

# CREATIVE CRITICAL WRITING

Describing the impetus for her reverie regarding the nearly unknown filmmaker Barbara Loden, Nathalie Léger mentions a “gathering of accidents.” She writes, “I kept being carried away by the subject, and I was appalled, devastated, to discover that it had all started, in spite of and even without me, in a state of disorder and imperfection.”

And Tisa Bryant, explaining how she came to describe, with illuminating flatness, a series of scenes from several films in her book *Unexplained Presence*, writes that she is “talking the seen,” explaining that “talking the seen” is “catching racialized narration in the act of making itself (un)known.”

And Jenny Bouly, commenting on her poetic exploration of the Peter Pan story in her book *not merely because of the unknown that was stalking toward them*, which is infused with rich, robust, even ornate language, notes “it’s how I write and how I love, and I write how I love, especially when writing about love.”

Taken together, Léger, Bryant, and Bouly enact a critical writing practice catalyzed not by intellectual rigor and a desire to interrogate, but in response to a yearning to engage their chosen object, but to engage it obliquely.

Exploring the work of these writers and many others, Creative Critical Writing is a craft-based workshop focused on techniques for writing about – or alongside, next to, or near – film, video, still images, sound, and other media forms. Moving beyond the conventions of scholarly writing, the course explores forms that have been variously dubbed creative nonfiction, the hybrid essay, the fourth genre, the lyric essay, the video essay, and poetic or vernacular criticism; and it considers writers who have contributed often stunning examples to the form.

In the class, participants will have the opportunity to read/view work by many writers, designers, and filmmakers; to explore the rich history of alternative writing techniques; and to experience work that might be situated within the context of media studies, but which deviates from the tradition of the thesis-driven scholarly article or book. While we will read and discuss this work, our emphasis will be on writing. Assignments include four formal projects, along with weekly optional prompts.

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Wednesdays, 10:00-1:00 | 2 units | SCI 209

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