editorial, a book review, create a painting, a drawing, a sculpture. You may choose to take photographs or make collages, write a poem about your topic, a series of journal entries, letters, or 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 your collection. 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. 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
Throughout 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.

FINAL PORTFOLIO
(20-30 pages of your best work from the semester)
Must include:
- at least two essays
- at least two reading responses
- letter which guides me through your portfolio
(Some of the following prompts might help you get started:
Introduce and critique each piece. Why did you include the ones you did? Is the order of your portfolio significant? I would like you look at your writing through the eyes of a writer. Do you notice common themes in your work? Comment on your writing style. How has your writing developed? Perhaps talk about your mentor. What has effected you as a writer? Your classmates’ work and comments? Readings from the packet? Writing and reading you have done outside of class? Include anything else you might want to say/add.)

May include:
- additional essays
- additional reading responses
- in-class exercises and journal entries
- any text you have created as part of the Multigenre Project

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 ever concerned about your grade, please come talk with me.
Your final grade will consist of:
30% final portfolio
30% multi genre project and presentation
20% writing assignments (drafts of essays and reading responses)
20% quality of your presence in class