Course Description
In this graduate writing workshop, we will explore the idea of lightness in our own work as well as in the works of selected authors. How do the white space and omissions become as much a part of the story as what is spoken? How does removing the excess allow for the reader to more actively engage with the text? Indirection, minimalism, swiftness and humor are all aspects of “lightness” we will discuss as we read one another’s work this semester. We will be reading some contemporary writers who illustrate, in various ways, a spirit of lightness, including Lydia Davis, JM Coetzee, Joan Didion and Rachel Cusk, Toni Morrison, Amy Hempel and James Baldwin.

Course Requirements:
I’d like you to produce at least 60 pages of original writing this semester, as well as a significant revision. Workshop submissions can take the form of short stories or novel pages. Each student will present their pages to the workshop several times throughout the semester for us to read and critique as a group. In advance of each workshop, students will write a short letter to the author, addressing the areas of the piece that you found particularly effective (and why), as well as areas where you were pushed out of the work or disengaged with the writing (and why). This letter is not a place to say whether you liked the piece or not, but rather to think about what the writer is attempting to do and to address the author’s intention. Please also come prepared to hand in a (respectfully) marked up manuscript to the author. This practice of close reading and critiquing is one of the ways you will sharpen your own skills as a writer.

*Students will be required to hand in a major revision to me at the end of the semester.

You will be required to read and come prepared to discuss all the stories and novels on the syllabus.

Finally, I’d like to set up a time to meet each of you at least once for a conference at some point throughout the semester.
**Reading List:**
JM Coetzee, *Disgrace*
Rachel Cusk, *Kudos*
Joan Didion, *Play It As It Lays*
Italo Calvino, *Six Memos for the New Millennium*
Lydia Davis, *Break It Down*
*Paris Review* selected interviews
Selected handouts of stories and essays.

**Class Schedule**

8/21  First Class, Introductions, Scheduling
     Coetzee, Calvino

8/28  Coetzee
     Workshop 1

9/4   Joan Didion, *Play It As It Lays*

9/11  Joan Didion, *Play It As It Lays*

9/18  *Paris Review* interview, Joan Didion

9/25  *Paris Review*, James Baldwin (handout)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>10/2</td>
<td>Lydia Davis, <em>Break It Down</em> (selected stories)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/9</td>
<td>Selected story (handout) TBD</td>
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<td>10/16</td>
<td>Rachel Cusk, <em>Kudos</em></td>
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<td>10/23</td>
<td>Rachel Cusk, <em>Kudos</em></td>
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<td>10/30</td>
<td><em>Paris Review</em> interview with Amy Hempel</td>
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<td>11/6</td>
<td>Amy Hempel selected story (handout)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/13</td>
<td><em>Paris Review</em> interview, Toni Morrison</td>
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11/27  Selected story (handout) TBD

12/4  Revision Due
Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:
Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems:
Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255
Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Sexual Assault Resource Center
For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: sarc.usc.edu

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086
Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. equity.usc.edu

Bias Assessment Response and Support
Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

The Office of Disability Services and Programs
Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

USC Support and Advocacy (USCSA) – (213) 821-4710
Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Diversity at USC
Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information
Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu