In creative nonfiction, we writers are hemmed in by two equally powerful forces -- the facts (those unalterable details, such as time, place, people, and history) and the self (the consciousness, the "I" who experiences, argues, presents, and feels). In this intermediate course, we will read and write with careful attention to these two forces. We’ll study essays and memoirs in many forms, spanning centuries and continents. Moreover, we’ll discover the ways in which prose style is inextricable from content -- that is, the way style itself plays a vital role in revealing the emotional and historical meaning of a text. Our goal will be to write with skill and verve about things that are real, about the material world of which we are part.
Course Requirements

Class Participation (30%) This includes attendance, punctuality and involvement in class discussions (including on the course site), as well as a presentation on an essay of your choice.

Absences: Attendance is required and essential to your experience of the course. Individual workshops are especially affected by absences and are impossible to recreate. If you have a legitimate reason to be absent, please arrange this in advance; otherwise unexcused absence will reduce your overall grade by 1/3 of a letter grade. Chronic absences will affect your grade significantly.

Presentation: In the first half of the quarter, you will lead a 20-minute discussion on an essay you’ve chosen. Please note that you will need to choose the essay at least a week before your assigned presentation day so that copies can be made and distributed to the class. I will model this presentation the first few class meetings, and am available to help you plan your discussion. Handouts, in-class writing exercises and other ways of involving the class are very much welcomed.

Canvas course site: We’ll be posting some of the work for class on our class site, including annotations on the published essays we read and responses to classmates’ work. We’ll also produce and respond to some short writing assignments. The site content will be entirely private to our class. Annotations and responses to classmates’ work will be part of your overall participation grade; any assignments completed on the site will be part of your assignments grade (see below).

Assignments (20%) This includes all writing exercises you’ve completed in class and for homework, and a longer essay or chapter submitted for the traditional workshop. We’ll conduct mini workshops and/or cold reads (reading the assignment aloud to the class and then inviting response) for many of these assignments, as well as sharing assignments on the course site.

Stanford Honor Code

The Honor Code is the University's statement on academic integrity written by students in 1921. It articulates University expectations of students and faculty in establishing and maintaining the highest standards in academic work. The Honor Code is an undertaking of the students, individually and collectively:

1. That they will not give or receive aid in examinations; that they will not give or receive unpermitted aid in class work, in the preparation of reports, or in any other work that is to be used by the instructor as the basis of grading;

2. That they will do their share and take an active part in seeing to it that others as well as themselves uphold the spirit and letter of the Honor Code.

3. The faculty on its part manifests its confidence in the honor of its students by refraining from proctoring examinations and from taking unusual and unreasonable precautions to prevent the forms of dishonesty mentioned above. The faculty will also avoid, as far as practicable, academic procedures that create temptations to violate the Honor Code.

4. While the faculty alone has the right and obligation to set academic requirements, the students and faculty will work together to establish optimal conditions for honorable academic work.
Written in-class workshop critiques (10%) One of the most valuable elements of a writing class is the opportunity to have your work seriously critiqued both by your instructor and your peers. It will be as beneficial to your nonfiction to think critically and generously about your classmates' work as it will be to have your own writing discussed. It isn't necessary to write pages and pages of comments to your classmates, but make sure your letter is carefully thought-out and both critical and kind. It's important to remember that we won't be discussing polished essays but early drafts.

Attendance at Readings (10%) Attendance at three readings in the Creative Writing program is required. A list of readings this quarter can be found at [http://creativewriting.stanford.edu](http://creativewriting.stanford.edu) and [http://events.stanford.edu/](http://events.stanford.edu/).

Final portfolio (30%): One of goals in this course is to produce a lot of writing, in the service of exploration. Not everything we write or dream up will be worth pursuing, or will allow us to do our best work. (As Louise Glück once wrote, "The only real exercise of will is negative; we have towards what we write the power of veto.") We'll present some of the work we produce to our classmates, either in workshop or on the course site. As the quarter progresses, we'll choose some things to pursue and some things to discard. A final portfolio of the work we pursue will be due at the end of the quarter; our goal will be 20-25 pages of revised writing. This portfolio may be composed of a single long essay, a chapter of a memoir, or a series of short essays and investigations. The main criteria will be sustained engagement and thoughtful revision. The portfolio may not constitute a "completion" of the work you pursue, but it should be a significant step toward polish and achievement.

Make-Up Work: If you miss a class, or cannot make three readings, please read an author interview on either The Paris Review's website, as part of their Art of Nonfiction series [theparisreview.org/interviews](http://theparisreview.org/interviews) or on the Identity Theory website [identitytheory.com/interviews/](http://identitytheory.com/interviews/), and write a two-paragraph analysis of it, due by the last day of class.

Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written critiques</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readings attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final portfolio</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Accommodation

Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodation.
Schedule outline

Sept 27 — 29
Intro to course: The facts & the self

Oct 4 - 6
Nonfiction as process: Creating & remembering

Oct 11 - 13
Consciousness & style

Oct 18 - 20
First attempts: Writing as discovery

Oct 25 - 27
History & place
(Workshops as needed)

Nov 1 - 15
Traditional workshops

Nov 17 - 24
NO CLASS Thanksgiving recess

Nov 29 - Dec 1
Substance & self
On revision

Dec 6 - 8
No exit: Moving forward

Friday, December 16
Final portfolios due by 5 p.m.