



**GARY HAWKINS**

Jensen 204

X 3718

ghawkins@warren-wilson.edu

OFFICE HOURS:

M & W: 1:30–3:00

T: 1:00–3:00

and by appointment

☛ You are, of course, not a single person. Nor are you a single writer. Think only of how you present yourself variously in an admissions essay, an email home, or a note to a good friend. A writer thrives on just this diversity, and each becomes a more resilient and more encompassing thinker when he or she can respond appropriately—and creatively—to the requests of various genres and occasions.

*I help myself to material and immaterial,  
No guard can shut me off, no law prevent me.*  
–Walt Whitman

This course will engage you repeatedly in the full process of writing: the insights and energy of prewriting exercises, the direction and assistance available from literary models, and the promise and payoff of revision. In a cooperative atmosphere we will *get outside the self* to explore the role of persona and character in the genres of creative non-fiction, literary fiction, and poetry. Ultimately, these explorations will expand your capacity of expression and lend you an understanding of the role of language and form in shaping any self-presentation.

### **Course Outcomes & Assessment**

Through this course you will become a more discerning and critical **reader** of a variety of genres; you'll be able to identify individual writing choices and track writing tactics.

You will become a more versatile **writer**, gaining the experience of writing in a variety of genres; you'll become more purposeful in your writing and revision.

You will become capable of giving generous **criticism** to others as well as self-criticism to yourself; you'll learn effective means of offering critique and some common protocols of a workshop.

You will become aware of the important role of **revision** in every writing task; you'll learn to employ genre constraints, feedback, and your own insight in thoughtful revision.

You will demonstrate this understanding and these abilities in prose arguments (annotations), in class participation (including in-class writing, discussion, and preparation for class), and the written work you craft in and out of class. Your periodic Progress Reports allow you to highlight your work and accomplishments during the course of the semester. However, the Portfolio is the primary means of assessment in this class.

### **My Assumptions in this Course (which a successful writer might well adopt)**

I assume that a writer is foremost a reader, that reading is the writer's starting point, that it fuels all writing.

Thus, I assume that you read as much as you can, that you read inquisitively and acquisitively, that you spend time with work that you love, that you spend perhaps more time with work that confounds you, that you look up words you don't know, that you retrace sentences that floor you, that reading is a privilege not a chore.

I assume that the writer grows via the activity of writing.

Thus, I assume that you have a willingness to engage in writerly exercise, that you are open to experimentation.

## Units & Genres

### Prologue: Small Self-Productions

We begin by introducing ourselves—or what we’ll soon learn can be only a *version* of a self. Working small (6 words, 350 words) you’ll move through the full writing process as we’ll practice it all semester: reading, invention & drafting, critique, revision, and publication.

### The Documentary: Descriptive Profile

Our exploration of character moves from the outside in. Your first major genre will place you as a kind of documentarian. Following non-fiction profiles by Joan Didion you will learn an eye for detail, both what to put in and what to leave out. In addition, you’ll conduct field work of your own to compile anthropological notes of appearance and behavior in some person either on campus or in the community. By observing this person, shadowing her, interviewing her, you’ll compile the material to build a character sketch that presents a detailed, sensory profile of your subject within her context.

### Their Story: Narrative Sketch

Next, with guidance from a variety of short story authors we’ll leave the position of fully external observer to begin to inhabit a subject’s thoughts through narration. Through our reading of stories we’ll learn how the writer can maintain the omniscience of the third person and still dip into the mind of a character through a technique called “free indirect discourse.” Then, to prompt your writing we’ll browse the tepid yet resilient post-War America depicted in the photographs of Robert Frank. His photos both tell national stories and whisper secrets. Your genre work will invent and retell one of these stories by “reading the minds” of those otherwise silent in photographs.

### A Testimony in Verse: Persona Poem

Next, we will introduce monologue—a character speaking out—in the realm of the poem where speech is shaped by rhythm and line as much as voice. Diving into the complicated social (and vocal) world of Diane Gilliam Fisher’s *Kettle Bottom* we’ll find the rich possibilities for speaking poetically (and we’ll look at other examples of persona poems as well). Your persona poem can give voice to an invented, contemporary, or historical figure, or you can give some thing the gift of speech.

### Postlude: Self-Portrait

Finally, as you make revisions (both radical and subtle) to your work and prepare the publication of your portfolio, you’ll compose a Self-Portrait of the Writer describing the course of your work over the semester. This Self-Portrait serves as your guide in assembling your Portfolio, and any reader of the Portfolio will turn to it to guide his understanding of what—and how—you present that final assemblage of your work and your learning.

### Evaluation

Process (in-class invention & writing, critique, genre drafts, progress reports)	15%
Reading (preparation & discussion)	15%
Annotations (3)	15%
Attended Performances (3)	5%
Portfolio	50%

### Required Texts:

Didion, Joan. *The White Album*.  
Fisher, Diane Gilliam. *Kettle Bottom*. (on order)  
Kelly, Joseph, ed.. *The Seagull Reader: Stories*.  
Prose, Francine. *Reading Like a Writer*.

**On Reserve:** Frank, Robert. *The Americans*.

## Requirements of the Course:

This is an active class, asking you to immerse yourself in reading, challenge yourself and others in discussion, and apply yourself to writing exercises both in and out of class.

## Reading

Reading is the writer's best aid. We'll learn to read as writers, moving carefully through a text to assess the choices the author makes. Read each assignment with care—even more than once—annotate, and come prepared to talk about how a text works.

## Discussion

In our discussions you'll learn the craft of each genre by replying to lectures, talking about things you discovered in reading, and asking questions about things that elude you. Listen well and contribute.

## Writing

Within each of the units you will do three kinds of writing:

**1) In-class free-writing & exercises** will help immerse you in the week's text, prime you for discussion, and allow you to experiment with some tactics.

**2) Annotations** ask you to pursue a single aspect of craft in a single text. You might track the way Joan Didion builds her sentences with parallel constructions or follow some of Brownings' use of rhyme. An annotation is obsessive, focused, and short (2 pages).

**3) Genre Work** is the central creative work of each unit. These are the pieces—Profile, Narrative, Persona Poem—which you bring forward to critique (at some stage of completion but not merely in rough draft) and which you revise for your portfolio.

**4) Progress Reports** are the final step of each unit. As we pause to reflect on what we've learned, you will pause to write a Progress Report that details the ways that this learning is reflected in what you've written—and aims to determine some goals to guide your revision. Your Progress Report has multiple audiences: it is a note to yourself, a update for me, and, as I publish it as part of the class *Dispatches*, it is a public announcement that will help guide the whole class

## Critique (and then Workshop)

As we reach the end of each unit you'll be asked to bring your genre work (in duplicate) to class for a day of critique. Most often working in pairs and guided by me to look at specific aspects of a particular genre, you'll read and respond to each other's work. This, too, is active work. Your goal is to offer thoughtful criticism and purposeful suggestions to help the author revise his or her work. Still, you may find that you gain as much from delivering these critiques; play your own suggestions back into your own work. At the end of the semester, we'll assemble as a workshop, responding to one revised piece from each member of the class.

## Attended Performances

Diane Gilliam Fisher will give the Harwood Cole Lecture on Saturday, November 8<sup>th</sup>. I expect all to attend. In addition to this event, I ask you to attend 2 more performances. By "performance" I include—and find most aligned with this course— on- and off-campus readings, slams, and open mics. However, I will consider other types of performance (theatrical, etc.) if you ask me about them first. For each performance you attend (including Fisher), please write a one-page response and present it to me within one week of the event.

## **Portfolio: Your Central Publication**

At 50% of your grade, the portfolio is central to this class. Think of the portfolio not as the finals-week assemblage of what you wrote earlier but as an on-going project created throughout the semester. Your portfolio is an opportunity to demonstrate your learning for the semester both in terms of process and final product. As such, a successful portfolio requires a substantial archive: keep everything you do in this class and keep it organized.

Your periodic progress reports play an important role in your on-going work on the portfolio. In writing these you begin to reflect on what you've learned as a writer and how your writing has changed as a result of what you've read, what you've written about in your annotations, what the writing exercises revealed to you, what you aimed to accomplish in your genre work, and what your revision goals are. After writing your progress report, take some time to begin to assemble the evidence that will support these claims (what excerpts from the readings, what exercises, etc. will you include in your portfolio?). I'll be curious to follow the arc of a piece, so include evidence that spans from the original emergence of your idea (perhaps via in-class writing) through its revision (as the result of both critique and annotations). Accomplishment in a portfolio is not measured in perfection of a genre. I'm just as interested in what you'd still revise as in what you nailed on the first draft.

Significantly, you'll present your portfolio to both me and the class in the Portfolio Showcase the last week of class. As you create this project, consider these two audiences and present your work (your evidence) to all of us in an organized—and creative—fashion. Lure us and help us follow your trajectory as a writer this semester. More details on portfolios, including the place of the Self-Portrait, will be forthcoming in class.

## **Essential Policies & Details**

### **Attendance**

Both our discussions and our workshops require your presence as we work in a collaborative and accumulative mode. Attendance (which means attendance with preparation) is mandatory. Missed work (including in-class writing and workshops) cannot be made up. Although you'll find the most success if you attend every class, you are allowed 3 absences to allow for interceding realities. Use these to cover illnesses and other unpreventables. Remember that shift work is never an excuse for missing class, and you should schedule routine medical appointments for hours when you are not in class. Any absences beyond the first 3 will negatively impact your final grade; chronic lateness or early departure is equivalent to absence.

### **Late Work**

In-class assignments cannot be duplicated or turned in late. Likewise, worksheet material must be ready (with the appropriate number of copies) at the beginning of the class period when it is due. If you miss a deadline for your genre work or an annotation your grade will be lowered on that assignment. But it is better to turn in these major assignments late than never. If you are having difficulties with a particular genre, come see me—the earlier the better.

### **Academic Integrity**

You will engage closely with the work of published authors and exchange many ideas collaboratively with other students. Still, all writing you submit for this course is assumed to be your own. If you are concerned that what you write might owe more than inspiration to another source, acknowledge that debt (we poets often use a note like, *After Ovid*). Willfully presenting the work of others as your own is a serious issue for which the College has penalties.

### **Accommodation**

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Deborah Braden, Educational Access Coordinator (Dodge House, x3791, [dbraden@warren-wilson.edu](mailto:dbraden@warren-wilson.edu)), as soon as possible to ensure that appropriate accommodations can be implemented in a timely fashion.

<b>Genre</b>	<b>Wk</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Today's Class:</b>	<b>Special prep for next mtg</b>
<b>Prol</b>	1	Aug	25	Ordinary Introductions & The 6-Word Memoir	
			27	Drafting, Critique, & Revision Plans	
			29	Postcard Publication & Game	
	2	Sept	1	George Melly & Drafting	Continue drafting (& type).
			3	Bring Obit (2 copies) Critique & Revision Plans	
<b>Prof</b>	3		8	Progress Report; The Annotation; Prose (1-12)	Test Drive Annotation
			10	Test Drive Annotation DUE Didion (51-58); Prose (35-62)	
			12	Field Study	
			15	Didion (79-85); Prose (63-84)	Non-Fiction Annotation
			17	DUE: Non-Fiction Annotation Didion (180-186)	
			22	Didion's openers	Complete profile.
			24	Critique: Bring Profile (2 copies)	
			26	Progress Report	
<b>Narr</b>	6		29	O'Connor (Seagull 372-388); Prose (13-34)	
			1	Seagull Reader: Story TBA	
			7	6 Seagull Reader: Story TBA; Prose (193-208); [Frank]	Fiction Annotation
			8	DUE: Fiction Annotation Seagull Reader: Story TBA; Prose (209-232)	Chapters on Character & Dialogue are also of interest, but optional
			10	Seagull Reader: Story TBA; Prose (233-248)	Complete narrative.
			8	13 Critique: Bring Narrative Sketch (2 copies)	
			15	Progress Report	
			FB	Oct	18-26

<b>P Poem</b>	9		27	Interlude: Poetry Exercises	
			29	Lines: Persona Poems (Packet Poems)	
			31	Stanza: Persona Poems (Packet Poems)	
	10	Nov	3	Diane Gilliam Fisher	
			5	Diane Gilliam Fisher	<b>SAT</b> : Fisher in Canon @ 3pm
	11		10	Form: Persona Poems (Packet Poems)	Poetry Annotation
			12	DUE: Poetry Annotation Poetry Exercises	
			14	Poetry Exercises	Complete persona poem.
	12		17	Critique: Bring Persona Poem (2 copies)	
			19	Progress Report	
<b>Postl</b>	13		24	Portfolio & Self-Portraits	
		Nov	26-30	THANKSGIVING	
	14	Dec	1	Strategies for radical revision Portfolio Production in Miniature	Complete one revision for workshop.
			3	DUE: All revisions for workshop (w/ copies) Strategies for further revision	
	15		8	Portfolio Revision Workshop	
			10	Portfolio Revision Workshop	
			12	Portfolio Revision Workshop	
	16		15	DUE: Portfolio Portfolio Showcase: Portfolios	
			17	Portfolio Showcase: Readings	