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## TOPICS: LAW, TRUTH, AND NON-FICTION WRITING in Fall 2018 (LW2091A)

<b>Course Code</b>	LW2091A	<b>Professor(s)</b>	Michelle Kuo
<b>Prerequisites</b>	None	<b>Office Number</b>	PV-204
<b>Class Schedule</b>	W: 13:45-16:40 in SD-4	<b>Office Hours</b>	By appointment
<b>Credits</b>	4	<b>Email</b>	mkuo@aup.edu
<b>Semester</b>	Fall 2018	<b>Office Tel. Ext.</b>	

## Course Description

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This is a course that focuses on craft. By the end of the course, you will have engaged in deep revision and experimented with a variety of voices in creative nonfiction.

Stories fill the law; the law is made up of stories. Consider the O. J. Simpson trial, for instance, where competing stories about the crime came to determine the outcome of the trial itself. The fact that story-telling—often untrue ones—is so deeply intertwined with verdicts is a deeply uncomfortable part of the law. In this course, we seek to examine this relationship, between story-telling and justice, between law and literature. In addition, we shall read canonical pieces in memoir that teach us elements of craft, including voice, structure, and setting. Among the writers we study are David Grann, Janet Malcolm, Larissa Macfarquhar, James Forman, Jr., Leslie Chang, Emmanuel Carrere, James Baldwin, George Orwell, Chang-rae Lee, and Vivian Gornick.

## Course Learning Outcomes

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## General Education

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[PLEASE EDIT OR REMOVE THE FOLLOWING TEXT AS APPLICABLE]

The general education program at AUP consists of four requirements: Speaking the World, Modeling the World, Mapping the World, and Comparing Worlds Past and Present.

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This course can be used to fulfill the [INDICATE THE REQUIREMENT(S) FULFILLED BY THE COURSE] requirement and as such has the following learning outcomes:

[INDICATE THE GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES]

## Course Outline

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### ***Week One,***

#### **Wednesday 12th September**

Syllabus Distributed. What is creative nonfiction?\_

### ***Week Two,***

#### **Wednesday 19th September**

Abe Streeep, "The Last Best Place" (on refugees in Montana)

James Baldwin, *Notes of a Native Son* (read title essay and "Equal in Paris")

George Orwell, "Shooting an Elephant"

In class: Sign up for Workshop Schedule

### ***Week Three,***

#### **Wednesday 26th September**

Chang-rae Lee, "Coming Home Again"

Virginia Woolf, "Street Haunting"

George Packer, "The Other Paris"

Experiment\_with Scene and Voice today. Post paragraphs on Blackboard.

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**Week Four,**

**Wednesday October 3rd**

Vivian Gornick, *The Situation and the Story*

**Week Five,**

**Wednesday October 10th**

Emmanuel Carrere, *Lives Other Than My Own*

**Workshops: First Story**

**Week Six,**

**Wednesday October 17th**

James Forman, Jr., *Locking Up Our Own*

Workshop Stories

**Week Seven,**

**Wednesday October 24th**

Fenton Johnson, "The Future of Queer"

Leslie Chang, *Factory Girls* (excerpt)

Workshop Stories

**Fall Break – October 31st** – read David Grann, *Killers of the Flower Moon*

**Week Eight,**

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**Wednesday November 7th**

David Grann, *Killers of the Flower Moon*

Workshop Stories

***Week Nine,***

**Wednesday November 14th**

Philippe Sands, *East West* (excerpts)

Workshop Stories

***Workshops: Second Story***

***Week Ten, November 21st***

**W**

Janet Malcolm, *The Journalist and the Murderer*

Workshop Stories

***Week Eleven,***

**Wednesday November 28th**

Errol Morris, *Wilderness of Error*

Workshop Stories

Nov 30th: Study trip to Nuremberg and Rothenburg

***Week Twelve,***

**Wednesday December 5th**

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Podcast – Serial

Workshop Stories

***Week Thirteen,***

**Wednesday December 12th**

Maggie Nelson, *The Red Parts*

Workshop Stories

Class Party

Final Exam Date: Read your work aloud; final poetry recitation; class party.

## **Textbooks**

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Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Required
Killers of the Flower Moon	Grann, David	Doubleday	9780307742483	Yes
The Situation and the Story	Gornick, Vivian	FSG	9780374528584	Yes
Locking Up Our Own	Forman, James	FSG	9780374537449	Yes
Notes of a Native Son	Baldwin, James	Beacon Press	9780807006238	Yes
Lives Other Than My Own	Carrere, Emmanuel	Picador	9781250013774	Yes

## **Attendance Policy**

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Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

**IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.**

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

## **Grading Policy**

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### Course Requirements

Engaged responses to classmates' work, reflecting careful consideration

(including letters) 20%

Reading Journal on Craft/Imitations 20%

Story 1 15%

Story 2 15%

Final Story (quality of revision) 20%

Poetry Recitations 10%

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## Course Policies

*General Policies.* Please make every effort to come to class regularly and punctually. Your final grade will reflect your class attendance and participation. Before coming to class, read all assigned materials and be prepared to engage with them.

To ensure a minimal amount of distractions, computers and cellphones are not permitted in class.

You are allowed two unexcused absences without penalty. Additional absences, barring medical or personal emergencies, will lower your final grade. At my discretion, chronic tardiness or a sustained failure to contribute to class discussions may count as unexcused absences.

*Academic Misconduct includes:*

- attempts to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
- use of unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
- forgery or falsification of academic documents or records;
- providing assistance to other students in any of these acts.

*Office Hours.* I would like to meet each of you throughout the semester. Please don't be shy about arranging an appointment.

*Requirements for Written Work.* All written work should be properly formatted, proofread, and submitted in both hard copy and email (mkuo@aup.edu). Late papers will be accepted only in the case of medical or personal emergency.

As you write, take risks. I do not grade your rough drafts or reading journals because I want you to experiment with voices and genres that you've never tried.

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- **Two workshopped stories**, 7-10 pages double-spaced. You will write two essays or stories that will be workshopped by the class. Please bring printed copies of the essay *the week before it is being workshopped*. If you want to save money with printing, meet me in PV-204 and we'll print them together.
  - **Final project**. Choose one of your stories and revise it substantially.
  - **Letter to classmate responding to work**. Please write detailed, encouraging, *specific* feedback in a letter responding to their work and attach this letter to your hard copy of the essay, which ought to contain some margin notes and line edits. I'll post guidelines for your letter but the number one rule is the golden one: treat others as you wish you'd be treated. Keep a folder of your letters. If you are absent, send this letter via email and CC me. You will turn this in along with your reading journal at the end of the semester. (If you hope to become a magazine or book editor, this is excellent practice.)
  - **Poetry Recitations**. You'll recite three poems in front of the class. The first two will be Shakespeare soliloquys. The third is your choice. This exercise will help us work through sound and meter.
  - **Reading Journals on Craft and Imitation. Due every class**. For each entry, please write **three paragraphs**.
    - First two paragraphs: Focus on one element of the writer's craft. This could be point of view, sentence length, dialogue, imagery, tone and voice, use of archival materials, structure, or anything else. Think like a writer rather than a reader. Choose at least one example from the reading that demonstrates the technique. These paragraphs should reflect your own thoughts and attention to elegant, concise prose.
    - Third paragraph: Imitation. Choose one element of craft and imitate that writer's technique. Ideally, these imitations will help you build your own stories.
    - **Please bring these paragraphs typed. You will read them out loud to another person at the beginning of class**. You will turn in a folder of your work at the end of the semester.

**Study Trip.** Please join Professors Wu and me for a study trip to Nuremberg and Rothenberg at the end of November.

## Other

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