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**ENGL 105x**  
**Creative Writing**  
**for Non-Majors**  
Fall 2019

Instructor: Brandi Wells  
Email: brandiwe@usc.edu  
Section # 32821  
Thursday 2:00-4:20pm @ THH 211  
Office: THH 449D  
Office hours: Thursday 1:00-2:00 or by appointment

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“Write about what you know’ is the most stupid thing I’ve heard. It encourages people to write a dull autobiography. It’s the reverse of firing the imagination and potential of writers.”  
—Kazuo Ishiguro

“There are no rules. Only: can you do this with confidence? Can you do it with aplomb? Can you do it with style? Can you do it with joy?”  
—Neil Gaiman

## **Writing and Reading Beyond What You Know**

The word “weird” is slippery and is often leveled at art that asks us to step outside our comfort zone. Why should anything or everything that isn’t ourselves be ‘weird’? What makes something weird? What does this mean? We’ll spend the semester investigating that word and how we can embrace both the strange and wild. Our focus will be on short stories and poetry. You’ll generate new writing, workshop, and revise, all while reading craft essays and the work of published authors. Your aim this semester is to write and read with an eye toward your own development as a writer, both in this class and well beyond it.

### **Requirements**

- Attendance! This doesn’t simply mean bodily presence, but full engagement. You should arrive on time, with any assigned readings, having prepared for class, and be ready to actively contribute. This includes having closely read and made notes on any assigned readings. Because the success of a writing workshop depends entirely on students’ regular preparation for and attendance in class, missing more than one class with or without an excuse will lower your grade. Missing more than two classes for any reason (medical appointments, athletic events, official school functions) may cause you to fail the course. If you must miss a class or deadline, make sure to email me in advance. If you are ill, there is a family emergency, or you are feeling generally overwhelmed, please do not hesitate to come and speak with me in office hours or contact me via email.

- You'll hand in original work twice during the semester. We'll schedule each student's due dates in week one or two. Bring printed copies of your workshop pieces for entire class, including myself, the week before you workshop.
- Keep a binder or notebook for in-class (and occasional out of class) writing activities, which you will turn in to me at the end of semester, as a part of your final portfolio. Please date all entries.
- You'll provide thoughtful and constructive feedback on your peers' writing. You'll need to make in text comments (we'll talk more about this in class) as well as write a one-page response for each workshop submission. Please bring 2 copies of your response: one for me and one for the author.
- Your final portfolio will include your in-class writing assignments, your workshop submissions, a significant revision of one of your workshop pieces, as well as a 1-2 page reflective letter about your semester and your writing plans for the future. Due by December 12.
- No phones, laptops, or other electronic devices. Please keep these out of sight.

### **Required Reading**

(This reading list is a sample set and is subject to change. I will provide handouts for all of the readings). You'll read work by Nnedi Okorafor, Brian Evenson, Toni Morrison, Carmen Maria Machado, Etgar Keret, Han King, Zachary Doss, Aimee Bender, Kristin Ong Muslim, Danielle Evans, Sam Cohen, Sheila Heti, Diane Cook, Adrienne Rich, Anne Bishop, Sylvia Plath, Elaine Kahn, Melissa Broder, Victoria Chang, Harryette Mullen, Sawako Nakayasu, Hanif Abdurraqib, Dana Levin, Audre Lorde, and Kenji Liu.

### **Grading**

Final Portfolio: 60% This will include your workshop submissions, your revised workshop submission, your in-class writing assignments, and your reflective letter.

Responses to Student work + participation: 40%

**Student Behavior** that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action. These strictures may extend to behaviors outside the classroom that are related to the course.

### **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” <https://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. <https://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. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>
- Relationship & 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. <https://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: <http://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. <https://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. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>
- Student Support & Advocacy – (213) 821-4710 Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>
- Diversity at USC – <https://diversity.usc.edu/> Tabs for Events, Programs and Training, Task Force (including representatives for each school), Chronology, Participate, Resources for Students.
- The Office of Disability Services and Programs — <http://dsp.usc.edu> provides certification fo students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations.
- The Writing Center — 213-740-3691 Offers one-on-one support for academic writing. Appointments for individual consultations can be made online. <https://dornsife.usc.edu/writingcenter/> Students whose primary language is not English may also check with the American Language Institute <http://ali.usc.edu>
- If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information <http://emergency.usc.edu> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which

\*\* This is a provisional syllabus that may be revised as the term unfolds.