

KINGSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
The City University of New York

CURRICULUM TRANSMITTAL COVER PAGE

Department: English Date: 9/4/25

Title Of Course/Degree/Concentration/Certificate: ENG 58 Creative Non-Fiction

Change(s) Initiated: (Please check)

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Closing of Degree | ☐ Change in Degree or Certificate |
| ☐ Closing of Certificate | ☐ Change in Degree: Adding Concentration |
| ☐ New Certificate Proposal | ☐ Change in Degree: Deleting Concentration |
| ☐ New Degree Proposal | ☐ Change in Prerequisite, Corequisite, and/or Pre/Co-requisite |
| ☐ New Course | ☐ Change in Course Designation |
| ☐ New 82 Course (Pilot Course) | ☐ Change in Course Description |
| ☐ Deletion of Course(s) | ☐ Change in Course Title, Number, Credits and/or Hours |
| | ☐ Change in Academic Policy |
| | ☒ Pathways Submission: |
| | ☐ Life and Physical Science |
| | ☐ Math and Quantitative Reasoning |
| | ☐ A. World Cultures and Global Issues |
| | ☐ B. U.S. Experience in its Diversity |
| | ☒ C. Creative Expression |
| | ☐ D. Individual and Society |
| | ☐ E. Scientific World |
| ☐ Change in Program Learning Outcomes | |
| ☐ Other (please describe): _____ | |

PLEASE ATTACH MATERIAL TO ILLUSTRATE AND EXPLAIN ALL CHANGES

DEPARTMENTAL ACTION

Action by Department and/or Departmental Committee, if required:

Date Approved: 8/29/25 Signature, Committee Chairperson: 

If submitted Curriculum Action affects another Department, signature of the affected Department(s) is required:

Date Approved: _____ Signature, Department Chairperson: _____

Date Approved: _____ Signature, Department Chairperson: _____

I have reviewed the attached material/proposal

Signature, Department Chairperson: 

CUNY Common Core Course Submission Form

Instructions: All courses submitted for the Common Core must be liberal arts courses. Courses submitted to the Course Review Committee may be submitted for only one area of the Common Core and must be 3 credits. Colleges may submit courses to the Course Review Committee before or after they receive college approval. STEM waiver courses do not need to be approved by the Course Review Committee. This form should not be used for STEM waiver courses.

College	Kingsborough Community College
Course Prefix and Number (e.g., ANTH 101, if number not assigned, enter XXX)	ENG 5800
Course Title	Creative Writing: Nonfiction
Department(s)	English
Discipline	English
Credits	3
Contact Hours	3
Pre-requisites (if none, enter N/A)	ENG 12
Co-requisites (if none, enter N/A)	
Catalogue Description	Instruction and practice in the art of writing nonfiction along with study of works of memoir and autobiography by established writers as examples and models. Analysis of peer writing in a workshop format.
Special Features (e.g., linked courses)	
Sample Syllabus	Syllabus must be included with submission, 5 pages max recommended

Indicate the status of this course being nominated:

☐ current course ☐ revision of current course ☒ a new course being proposed

CUNY COMMON CORE Location

Please check below the area of the Common Core for which the course is being submitted. (Select only one.)

Required Core ☐ English Composition ☐ Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning ☐ Life and Physical Sciences	Flexible Core ☐ World Cultures and Global Issues (A) ☐ US Experience in its Diversity (B) ☒ Creative Expression (C) ☐ Individual and Society (D) ☐ Scientific World (E)
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C. Creative Expression

A Flexible Core course must meet the three learning outcomes in the right column.

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Students will synthesize and critically assess raw material from memory, observation, and research in the two major <i>Creative Nonfiction Essays</i> (each 5-6 pages), shaping it into polished works that balance personal experience with broader contexts● Students will also fulfill this learning outcome in their informal writing assignments (each 300-400 words) in the following ways:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Students will gather, interpret, and assess multiple perspectives in the <i>Peer Profile</i> assignment by conducting interviews and combining observation with another person's voice, story, and context.○ Students will interpret and assess environmental details as sources of information in the <i>Observation and Environment</i> exercise, transforming sensory data and setting into narrative meaning.○ Students will gather and evaluate diverse literary models through weekly <i>Reading Responses</i>, comparing published authors' approaches to structure, voice, and perspective in order to apply these techniques to their own writing. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Students will critically assess and refine their own use of evidence in the two major <i>Creative Nonfiction Essays</i>, revising drafts to ensure that memory, observation, and research are integrated effectively and ethically into a coherent argument or narrative.● Students will critically evaluate arguments about craft and perspective in weekly <i>Reading Responses</i> by analyzing how published authors use structure, detail, and voice to shape meaning and persuade readers.● Students will analyze the reliability and representation of personal narratives in the <i>Peer Profile</i> assignment, assessing how interview material and observation can be interpreted and woven into an accurate, respectful portrait.● Students will evaluate the effectiveness of narrative strategies and evidence in <i>Peer Workshops</i> by providing constructive critiques that assess peers' use of detail, context, and structure to support meaning.● Students will read and analyze both contemporary and historical examples of creative nonfiction (examples include John Berger, a week on documentary practice using the work of Werner Herzog, Ntozake Shange, John McPhee, Megan Harlan, and others), providing published models for close examination of narrative perspective, point of view, effective use and evaluation of primary observation and secondary research, and the critical interplay between articulation and analysis of both perspective and evidence in creative nonfiction. Readings are paired weekly with short writing exercises that focus on specific skills or techniques highlighted in that assigned reading and discussion, reinforcing the importance of reading to the development of writing skills. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Students will produce well-reasoned written arguments in <i>Creative Nonfiction Essays 1 and 2</i> by shaping raw material from | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions. |

assignments like <i>Observation and Environment</i> or <i>Mining the Mind's Map</i> into narratives that use sensory detail, memory, and cultural context as evidence to support broader conclusions about personal or social experience. • Students will construct oral arguments with supporting evidence during <i>Proposal/Pitch Workshops</i> by presenting their essay concepts, explaining how interviews, observations, or research (e.g., profiles of peers or descriptions of place) justify their chosen focus, and responding to instructor and peer questions. • Students will strengthen their ability to argue from evidence in <i>Peer Workshops</i> by defending their revision choices with reference to specific feedback and by offering critiques of peers' drafts that point to concrete examples—such as the effectiveness of dialogue, structure, or descriptive detail—in supporting the writer's intended meaning.	
A course in this area (II.C) <u>must meet at least three of the additional learning outcomes</u> in the right column. A student will:	
• Creative nonfiction is a hybrid and emerging discipline within creative writing. Congruent with the above learning outcomes, students will develop a critical understanding of a medium that encompasses both creative writing/expression as well as clear communication with a diverse readership, one that requires clear engagement with a diverse world of competing or conflicting perspectives and experience. • Students apply the fundamental concepts and methods of Creative Writing and Media Arts by: ○ Considering how nonfiction uses both narrative craft and documentary strategies to represent lived experience. In Week 2, for example, they view Herzog's <i>Cave of Forgotten Dreams</i> (media arts) and then complete the Peer Profile Assignment, applying interview and observation techniques (creative writing) to portray another person with accuracy and perspective. ○ Exploring how setting and perspective shape expression across disciplines. In Week 3, the Observation and Environment Assignment requires students to capture sensory details from a chosen place (creative writing) while also adopting techniques of framing and attention from documentary/media practice. ○ Practicing techniques of storytelling, moving from idea development to polished narrative. Across Weeks 7–12, the Creative Nonfiction Essays combine creative writing skills (voice, structure, revision) with media arts processes (proposal, pitch, workshop), highlighting nonfiction as both an artistic and documentary form.	• Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring creative expression, including, but not limited to, arts, communications, creative writing, media arts, music, and theater.
• Students analyze how artistic and communicative choices shape meaning. In Week 2, after viewing Herzog's <i>Cave of Forgotten Dreams</i>, they complete the Peer Profile Assignment, learning how tone, perspective, and narrative framing influence how another person's story is conveyed to an audience. • Students explore how details and perspective turn lived experience into expression. In Week 3, the Observation and	• Articulate how meaning is created in the arts or communications and how experience is interpreted and conveyed.

Environment Assignment requires students to interpret a specific setting through sensory description, showing how meaning emerges from the interplay of environment, perception, and narrative voice. Students practice how meaning is deepened through revision and audience awareness. Across Weeks 7–12, the Creative Nonfiction Essays move from proposal to final draft, as students articulate how structure, voice, and context shape interpretation, transforming personal experience into works that communicate broader significance. Students must demonstrate their use of those applied concepts and methods and will receive guided, written feedback from peers as well as extensive written and oral feedback from the instructor in one-on-one conferences.	
- Students are required to demonstrate an understanding of and ability to apply basic skills and techniques of nonfiction narrative storytelling. This is craft-oriented work, requiring practical application as well as reflective understanding through shared discussion of assigned readings, workshop feedback sessions of peer work, and the final, qualitative and integrated full-length works, combining techniques of storytelling with direct observation of self and social or natural environments coupled with supporting research and the ability to articulate, evaluate, and respond to diverse perspectives on shared human and social experience. - Students learn how raw material becomes the foundation for creative work. In weekly informal writing projects, such as reflections, observation exercises, and interview-based writing, they practice generating ideas and experimenting with techniques, demonstrating early-stage creative skills. - Creative Process – Crafting and Shaping: Students move from observation to composition by transforming lived experience into narrative. In Week 3's Observation and Environment Assignment, they gather sensory details and then shape them into a vivid scene, practicing the creative process of selecting, refining, and arranging material. - Creative Process – Revision and Refinement: Students apply drafting, feedback, and revision as essential creative skills. Across Weeks 7–12, the Creative Nonfiction Essays require proposal, drafting, peer workshops, and conferences, guiding them through the iterative process that turns initial concepts into polished, publishable work.	Demonstrate knowledge of the skills involved in the creative process.
Students will reinforce the skills and techniques of narrative nonfiction with practical experience in research and communication. Emphasis will be placed on the judicious use of focused research to supplement but not supplant direct observation and first-person narrative storytelling, and on “living archives” of resources in specific social or institutional contexts within the storytelling frame.	Use appropriate technologies to conduct research and to communicate.

ENG 58: Creative Nonfiction

Section XX/ CF# XXXXX; 3 credits/3 hours

Class meeting days; Class times; Room: TBD

Professor Name; lastname.firstname@kbcc.cuny.edu; 718-368-XXXX

Office hours: time and location

Course Description

This course offers instruction and practice in the art of writing nonfiction, including autobiography and memoir, cultural memoir and critique, nature, travel, and community writing, and literary journalism. We will examine the ways in which both traditional and experimental genres can enrich your development as a writer.

As a writing workshop, our emphasis is on developing key skills in the craft of creative nonfiction, and on an understanding of how a complete work of creative nonfiction reflects a process of research, drafting, feedback, and revision. The process of drafting and crafting is truly a process of discovery, balancing clear goals and individual steps with an openness to the unexpected ways that a story develops over time. By reading published examples of this type of writing, as well as the work of your peers in the class (as your work will be read by them), you will strengthen your own written work. The most effective way to learn to do anything is to do it yourself, but with clear models and learning goals to help you understand and explore new questions and solutions as a writer.

Learning Outcomes

This semester you will learn to:

- Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.
- Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.
- Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.
- Demonstrate understanding of fundamental concepts and methods of narrative nonfiction according to established standards in this emerging, interdisciplinary area of creative writing.
- Develop a self-aware perspective based on these techniques and related skills, including your identification of compelling issues or contexts on which to focus your individual writing projects.
- Demonstrate awareness of the ethical questions raised by primary and secondary research into an issue, critically evaluate information gathered from a range of sources and perspectives, and clearly communicate the result so that both the creative and nonfiction aspects of your written work are clear to the reader.

Required Texts

Gutkind, Lee, ed. *In Fact: The Best of Creative Nonfiction*. Introduction by Annie Dillard. New York: Norton, 2005. ISBN 0-393-32665-9

Note: There will be sufficient copies ordered through the KCC online bookstore for the class. You are also free to purchase new or used copies elsewhere. The copy you order must have the same 10-digit ISBN number listed above to ensure you have the same edition, with the same page numbers, for reference in assigned readings.

Overview of Course Assignments and Requirements

Class Participation

Active participation in the course is essential for success. Participation refers to the active engagement and involvement of students during class discussions and interactions, such as asking relevant questions, responding to peers' comments, and demonstrating attentiveness and respect. Active participation also involves being prepared for class, having completed the assigned readings or tasks, and engaging in group work or class exercises in a meaningful way. Attendance, punctuality, and proper classroom etiquette factor into this portion of the grade.

Informal Writing: Weekly Projects and Reading Responses

Each week you will produce informal writing assignments that will serve as the foundation for your work in the course, providing space to experiment with ideas, practice techniques, and gather raw material for more polished essays. These assignments should be between 300 and 400 words, and will include short reflections on course readings, observation exercises that capture details from everyday life, interview-based writing that brings in other voices and perspectives, and personal responses that encourage ongoing reflection on process and experience. While these pieces will be less formally structured than major assignments, they are essential for building skills, generating content, and fostering a regular writing practice.

Formal Writing: Creative Nonfiction Essays

The two Creative Nonfiction Essays that you will produce for this course give you the opportunity to expand on ideas and material developed in earlier informal exercises, including interviews, observations, and personal reflections. Each essay will (between five and six pages, written in drafts with both instructor and peer review) blend narrative, description, and analysis, while demonstrating attention to voice, structure, and style. The goal is to transform raw material into a compelling work of nonfiction that reflects both individual experience and broader significance, showcasing the writer's ability to revise, refine, and shape their work for a wider audience.

Peer Workshops

The Peer Workshop is a central component of the course, designed to help students develop their creative nonfiction through constructive feedback and collaborative learning. In these workshops, students will read and respond to one another's drafts of the two creative nonfiction essays, providing thoughtful, written critiques that highlight strengths, identify areas for improvement, and suggest strategies for revision. Participation requires both submitting one's own work for discussion and engaging seriously with peers' writing, fostering a supportive community of writers.

NOTE: All work assigned for the course must be submitted through the appropriate assignment submission portal in the course Brightspace page. It is your responsibility to log in to your CUNYFirst

email and the course Brightspace page regularly for announcements, updates on assignments or materials; to complete each assignment fully and on time; and in general to take your work as a writer (and college student) seriously.

Grade Breakdown

Class Participation:	10%
Informal Writing:	30%
Peer Workshop Feedback:	10%
Creative Nonfiction Essays:	50% (25% each)

Weekly Schedule of Activities and Assignments

Week One: Observing, Seeing, Remembering, Writing

Reading: John Berger, “Drawn to That Moment” (handout is posted in the Week One module folder in Brightspace).

Writing: Pictures, Stories, Memory (see assignment instruction handout, posted in the Week Two module folder in Brightspace).

Week Two: On Documentary

In-Class Viewing and Discussion: Werner Herzog, dir. *Cave of Forgotten Dreams* (2010).

Reading: John Edgar Wideman, “Looking at Emmett Till” (*In Fact* pp. 24-48); Jewell Parker Rhodes, “Mixed-Blood Stew” (*In Fact* pp. 382-394).

Writing: Reading Response

Respond to reading: choose passages that point to technique and tools of observation.

Writing: Peer Profile

In this exercise, students will create a profile of a peer partner by combining interview material with careful observation. Each student will conduct at least one interview with their partner, paying close attention to voice, perspective, and personal stories, while also observing details of their demeanor, habits, or environment. The goal is to weave these elements together into a short piece of creative nonfiction that captures the individuality of the partner and reflects on the act of portraying another person. This assignment emphasizes listening, noticing, and representing others with accuracy and respect.

Week Three: Sense and Senses

Reading: Joe Brainard, excerpt from *I Remember* (handout); Ntozake Shange, “What Is It We Really Harvestin’ Here?” (*In Fact* pp. 109-118).

Writing: Reading Response

Comment on the writers’ different approaches and the ways writers can shape personal experience into broader commentary. Which approach do you favor?

Writing: Observation and Environment

In this exercise, students will focus on the relationship between observation and environment by selecting a specific place—a café, park, classroom, street corner, or other everyday setting—and spending time there to record sensory details, movements, interactions, and atmosphere. The goal is not only to capture what is seen, but also to attend to sound, smell, texture, and mood, noticing how environment shapes experience and narrative possibilities. Students will then craft a short piece of writing that transforms these raw observations into a vivid scene, exploring how place can function as character, context, or catalyst in creative nonfiction.

Week Four: Characters and Contexts

Reading: Robert Smithson, “The Monuments of Passaic, NJ”; Leslie Rubinkowski, “In the Woods” (*In Fact* pp. 318-330).

Writing: Reading Response

How do the writers use landscape and environment to shape their narratives, and what do their approaches reveal about the relationship between place and perspective in creative nonfiction?

Writing Assignment: Observation and People

In this exercise, students will choose a person they know—a family member, friend, coworker, or acquaintance—and write a brief scene that brings this individual to life on the page. Rather than relying on direct description alone, students will place the character in a specific context, using setting, dialogue, gesture, and action to reveal personality and complexity. The goal is to practice showing rather than telling, while also considering how environment and circumstance shape how a character is perceived in nonfiction storytelling.

Week Five: Scene, Situation, Story

Reading: Meredith Hall, “Shunned” (*In Fact* pp. 49-70); John McPhee, “An Album Quilt” (*In Fact* pp. 71-84).

Writing: Reading Response

How do the two writers use structure to shape memory and experience into narrative? What do you find helpful in terms of how you want to approach material?

Writing Assignment: Mining the Mind's Map

This assignment invites students to draw on memory, association, and reflection as raw material for creative nonfiction. Through guided prompts and freewriting, students will chart connections between personal experiences, places, and moments that have left a lasting impression. From this "map," students will select one thread to develop into a short narrative or reflective piece, practicing how to transform memory into story while exploring the role of perspective, voice, and detail in shaping lived experience on the page.

Week Six: Scene, Situation, Story continued

Reading: Megan Harlan, "A History of Nomadism" (handout); Gerald N. Callahan, "Chimera" (*In Fact* pp. 368-381).

Writing: Reading Response

How do the authors explore identity, and how does their use of language reflect the themes of change and belonging?

Writing: Mining the Mind's Map, cont.

Week Seven: Creative Nonfiction Essay 1

Preliminary Research and Proposal/Pitch Draft.

In-Class Development and Proposal/Pitch Workshop; Individual Proposal/Pitch Conferences with Instructor

Week Eight: Creative Nonfiction Essay 1

In-Class Drafting and Peer Feedback Workshop

Week Nine: Creative Nonfiction Essay 2

In-Class Development and Proposal/Pitch Workshop; Individual Proposal/Pitch

*Creative Nonfiction Essay 1 Final Draft Due

Week Ten: Creative Nonfiction Essay 2

In-Class Research, Drafting and Development Workshop

Week Eleven: Creative Nonfiction Essay 2

Week Twelve: Creative Nonfiction Essay 2

Conferences with Instructor

Last Class: *Creative Nonfiction Essay 2 Final Draft Due

COLLEGE STATEMENTS

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY:

Plagiarism is “the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work” (www.dictionary.com). Please note that this includes language, text, or material taken (without acknowledgement) from AI text-generators. If you plagiarize in any of the work you submit, you may receive a grade of 0 for the assignment. Please see Kingsborough’s website page on Academic Integrity for more information on plagiarism.

https://www.kbcc.cuny.edu/studentaffairs/student_conduct/academic_integrity.html

CIVILITY:

Kingsborough Community College is committed to the highest standards of academic and ethical integrity, acknowledging that respect for self and others is the foundation of educational excellence. Civility in the classroom and respect for the opinions of others is very important in an academic environment. It is likely you may not agree with everything that is said or discussed, though courteous behavior and responses are still expected. Therefore, any acts of harassment and/or discrimination based on matters of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and/or ability are not acceptable. Whether we are students, faculty, or staff, we have the right to be in a safe, civil environment, free of disturbance.

INCLUSIVITY AND SAFETY:

The administration, faculty, staff, and students at Kingsborough Community College believe that the college is best served by having a campus that is truly diverse. We strive to create a campus where the voices, talents, and skills of all members of the college are valued and respected, and where all members of the college community can thrive. We maintain that a student body, faculty, staff, and administration that reflect the diversity of New York City is vital for the success of our community, allowing opportunities for people with different perspectives, abilities, and backgrounds to interact with and learn from each other. We at Kingsborough Community College believe that a focus on inclusive excellence – the proactive fostering of greater diversity, inclusion, and ultimately equity at every level of college life – will maximize success for all members of the college community.

PREFERRED GENDER AND PRONOUN NAME:

I affirm all forms of gender expressions and identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is on the class roster, please let me know. Feel free to inform me on your preferred gender pronoun or if you do not have a pronoun. The gender-neutral bathrooms are located in the following places on campus: A117, A119, L303, L504, M436, T4 154, T8 108B, V211, and V212. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

SAMPLE ASSIGNMENT

Creative Nonfiction Essay Instructions

The **Creative Nonfiction Essay** is the culminating writing project for this course, giving you the opportunity to expand on ideas, experiences, and material developed in earlier informal exercises—including interviews, observations, reflection journals, and reading responses. Building on these exercises, you will craft a polished essay of **5–6 pages** that blends narrative, description, and analysis while demonstrating attention to voice, structure, and style.

Goals:

- Transform raw material from prior assignments into a coherent, compelling work of nonfiction.
- Reflect both individual experience and broader significance, connecting personal insight with themes, contexts, or observations explored in the course readings and exercises.
- Showcase the ability to revise, refine, and shape your writing through drafts, instructor feedback, and peer review.

Requirements:

1. **Length:** 5–6 pages, double-spaced, standard font and margins.
2. **Drafting Process:** Submit an initial draft for **instructor feedback** and participate in at least one **peer workshop** to receive constructive responses. Revise and submit a final polished version.
3. **Content:**
 - Incorporate material and strategies developed in prior exercises: interviews, observation-based writing, scene construction, character/context exercises, and reflective or associative writing (e.g., Mining the Mind's Map).
 - Include both **specific, vivid details** and broader reflections or analysis.
 - Demonstrate a clear sense of **narrative structure** while experimenting with voice and perspective.

4. **Engagement with Course Readings:** While primarily focused on your own experiences, your essay may draw connections to themes, approaches, or techniques highlighted in course readings, such as attention to environment, character, memory, or cultural context.

Evaluation:

Your essay will be evaluated on:

- Clarity, coherence, and narrative flow
- Depth of reflection and insight
- Use of descriptive detail and development of scenes
- Effective integration of techniques from prior exercises
- Attention to revision, voice, and stylistic choices

This essay allows you to synthesize the course's writing practices—from observing and remembering to portraying people and place—into a sustained work of creative nonfiction that demonstrates both craft and personal vision.