KRESGE LAB (65W): CREATIVE WRITING
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> [T]he real fun of writing, for me at least, is the experience of making a set of givens yield. There's an incredibly inflexible set of instruments—our vocabulary, our grammar, the abstract symbols on paper, the limitations of your own powers of expression. You write something down and it's awkward, trivial, artificial, approximate. But with effort you can get it to become a little flexible, a little transparent. You can get it to open up, and expose something lurking there beyond the clumsy thing you first put down. When you add a comma or add or subtract a word, and the thing reacts and changes, it's so exciting that you forget how absolutely terrible writing feels a lot of the time.
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> —Deborah Eisenberg, "Interview: The Art of Fiction No. 218," *The Paris Review*, Issue 204 (Spring 2013)

Course Description:

This is a course designed for aspiring writers (poets, essayists, novelists, playwrights, journalists, hybridists, and others) who seek to develop expanded and creative approaches to their craft, and who also seek a supportive and critical audience of writers with similar aspirations. Unlike other creative writing courses that focus on a range of genres, we will largely read and write fictional forms. We will be writing prose both in and outside of class, often in response to prompts that relate to the assigned readings.

This course will address not only the thematic, technical, and formal decisions that writers make but also the social and economic contexts in which such decisions are made. This will mean considering the political and representational valences of the assigned readings as well as the conditions set by the publishing industry: which voices, in other words, the industry amplifies and which it marginalizes.

Outcomes:

In this course, you will...

1. develop awareness of your process as a writer, both through dialogue with peers and through prompt-driven writing assignments.

2. respond supportively and rigorously to the writing of your peers through collaborative workshops.
3. develop critical reading practices that focus specifically on concerns of craft, technique, and form.

Course Readings:
- Selected readings* (available on Canvas—no purchases required).

*While I encourage you to print the assigned readings so that you can annotate them in hard copy, this choice is ultimately yours. However, if you choose *not* to print these readings, please keep in mind the following guidelines, **which contain my policy on electronic devices**:
1. You must have a system of annotating the PDF versions of the readings.
2. You must bring a means of accessing these annotated digital readings in class that **isn't** a cell phone (i.e., a tablet or laptop).

Course Assignments:
Writing exercises: Almost every week, you will be completing brief (i.e., 2-3 pages) prose exercises that relate in some way to the week's assigned reading(s). Each prompt can be found on Canvas, in the module of whichever week the prompt is assigned. Your exercises are to be submitted to Canvas prior to class. They needn't be spotless—indeed, I encourage messy experimentation!—but they should reflect thoughtfulness and care.

Workshops: Starting in the second week of class, you will be meeting in small groups to workshop and discuss your exercises. **You are expected to have read your peers' work with care, and to have made thoughtful margin notes and line suggestions.** There will also be opportunities to workshop exercises as a larger group, although we won't have enough time to do this for everyone—I'll be taking volunteers once the term is underway.

Final submission: In the final week of class, you will be submitting a revision and expansion (i.e., 5-6 pages) of an earlier exercise, to be accompanied by a substantial letter explaining not only your inspiration, composition process, and approach to revision, but also how this piece reflects your identity as a writer and how it connects to the rest of your work in this course.

Reading reflections: These are brief, optional assignments (although if you intend to receive an "A" in the course then you must complete at least three of them) that invite you to engage directly with the readings, addressing anything that came up during your reading experience.

Course Schedule:

Week	Reading due	Writing due
Week 1: 6/27	- Syllabus - Jenn Alandy Trahan, "They Told Us Not to Say This" - Megan Giddings, "The Alive Sister"	NONE (although we will be doing some writing in class today—be sure to submit what you do to Canvas before Wednesday, 6/28, at noon)
Week 2: 7/4 **NO CLASS**	NONE **(but be sure to have emailed your group your submission by 7/4!)**	Writing exercise no. 1
Week 3: 7/11	- Charles Yu, "Standard Loneliness Package" - Anthony Veasna So, "The Shop" - Charlie Jane Anders, "This Is Why We Can't Have Nasty Things" - Joseph O'Neill, "The First World" - Rita Chang-Eppig, "The Miracle Girl" - Workshop submissions	**Discussion post** - Reading reflection (optional)
Week 4: 7/18	- Cristina Henríquez, "Everything Is Far from Here" "Cristina Henríquez on Immigration, Detention, and Missing Names" - Bryan Washington, "Lockwood" - Grace Paley, "In the Garden" - Richard Jean So and Gus Wezerek, "Just How White Is the Book Industry?" - Workshop submissions	- Writing exercise no. 2 - Reading reflection (optional)
Week 5: 7/25	- Kirstin Valdez Quade, "Jubilee" - Joy Williams, "Chicken Hill" - Alice Munro, "The Bear Came Over the Mountain" - Amelia Gray, "Labyrinth" - Yiyun Li, "All Will Be Well" - New Yorker Fiction Podcast, "Samantha Hunt Reads Yiyun Li" - Workshop submissions	- Final submission - Reading reflection (optional)

Formatting:

All writing you submit should…

- be **double-spaced**, using **twelve-point Times New Roman** font on a page with **one-inch margins**.
- include **a header on the first page** that features your name, the course title, my name, the assignment, and the date.
- have **page numbers**.

Grading

Because traditional qualitative grading tends both to reinforce existing hierarchies and, in a class such as this, to discourage creative risk-taking, I will be using "contract grading," a labor-based grading system that affords greater transparency regarding how grades are determined. The way this system works is that if you check the boxes in a given column below, you will receive the corresponding grade. One of the many things I like about this model is that I can give you descriptive and evaluative feedback that is decoupled from a grade—this hopefully makes the process of receiving feedback feel slightly less menacing and more approachable. If you have any questions about this approach to grading, please ask me!

A	B	C	D/F
Students who receive an "A" in this course will have done **ALL** of the following: ☐ Completed three of the optional reading reflections **on time*** ☐ Completed every exercise on time ☐ Completed the final submission on time, demonstrating care in their revisions ☐ Arrived to every workshop prepared, having carefully read their peers' submissions ☐ Carefully read and annotated every assigned reading ☐ **Had one or fewer unexcused absences**	Students who receive a "B" in this course will have done **ALL** of the following: ☐ Completed every exercise on time ☐ Completed the final submission on time, demonstrating care in their revisions ☐ Arrived to every workshop prepared, having carefully read their peers' submissions ☐ Carefully read and annotated every assigned reading ☐ **Had one or fewer unexcused absences**	Students who receive a "C" in this course will have done **ALL** of the following: ☐ Completed two or fewer of the exercises ☐ Completed the final submission ☐ Arrived to workshop inconsistently prepared ☐ Inconsistently read and annotated every assigned reading ☐ **Had two or fewer unexcused absences**	Students who receive a "D" or "F" in this course will have done **SOME**** of the following: ☐ Completed fewer than two of the exercises ☐ Not completed the final submission ☐ Arrived to workshop inconsistently prepared ☐ Inconsistently read and annotated every assigned reading ☐ **Had more than two unexcused absences**

*Late work may not receive feedback. However, if you are facing extenuating circumstances that might warrant an extension, just reach out to me!

**Not submitting the final assignment will result in automatic failure of the course, as will having more than two unexcused absences (see attendance policy below).

Attendance, Participation, and Coursework:

Please come to each meeting *on time*, and leave respectfully after the meeting is complete. You are also expected to come to class *prepared*, which means bringing with you the assigned (and **annotated**!) readings, a notebook, and any work you've been asked to submit in hard copy. Failure to submit one of the major graded assignments by the end of the semester may result in failure of the course.

More than one absence will negatively impact your grade in the course; more than two unexcused absences will result in failure of the course. Lateness is disruptive to the entire class. If you arrive once class is underway or depart before the class session has ended, you will be marked as late. *Two latenesses count as one absence in calculating your final course grade.*

Coursework for Kresge Labs consists mainly of your regular presentation of projects-in-progress to the class. Participation is crucial in this course; you are expected to respond vigorously and constructively to the work of your peers, and to maintain in each conversation a distinction between *creative, constructive criticism*, which helpfully addresses the work under discussion on its own terms, and *ad hominem judgment*—commentary on the writer as a person, their background, or their potential—which, in this course, is unwelcome, even when well intentioned. Through this distinction we create a safe, non-judgmental space in which writers can expect to be treated respectfully and hear meaningful feedback; this in turn fosters a space in which we feel free to express what really matters to us about a text.

Academic Integrity and Honesty:

Be careful to distinguish borrowed ideas and language from your own ideas and language. *Plagiarism* is the misuse of others' material, representing someone else's (or an AI chatbot's) writing or thoughts or observations as your own. We spend our time in class participating in an ongoing creative and analytical conversation, and when you write, and speak, you join this conversation. Anyone who attempts to take credit for the work of others will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include failing the class and/or a notation on your academic record.

Audio or Video Recording:

No video or audio recording permitted unless you have my permission.

Students with Learning Differences:

UC Santa Cruz is committed to creating an academic environment that supports its diverse student body. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in

this course, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the [Disability Resource Center (DRC)](#) to me privately during my office hours or by appointment, preferably within the first two weeks of the quarter. At this time, I would also like us to discuss ways we can ensure your full participation in the course. I encourage all students who may benefit from learning more about DRC services to contact DRC by phone at (831) 459-2089 or by email at drc@ucsc.edu.

Title IX:

Title IX prohibits gender discrimination, including sexual harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. If you have experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence, you can receive confidential support and advocacy at the Campus Advocacy Resources & Education (CARE) Office by calling (831) 502-2273. In addition, Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) can provide confidential counseling support, (831) 459-2628. You can also report gender discrimination directly to the University's Title IX Office, (831) 459-2462. Reports to law enforcement can be made to UCPD, (831) 459-2231 ext. 1. For emergencies call 911.

Land Acknowledgment:

The land on which we gather is the unceded territory of the Awaswas-speaking Uypi Tribe. The Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, comprised of the descendants of indigenous people taken to missions Santa Cruz and San Juan Bautista during Spanish colonization of the Central Coast, is today working hard to restore traditional stewardship practices on these lands and heal from historical trauma.

STUDENT SERVICES:

[Counseling and Psychological Services](#)

Many students at UC Santa Cruz face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

[Students in Recovery](#)

There are resources for students in recovery.

[Student Success and Engagement Hub](#)

The Division of Student Success provides campus-wide coordination and leadership for student success programs and activities across departments, divisions, the colleges, and administrative units.

[Tutoring and Learning Support](#)

At Learning Support Services (LSS), undergraduate students build a strong foundation for success and cultivate a sense of belonging in our Community of Learners. LSS partners with faculty and staff to advance educational equity by designing inclusive learning environments in Modified Supplemental Instruction, Small Group Tutoring, and Writing Support. When students fully engage in our programs, they gain transformative experiences that empower them at the university and beyond.

[Slug Support Program](#)

College can be a challenging time for students and during times of stress it is not always easy to find the help you need. Slug Support can give help with everything from basic needs (housing, food, or financial insecurity) to getting the technology you need during remote instruction.
To get started with SLUG Support, please contact the [Dean of Students](#) Office at 831-459-4446 or you may send us an email at deanofstudents@ucsc.edu.

Slug Help/[Technology](#)

The ITS Support Center is your single point of contact for all issues, problems or questions related to technology services and computing at UC Santa Cruz. To get technological help, simply email help@ucsc.edu.

On-Campus Emergency Contacts

For all other help and support, including the health center and emergency services, Click here to go to UCSC's [Emergency Services](#) page. Always dial 9-1-1 in the case of an emergency.