

Fall 2024
Writing Studies Course Schedule



Mondays, 6:30-9:15 pm, Online

ENG 620: Special Topics in Literature & Culture: Nature and Environmental Writing

Instructor: Dr. Melissa A. Goldthwaite

CRN: 40585

(Area I)

Nature and Environmental Writing will give you an opportunity to explore the ways culture and genre inform contemporary writers' approaches to nature and environmental writing. For example, we will study the ways Robin Wall Kimmerer, a member of The Citizen Potawatomi Nation and a botanist, braids Western science, Indigenous knowledge, and her own experiences in her environmental essays. We will dip into *You Are Here Now: Poetry in the Natural World*, a new collection—described as “a lyrical reimagining of what ‘nature’ and ‘poetry’ are today”—edited by our current Poet Laureate of the United States, Ada Limón. And that’s just the start. Assignments will include informal exercises, an analysis of and presentation on a text from a list of optional readings, and a longer piece or collection of environmental/nature writing in a genre chosen by the student. This discussion-based course will include both small-group and whole-class workshops.



Tuesdays, 6:30-9:15 pm, Online - Synchronously

ENG 678 – Magazine Writing

Instructor: Professor Tenaya Darlington

CRN: 42086

(Area III)

This class is designed to give you an overview of the magazine industry (both online and print) and to help you brainstorm, pitch, write, and edit journalistic stories for publication. We’ll spend most of the term writing, but we’ll also look closely at several publications as case studies in order to learn how magazines operate. If you’re interested in developing journalistic skills – from interviewing sources to writing succinctly – this class is designed to be an introduction. You’ll also learn about the business side of freelance writing, from building relationships with editors to negotiating contracts.



Wednesdays, 6:30-9:15 pm, Online
ENG 643 – Special Topics in the Essay
Instructor: Nikki Palladino
CRN: 42432
(Area II)

What makes an essay effective? To answer that, we'll need to define the essay as a literary form. What is it? What is it (not)? As part of our studies, we'll read examples published in *The Best American Essays*, as well as other published writings.

In 1986, Elizabeth Hardwick began her introduction to the first volume of *The Best American Essays* by writing, "The Essay?" Twenty-one years later, David Foster Wallace picked up where Hardwick left off, writing in the Foreword, "I do think there are things certain essays do, ways they behave (or misbehave) in prose that invites us to think that what we're reading is truly an essay. Asked to attend a panel in the early 2000s and define the essay definitively, Wallace writes, "I should have simply stood up and uttered two words: *The Essay?*" The good news for writers is that the form and structure are inexact.

Yet, there are criteria. Virginia Woolf once wrote that "the essay must be pure – pure like water or pure like wine, but pure from dullness, deadness, and deposits of extraneous matter." Most editors, when evaluating contributors' essays, will select essays of general interest. In this course, we will create general interest essays that, George Saunders says, reflect our "chosen" voice and focus on what we value (in life, in prose). To do this, we will study the writing styles of such authors as John Paul (JP) Brammer, Lydia Davis, Joan Didion, Zadie Smith, Jia Tolentino, Ocean Vuong, David Foster Wallace, and E.B. White.



Thursdays, 6:30-9:15 pm, Online
ENG 550: The Practice of Writing
Instructor: Dr. Cristina Hanganu-Bresch
CRN: 40584
(Core Class)

This course is designed as an Introduction to the Writing Studies Program, and it allows students to explore a variety of genres while they explore career options within the writing/publishing world. Students will consider the work of various writers and will play the role of columnist, essayist, poet, fiction writer, and editor. At the end of the course, students will reflect on these different roles and begin brainstorming a possible thesis project in one area.