

**COURSE OUTLINE:**  
**JOUR6200.03: Writing Craft II**

**Faculty Supervisor:**  
**Stephen Kimber**, Professor of Journalism

**Overview:**

Writing Craft II combines an intense summer residency at the University of King's College with a series of written assignments completed during the fall semester. Officially, the course runs from July 31–December 6, 2016.

In advance of the summer residency, students will read a number of assigned texts and complete related assignments, which will be emailed in advance.

During the residency, students will attend daily lectures, workshops, and panels offered by faculty, mentors, and guest lecturers on topics related to the craft of creative nonfiction, and participate in discussions.

During the fall semester, students will submit an “End Notes” essay assignment — and respond online to assignments written other students — online. Students will also read and critique three “canonical” books of creative nonfiction.

**Relationship to Other Classes:**

JOUR 6200.03 will deepen students' understanding of the creative nonfiction genre they will carry forward into the final year of the MFA and into their careers.

**Learning Outcomes:**

At the end of Writing Craft II, students will have achieved the following learning outcomes:

- Improved their literacy about creative nonfiction writing as a distinct literary genre with its own history, ethics, craft, and professional issues.
- Enhanced their nonfiction writing skills through workshopping their own and other students' writing.
- Learned to produce a readable, informative and transparent exposition of the research techniques used to prepare a creative nonfiction book.
- Expanded their knowledge and understanding of the creative nonfiction canon.

## Student Assignments:

### Pre-residency:

Award-winning author Charlotte Gray is this year's HarperCollins Canada Writer in Residence; acclaimed editor Diane Turbide is this year's Penguin Random House Editor in Residence. In order to make best use of the limited time they'll have with us during the residency, we ask you to do some advance reading (and assignments).

#### Readings:

- *The Massey Murder: A Maid, Her Master and the Trial that Shocked a Country* (Harper Collins)
- "[What I Write](#)" By Charlotte Gray.
- Diane Turbide "Editorial letter" (emailed)

#### Assignments:

- In "[What I Write](#)," Charlotte Gray says she strives to "squeeze the juice out of the dramatic possibilities" uncovered during her research. Discuss how she does this, providing at least two examples from *The Massey Murder*.  
**Length:** 500 words. **Due:** July 31, 2016.
- Discuss what nonfiction writers can learn, based on the feedback and comments contained in Diane Turbide's editorial letter, about such subjects as storytelling techniques, character development, book structure, the use of detail and the length of a manuscript.  
**Length:** 500 words. **Due:** July 31, 2016

### Post-residency Assignments:

- Students will submit a 1,500-word narrative End Notes essay, explaining the "sausage-making" research, writing, ethical and other issues related to the development of their project.
- Students will read and critique three "canonical" books of creative nonfiction

## Assignment Deadlines

### July 31, 2016

- Charlotte Gray assignment
- Diane Turbide assignment

### Sept 1, 2016

- Book Report Choices

### September 25, 2016

- Book Report #1

### October 23, 2016

- Book Report #2

### November 16, 2016

- End Notes Assignment

### November 27, 2016

- Book Report #3

## Marking

Charlotte Gray assignment	10%
Diane Turbide assignment	10%
End Notes assignment	40%
Book Reports (3 x 10%)	30%
Residency participation	10%

## Assignments

### End Notes Essay

*Students will submit a 1,500-word narrative End Notes essay, explaining the “sausage-making” research, writing, ethical and other issues related to the development of their project.*

As nonfiction writers, we sometimes reconstruct scenes and/or incorporate dialogue we didn't personally witness. Unlike daily journalists, we don't always attribute every fact or source of information within our text since, to do so, would slow down the narrative. And, unlike academics, we also prefer not to footnote every last scrap of information.

So how can readers decide whether to trust that the information we have presented as nonfiction is as accurate as we can make it?

Many nonfiction writers use “End Notes” to explain — in general and specific terms — their sausage-making process. Was that scene reconstructed from participants' journals or contemporary news accounts? In cases where recollections of events differ, how did the writer decide which view was more credible? Am I basing dialogue on available transcripts, or a report in the newspaper, or interviews with the participants, or my own recollections? Does the use of quotation marks, for purposes of the story, signal these are verbatim quotes or, especially in historical reconstruction, supported in a general way by other documentation.

End Notes allow you to focus on the narrative flow in your storytelling while still providing those readers who want to know more about how and why you did what you did with transparency about your sources of information and the choices you made.

Many End Notes sections begin with an essay-like overview to explain the writer's general approach followed by specific end notes for sections or chapters in the manuscript.

What I'm looking for in this assignment is that overview — 1,500 well-chosen words — about your own struggles and processes to tell the truth as best you can. I know, I know. Your manuscript isn't yet complete. Fair enough. Work with what you've done. If you decide to incorporate some or all of this assignment into your own End Notes section, you'll already have made a good start!

To give you a better sense of the kind of essay I'm looking for, you'll find on introductory sections of End Notes for published books, as well as some completed assignments by a number of students who survived to graduate and live happily ever after.

**Deadline:** November 16, 2016

**Words:** 1,500

**Part II:** You will also read and respond to at least five of your fellow students' essay submissions.

First and foremost, I want you to read a sampling of five of the essays submitted by your fellow students. And then I want you to respond in 300 well-chosen words, primarily as a reader:

- Does the essay make clear how the writer gathered and evaluated key information used in the book and/or the writer's approach to any factual issues raised by the book?
- Is the essay written in an engaging writerly way that goes beyond simply providing information about sources?
- Does reading the essay intrigue you enough that you'd like to read more.

Given that most readers come to End Notes *after* they've read the book, we're — me too — at a disadvantage reading these as standalone essays. There's nothing to be done about that, except to acknowledge reality and do our best to be helpful to the writer by raising any questions we think readers might have.

**Logistics:** Nested several layers deep in the "2017 Dropbox" folder, there is a folder entitled "Submit EndNotes responses here." Inside that you'll find folders with each student's name on it. Save your response inside the appropriate folder using the following filenaming convention: "[Yourlastname] on [Writer'slastname]'s essay".

**Deadline:** November 30, 2016

**Words:** 300 each

**End Notes Assignment Rubric (40 per cent)**

<b>Content (60)</b>	Provides the reader with clear, comprehensive, detailed information on the sources of all facts and information not otherwise obvious from the text itself.	Provides the reader with information on the sources of most facts and information not otherwise obvious from the text itself.	Fails to provide the reader with useful information on the sources of all facts and information not otherwise obvious from the text itself.
<b>Writing style (30)</b>	Despite the fact-heavy content, the writing is compelling. It hooks the reader and sustains interest throughout.	The writing is generally engaging, but has some dry spots. In general, it is focused and keeps the reader's attention.	The writing has little personality. The reader quickly loses interest and stops reading.
<b>Grammar, Spelling, Writing Mechanics (10)</b>	The writing is free or almost free of errors. Follows <i>Chicago Manual of Style</i>	There are occasional errors, but they don't represent a major distraction or obscure meaning. Style inconsistent.	There are so many errors that meaning is obscured. The reader is confused and stops reading.

## The Great “Great Books” Reports Assignment And Never-ending Books List

So... this started out as “The Canon,” that *exclusive* list of agreed upon works of creative nonfiction that everyone — and particularly every writer of creative nonfiction — must read before they die.

It all started to fall apart at “agreed upon...” *What about...? And don't forget... And Really?* What needs to be represented? Literary Journalism? Memoir? Essay? Biography? History? Graphic Nonfiction? And whose voices aren't there enough of? Women? Canadians? Non-white-non-heterosexuals of varied persuasions? Other?

So this is no longer the canon, if it ever was or ever could have been. It's a random selection of (mostly) wonderful and wonderfully eclectic creative nonfiction by an eccentric variety of often eccentric writers, whose names and titles were suggested by faculty, mentors and students. I've also included some CNF books by your mentors for consideration because I can, because they write great stuff, and because you should read them too.

And, of course, although this list has outgrown all its fences, it's still far from comprehensive. There are, I'm sure you'll discover, favourite writers missing from the list, And even other books by writers on the list you can't understand how I could have ignored... So shoot me. There are also books on this list some of you might question: is this really nonfiction? Is this really any good?

Which leads me to your assignment. Pick three books from the list below. Or suggest books not on the list for which you can make a good case. And write about your choices in an interesting, entertaining, informative, even provocative way.

The official assignment reads as follows: **Book Reports:** For each of three books, students will provide a brief outline of the book's content (400 words), a bio of the author (200 words), and an analysis of the book's significance as a work of creative nonfiction (400 words).

A couple of suggestions:

- Don't “read” books you've already read. It's a waste of this opportunity.
- Read at least one book outside your genre comfort zone. If you love literary journalism, read at least one personal memoir. And versa vice...

Author	Title
• Ackerman, Diane	The Moon By Whale Light
• Angelou, Maya	<i>I know why the caged bird sings</i>
• Alexievich, Svetlana	<i>Boys In Zinc</i>
• Alexievich, Svetlana	<i>War's Unwomanly Face</i>
• Agee, James	Let Us Now Praise Famous Men
• Auletta, Ken	Three Blind Mice: How the TV Networks Lost Their Way
• Baldwin, James	Notes of a Native Son
• Berendt, John	Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil
• Bernstein, Carl, and Woodward, Bob	All the President's Men
• Bissinger, Buzz	Friday Night Lights
• Blais, Madeleine	The Heart is an Instrument: Portraits in Journalism
• Boo Katherine	Behind the Beautiful Forevers: <i>Life, Death &amp; Hope in a Mumbai Undercity</i>
• Bowden, Mark	Black Hawk Down
• Brown, Ian*	The Boy in the Moon
• Bydlowska, Jowita *	<i>Drunk Mom</i>
• Cameron, Stevie*	On The Farm
• Capote, Truman	In Cold Blood
• Cariou, Warren*	Lake of the Prairies
• Carr, David	Night of the Gun
• Carr, Mary	The Liar's Club
• Casey Allan	Lakeland
• Chatwin, Bruce	The Songlines
• Chong, Denise*	The Concubine's Children
• Collins, Anne*	In the Sleep Room
• Conover, Ted	Newjack
• D'Allaire, Romeo*	Shake Hands With The Devil
• Danica, Elly*	Don't: A Woman's Word
• Denick, Barbara	Nothing to Envy
• de Villiers, Marq	Water
• Didion, Joan	Year of Magical Thinking
• Didion, Joan	Where I Come From
• Dryden, Ken	The Game
• Djwa, Sandra	Journey With No Maps
• Dillard, Annie	Pilgrim at Tinker Creek



• Dillard, Annie	An American Childhood
• Eggers, Dave	A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius
• Ephron, Nora	Crazy Salad
• Dan Fagin	<i>Toms River: A Story of Science and Salvation</i>
• Falconer, Tim	That Good Night
• Falconer, Tim	Drive
• Falconer, Tim	Bad Singer
• Finkel, David	Good Soldiers
• Flynn, Sean	3000 Degrees
• Fong Bates, Judy*	The Year of Finding Memory
• French, Tom	South of Heaven
• Frost, Karolyn Smardz*	I've Got a Home in Glory Land
• Freidan, Betty	The Feminine Mystique
• Fuller, Alexandra	Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight
• Gelhorn, Martha	The View from the Ground
• Gill, Charlotte*	Eating Dirt
• Gilbert, Elizabeth	Eat, Pray, Love
• Glenn, Lorri Neilsen*	Threading Light
• Godfrey, Rebecca*	Under the Bridge: The True Story of Reena Virk
• Gray, Charlotte	The Massey Murders
• Grealy, Lucy	Autobiography of a Face
• Greene, Melissa Faye	Praying for Sheetrock
• Greene, Melissa Faye	Last Man Out
• Gwyn, Sandra*	The Private Capital
• Harr, Jonathan	A Civil Action
• Hayes, David*	No Easy Answers
• Hayes, David*	<i>Power and Influence</i>
• Hemingway, Ernest	Death in the Afternoon
• Herr, Michael	Dispatches
• Herriot, Trevor*	River in a Dry Land
• Hersey, John	Hiroshima
• Hillenbrand, Laura	Seabiscuit
• Jobb, Dean	Empire of Deception
• Johnston, Wayne*	Baltimore's Mansion
• Junger, Sebastian	The Perfect Storm
• Junger, Sebastian	War

• Kapuscinski, Ryszard	Another Day of Life
• Kapuscinski, Ryszard	The Soccer War
• Karr, Mary	The Liar's Club
• Kidder, Tracy	Soul of a New Machine
• King, Ross*	Leonardo and the Last Supper
• Kimber, Stephen*	What Lies Across the Water
• Kimber, Stephen*	Sailors, Slackers and Blind Pigs
• Kingsolver, Barbara	Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food
• Kotlowitz, Alex	There Are No Children Here
• Krakauer, Jon	Into Thin Air
• Kramer, Jane	The Last Cowboy
• Langewiesche, William	<i>American Ground</i>
• Larson, Erik	<i>The Devil in the White City</i>
• Lewis, Michael	The Big Short
• LeBlance, Adrian Nicole	Random Family
• Liebling, A. J.	The Earl of Louisiana
• Lopez, Barry	Arctic Dreams
• MacIntyre, Linden*	Causeway
• MacKinnon, J. B. *	Dead Man in Paradise
• MacMillan, Margaret	Paris 1919
• Mahoney, Rosemary	Whoredom in Kimmage
• Mailer, Norman	Armies of the Night
• Mairs, Nancy	Voice Lessons
• Mairs, Nancy	Remembering the Bone House
• Malcolm, Janet	The Journalist and the Murderer
• Maracle, Lee	I am Woman
• Marquez, Gabriel Garcia	News of a Kidnapping
• Mason Lee, Robert*	100 Monkeys: The Triumph of Popular Wisdom in Canadian Politics
• McFarlane, David*	The Danger Tree
• McGoogan, Ken*	Lady Franklin's Revenge
• McGoogan, Ken*	Fatal Passage
• McPhee, John	Annals of the Former World
• Mitchell, Joseph	Up in the Old Hotel
• Mitford, Jessica	The American Way of Death
• Moon, William Least Heat	Blue Highways

• Mukherjee , Siddhartha	<i>The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer</i>
• Mezlekia, Nega	Notes from the Hyena's Belly
• Mortenson, Greg	Three Cups of Tea
• Newman, Peter C.*	Distemper of Our Times
• Nikoforuk, Andrew*	Saboteurs
• Orlean, Susan	The Orchid Thief
• Orwell, George	Road to Wigan Pier
• Orwell, George	Homage to Catalonia
• Patchett, Ann	Story of a Happy Marriage
• Paterniti, Michael	Driving Mr. Albert
• Plimpton, George	Paper Lion
• Raddall, Thomas*	In My Time
• Read, Piers Paul	Alive
• Richards, David Adams*	Lines on the Water
• Rhodes, Richard	The Making of the Atomic Bomb
• Roberts, Paul William	A War Against Truth: An Intimate account of the Invasion of Iraq
• Ross, Gary*	Sting: The Incredible Obsession of Brian Molony
• Ross, Lillian	Picture
• Sacco, Joe	Palestine
• Sack, John	M
• Seltzer, Richard	Confessions of a Knife
• Silcott, Jane*	Everything Rustles
• Simon, David	Homicide: A Year on the Killing Streets
• Skloot, Rebecca	The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks
• Smith, Graeme*	The Dogs are Eating Them Now
• Solnit, Rebecca	The Faraway Nearby
• Strayed, Cheryl*	Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail
• Stroud, Carsten*	Close Pursuit: A Week in the Life of an NYPD Homicide Detective
• Sullivan, Rosemary*	Shadowmaker: The Life of Gwendolyn MacEwan
• Talese, Gay	Honor Thy Father
• Talese, Gay	The Kingdom and the Power
• Terkel, Studs	Working
• Texier, Catherine	Breakup
• Thompson, Hunter	Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas
• Thompson, Hunter	Hell's Angels

• Thurston, Harry*	A Place Between the Tides
• Thurston, Harry*	Secrets of the Sands
• Toews, Miriam*	Swing Low
• Tracey, Lindalee*	On The Edge: A Journey into the Heart of Canada
• Vaillant, John*	The Golden Spruce
• Vaillant, John*	The Tiger: A True Story of Vengeance and Survival
• Vassanji, M. G.	A Place Within: Rediscovering India
• Wallace, David Foster	<i>A Supposedly Fun Thing I Will Never Do Again</i>
• Walls, Jeanette	<i>The Glass Castle</i>
• Walker, Alice	<i>In Search of Our Mother's Gardens</i>
• Eudora Welty	<i>One Writer's Beginnings</i>
• Westoll, Andrew*	<i>The Chimps of Fauna Sanctuary</i>
• White, Evelyn	<i>Alice Walker</i>
• Winchester, Simon	The Professor and the Madman
• Winchester, Simon	Krakatoa: The Day the World Exploded
• Wolfe, Tom	Electric Kool Aid Acid Test
• Wolfe, Tom	The Right Stuff
• Wolff, Tobias	This Boy's Life
• Wright, Evan	The Killer Elite

\* Canadian title

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**Book Reports Assignment Rubric (30%= 3 X 10%)**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Exceptional “A”</b>	<b>Acceptable B</b>	<b>Failure &lt;B-</b>
<b>Book Description (10)</b>	Provides the reader with a succinct summary of the book’s contents, approach, and style. Includes information on its market success.	Provides the reader with a useful summary of the book’s contents, approach, and style but fails to offer information on its market success.	Fails to provide the reader with a useful summary of the book or information on its marketplace success.
<b>Author Biography (10)</b>	Provides the reader with a concise, relevant-to-the-book’s topic biography that demonstrates the student has consulted with numerous sources.	Provides the reader with a concise, relevant author biography.	Fails to provide the reader with a concise, relevant author biography.
<b>Analysis (50)</b>	Provides the reader with a clear, thoughtful analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the book as well as explains its significance and influence on contemporary creative nonfiction writing with example and anecdote.	Provides the reader with an acceptable analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the book and outlines its significance and influence on contemporary creative nonfiction writing.	Fails to provide the reader with a clear analysis of the book or an understanding of its significance.
<b>Writing Style (30)</b>	The writing is compelling. Hooks the reader and sustains interest throughout.	The writing is engaging, but has dry spots. In general, it keeps the reader's attention.	The writing has little personality. The reader quickly loses interest and stops reading.

## Residency Participation

The Summer Residency is a unique opportunity for students to engage intensely with faculty, mentors, guest presenters and each other about the art and craft of creative nonfiction.

We recognize individuals engage in different ways: asking questions or questioning assumptions during presentations, participating in organized events like micro-readings, having one-to-one discussions with guests at the end of their events, discussing a point over beer during study hall, emailing to follow up on an issue that was raised...

We also recognize participation includes other aspects of interaction: showing up on time, focusing on presentations rather than social media feeds, etc.

We assume you know and understand all this, so your participation mark starts at A-. That's the benchmark. Those whose participation goes above and beyond will earn extra points, those who don't live up to expectations will see their mark docked.

If we notice anyone slipping below the benchmark during the first week, we'll point it out privately so the student has the opportunity to rectify — or respond — before the end of the residency.

If you have concerns about participation, please don't hesitate to discuss it with me.

### Course Texts

- Hart, Jack. *Storycraft: The Complete Guide to Writing Nonfiction*. University of Chicago Press. Chicago. 2011.
- Rabiner, Susan and Fortunato, Alfred. *Thinking Like Your Editor*. Norton. New York, 2003.
- Larsen, Michael. *How to Write a Book Proposal*. New York: Writer's Digest Books, 2011.
- Levine, Mark L. *Negotiating a Book Contract*. Asphodel Press, 2009.

### Suggested Texts

Gutkind, Lee. *The Art of Creative Nonfiction: Writing and Selling the Literature of Reality*. New York: Wiley, 1997.

Kidder, Tracy, and Richard Todd. *Good Prose: The Art of Nonfiction*. Toronto: Random House Canada, 2013.

Kramer, Mark and Wendy Call. *Telling True Stories: A Nonfiction Writer's Guide from the Nieman Foundation at Harvard University*. New York: Plume, 2007.

Curtis, Richard. *How to Be Your Own Literary Agent: An Insider's Guide to Getting Your Book Published*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2003.

Gutkind, Lee. *Keep It Real: Everything You Need to Know About Researching and Writing Creative Nonfiction*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2008.

Rabiner, Susan, and Alfred Fortunato. *Thinking Like Your Editor: How to Write Great Serious Nonfiction*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003.

## Academic Performance

The course uses the following grading scale:

A+	90-100
A	85-89
A-	80-84
B+	77-79
B	73-76
B-	70-72
F	<70

Students must achieve a minimum grade of B- in all classes. Disputes over academic performance and assessment will be dealt with according to the Academic Regulations of the School of Journalism and the Dalhousie University Faculty of Graduate Studies. For more information, see the King's calendar and the Dalhousie University Graduate Calendar.

### **Statement on Accommodation:**

Students may request accommodation as a result of barriers related to disability, religious obligation, or any characteristic under the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act. Students who require academic accommodation for either classroom participation or the writing of tests, quizzes and exams should make their request to the Office of Student Accessibility & Accommodation (OSAA) prior to or at the outset of each academic term. Please see [www.studentaccessibility.dal.ca](http://www.studentaccessibility.dal.ca) for more information and to obtain Form A - Request for Accommodation.

### **Academic Integrity**

The School of Journalism vigorously enforces the highest standards of academic integrity.

Plagiarism is the duplication in whole or in part of work created for another purpose. This can be work done by another student, published work or even a student's own work that has been re-purposed for a class. This includes electronic files such as spreadsheets or database queries, which must be an individual's own work unless otherwise allowed. Plagiarism can be reflected in actual language, or in the duplication of an idea or a sequence. Do not cut and paste information from the Internet. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, consult your instructor.

All cases of suspected plagiarism will be dealt with according to the policy. Academic integrity issues will be dealt with by the Academic Integrity Officer of the



University of King's College, the Faculty of Graduate Studies and the Dalhousie Senate, as outlined in the King's calendar and the Dalhousie University Graduate Calendar. As well, the School of Journalism has a statement of ethics and professional standards that must be followed. It can be found at: <http://ethics.kingsjournalism.com> Please read this material carefully.

### **Grammar and Style**

Proper usage and grammar are an expectation for all written work in this course. Although this course is offered through the School of Journalism, the publishing content is intended primarily for book content. As a result, we will follow the *Chicago Manual of Style* for all written work.