Course description:
Kresge 65W is a creative writing course that will help you develop and workshop a series of weekly assignments, as well as work toward an independent creative final project. Our class will focus primarily on fiction and creative nonfiction, with room to explore—and compose in—these or related genres. True to its “lab” moniker, this is a hands-on class, shaped entirely by the work you will be doing work before (reading and writing exercises in anticipation of our upcoming class theme, responding to peers’ work), during (writing, discussion, workshopping), and after each class (extending our class theme into your own narrative projects).

Course policies & grading:
The nonnegotiables:

• Show up for all five classes. Be on time. Be present (listening, thinking, writing, not bringing in outside distractions—if you need to check your phone, please step outside).
• Come to class prepared: with your writing devices of choice (laptop, notebook), any homework due that day in hard copy, and access to material for any ongoing project(s).
• Do all assigned writing exercises on time. You’ll have work due on Sundays (online) and Wednesdays (in class).
• Turn in a thoughtful final project by the end of Session 1 (Sunday, July 30, to be exact). This can be an extension/revision of one or more of your writing exercises, or an independent project. Aim for 10-20 pages.
• Be respectful of yourself (by building good writing habits and allowing yourself to experiment/fail) and your peers (by following our class’s workshop etiquette agreement).
• You can expect to do about 6 hours of work outside of class each week. This will take the form of:
  • **weekly homework**: select one of the options to extend that week’s discussions/lessons, share it online by 10 p.m. Sunday night (aim for 2.5-5 pages, 12 point font, double-spaced)
  • **weekly prep work**: reading, writing, and thinking in preparation for the upcoming class, due by the beginning of our class meeting
  • **ongoing**: writing toward your final project (this can be an extra work/revisions on current or older homework assignments, or time spent on an independent writing project)
  • **ongoing**: spend 1 each week hour devoted to a new routine/new habit that will serve your writing and creativity: a daily writing session (dream journaling, keeping a personal diary, freewriting); a more extensive once-a-week writing session (such as a weekly coffee-shop writing date with a classmate); or time devoted to quality pleasure-reading (seeking out and reading good essays/stories, etc.) or craft-reading—see the “About” page of our class website for suggestions
• If you keep up with all of this, you can expect an A in the class. I will grade on thoughtfulness and effort, not on my judgment of your written work. If you fall behind in one or more area, or approach your peers’ work without diligence or respect, you can expect a lower grade.

The negotiables:
• I want this class to be meaningful to you. For our weekly in-class and at-home writing exercises, you are welcome to:
  o revise/continue old work or start new work
  o tweak prompts to follow your inspirations
  o write in the form of the short story, the nonfiction narrative, or any alternate genre
• As a class, we’ll agree on an approach to workshopping that feels like the best fit for our group.

Campus policies/information:

Session Deadlines:
Deadline to Drop: Monday, July 3
Deadline to Withdraw: Friday, July 14

DRC Accommodations:
The DRC reduces barriers to inclusion and full participation for students with disabilities by providing support to individually determine reasonable academic accommodations. If you have questions or concerns about exam accommodations, or any other disability-related matter, please contact the DRC office, located in Hahn 125 or at 831-459-2089 or drc@ucsc.edu.

Academic Dishonesty:
Academic integrity is the cornerstone of a university education. Academic dishonesty diminishes the university as an institution and all members of the university community. It tarnishes the value of a UCSC degree. All members of the UCSC community have an explicit responsibility to foster an environment of trust, honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility. All members of the university community are expected to present as their original work only that which is truly their own. All members of the community are expected to report observed instances of cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty in order to ensure that the integrity of scholarship is valued and preserved at UCSC.

In the event a student is found in violation of the UCSC Academic Integrity policy, he or she may face both academic sanctions imposed by the instructor of record and disciplinary sanctions imposed either by the provost of his or her college or the Academic Tribunal convened to hear the case. Violations of the Academic Integrity policy can result in dismissal from the university and a permanent notation on a student’s transcript. For the full policy and disciplinary procedures on academic dishonesty, students and instructors should refer to the Academic Integrity page at the Division of Undergraduate Education.

Title IX:
The university cherishes the free and open exchange of ideas and enlargement of knowledge. To maintain this freedom and openness requires objectivity, mutual trust, and confidence; it requires the absence of coercion, intimidation, or exploitation. The principal responsibility for maintaining these conditions must rest upon those members of the university community who exercise most authority and leadership: faculty, managers, and supervisors. The university has therefore instituted a number of measures designed to protect its community from sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and other related prohibited conduct.

Information, advice, referrals, and/or copies of the UC Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment and the UC Santa Cruz Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Reports of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment are available to all students, faculty, and staff by contacting Tracey Tsugawa, Title IX/Sexual Harassment Officer, 105 Kerr Hall, 459-2462, or tsugawa@ucsc.edu.
Our course will be structured as a series of explorations:
(more details distributed weekly, via a weekly packet and additions to our Google Classroom page—I want to leave room to adjust the class to our group’s needs and interests)

JUNE 28
Week 1: Familiar Artifacts
INSPIRATIONS: THE EVERYDAY OBJECT, THE OFT-REPEATED STORY
What are the parameters of the short story? Of creative nonfiction? What value can we find in the adage “write what you know”?
This week, we’ll overview the course, talk about our weekly work together, and set up a workshopping schedule. We’ll do a series of writing exercises focused on everyday objects and everyday stories. We’ll read and discuss two narratives that work with objects: Aimee Bender’s short story “Americca” and Jenny Qi’s personal essay “A Heart Filled with Love, Not Stuff.” We’ll talk about the “write what you know” adage with the help of Alice LaPlante’s “The Splendid Gift of Not Knowing.”

JULY 5
Week 2: Story Architectures
INSPIRATIONS: SPACES, STRUCTURES, PLOTS, BLUEPRINTS
What are the conventions of shaping and plotting fiction and nonfiction narratives? How can we inject a sense of place into our writing? How can we use physical spaces to inspire our creative work?
This week, we’ll talk about building and shaping narratives—what are the common structures, and do we have to follow them? What structures allow us to take Alice LaPlante’s advice from last week—to render (not solve) the mystery, to find the real subject (“find oil”)?

JULY 12
Week 3: Populating Our Narratives
INSPIRATIONS: CELEBRITIES, BACKSTORIES, LOVE STORIES
How can we create characters who have lives beyond the page?
In Zen in the Art of Writing, Ray Bradbury suggests that “plot is no more than footprints left in the snow after your characters have run by on their way to incredible destinations.” In both fiction and nonfiction, characterization is what tends to drive a story home, make it poignant, make it memorable. Today, we’ll work on moving beyond coyness and caricature to building round, full characters.

JULY 19
Week 4: Odyssey & Observation
INSPIRATIONS: MAPS, PSYCHOGEOGRAPHY, THE FLÂNEUR, THE DÉRIVE
How can we use psychogeography and flânerie to jolt awareness and enhance observation in our writing? How can we incorporate movement into our writing—in its inspiration and flow/structure?
The flâneur is a 19th-century figure who idled, wandered, exhaustively explored cities. The Situationists were a mid-twentieth collection of activists and artists who embraced chance and randomness as part of a larger political/artistic project—one technique for doing so was psychogeography, “a whole toy box full of playful, inventive strategies for exploring cities.” We’ll use both as inspirations for our own writing this week.

JULY 26
Week 5: Beginnings, Middles, Ends
This week, we’ll wrap up and share our work.