

Writing *Creative* Nonfiction

Meeting Time and Place: Tu Thur 3-4:15 in BAC 151
 Professor: Richard (Rick) Hill / Home phone: 858-270-5227/ E-Mail: rhill@ptloma.edu
 Office: BAC 126/ Office Phone: 2670 /LJML Dept Phone: 2297
 Office Hours: *Open*: Tu- Th 4:30-5:30 & Wed 2:00-4:00 (except when department and faculty meetings intervene)
By Appointment: M&F 2 – 5. Other times can be arranged as necessary.
Knock on the door with a question: Anytime I'm in the office.

PROSPECTUS / OBJECTIVES: Welcome to Writing 323, where we learn to write the truth in creative ways. “Nonfiction” used to refer to news articles and feature stories, but in the past twenty years or so, creative nonfiction--a blend of facts and creative writing techniques--has become a major genre in the creative arts.

As with fiction writing, creative nonfiction talent can't be taught. But technique can be—just as craft can be sharpened through guided practice, and scope can be widened through exposure to good writers. No previous creative writing experience is necessary, and we'll use the learn-by-doing technique. Demonstrated initiative in listening, writing, rewriting, and trying new approaches, plus commitment to improvement and willingness to work, will take you far.

Class members will complete the course with a substantial body of writing from the various subgenres of creative nonfiction. Evaluation of your progress will NOT be based on your innate talent or lack thereof, your subject matter, writing style, or whether or not you agree with me in class discussions and workshop sessions. In other words, it is possible to get a high grade if your writing talent is the “worst” in the class, and a low grade even if your writing talent is the “best” in the class---talent is not the issue; your success in the course is based on what you actually DO.

Required Textbook

Griffin, Connie D. *To Tell the Truth: Practice and Craft in Narrative Nonfiction*. New York: Pearson Longman. 2009. ISBN 10: 0-205-60549-4. Readings start the second week of class; if you haven't ordered the book yet online before the first class day, you'd best get it at the bookstore. **BRING YOUR BOOK TO CLASS EVERY DAY.**

Crucial email: Since you'll be receiving important email announcements about this class, all students are required to check their PLNU e-mail daily. Twice daily is even better.

Required supplies: Portable stapler, two double pocket folders (one for turning work in and one for storing evaluated work—I write notes on the folders so get the kind with a white, writable surface inside), notebook or composition book, loose paper. (Bring all but the storage folder to class every day).

FIVE TAKEAWAYS FROM THIS COURSE: Besides many specific CNF techniques, students will learn:

1. How to read like a writer (and thereby increase your enjoyment of reading and writing).
2. How to make a CNF piece interesting to readers: images, scenes, dialogue, rising action, etc.
3. How to create a writing group and get the most out of it.
4. The Golden Writing Revelation: Creative Work Gets Better With Revision.

OFFICIAL LJML COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students who complete WRI323 will be able to:

1. Craft descriptive and evocative language in the “show don't tell” method
2. Present descriptions of places and people through a variety of points of view
3. Develop conflict/resolution, rising action, and dramatic
4. Format submissions to editors for each genre in a professional manner;
6. Identify these craft techniques in the works of other writers.

See page 7 for other official PLNU and LJML statements and announcements.

ACTIVITIES: *In addition to crafting several creative nonfiction pieces, class activities will include seminars on form and technique, in-class writings, class discussions and workshops, audio and video visits by famous and/or good writers, and general encouragement. More specifically:*

Class Discussion and Workshops: Most lectures on technique and forms will be given early; by midterm our primary class activity will be class discussion and peer workshops on writing in progress. The course works well as a writing seminar and workshop only if everyone is active. A good rule of thumb is not to let a day go by without adding something to the class discussion. If you're a basically shy person like me, preparing questions / comments in advance can help in the early days before you get comfortable talking in public. In this sort of seminar course, saying, "I'm not into class participation" is like saying to your math professor "I'm not into quizzes and tests."

A NOTE ON WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS: As a writer in this course, please feel free to write whatever you want---you can probably find a market for any attitude, outlook, language, or subject matter. As a reader, please strive for editorial detachment, offering constructive comments in discussions and workshops regardless of whether you like or approve of the content. Personal, political, and/or moral stances are fine, but should not dominate our discussions.

A CAVEAT ON THE ABOVE: You can write whatever you want without fear of shocking me; however, you should not read anything aloud in class or in our public reading final that would offend those who avoid profanity. In case you need a general rule, try this: if it couldn't be read on network TV during prime time, it will definitely be offensive to some people. **If you have any question as to whether an item is okay to read out loud, always show it to me first.**

Reading: We will read and discuss a variety of creative non-fiction sub-genres, including memoirs, personal essays, travel writing, shorts, prose poems, spiritual autobiography and more. All our readings will be discussed from a writer's point of view---i.e., *our focus is on HOW the writer achieves effect rather than on literary analysis.*

Writing: Somebody said, "It takes writing a million words to make a writer." We'll get a good start on the million in this class. In addition to regular in-class writings and 15 or so pages of analyses and exercises, we will write around 20 pages of "finished" work---i.e., work that has gone through many early drafts (and many pages) and is ready to send to a publisher. Various assignments, short and long, will comprise the total.

Conferences: I will read and comment on all of your assignments. Each student will schedule at least two one-on-one conferences with me: one before the 8th week of the semester, and one before the 14th week. Scheduling more than two conferences is encouraged; one-on-one discussions can speed progress dramatically. When you come to a conference, bring one or more of your writing projects in progress. Mark passages you want to discuss, and write out in advance any questions you want to ask.

CLASS POLICIES

I. Reading Assignments

We will read the entire textbook chapter by chapter. For each reading assignment, bring a half page of typed, single-space notes to aid in class discussion. A little summary is okay, but notes should focus on some aspect of the reading that you can relate to in your writing progress---something you either agree or disagree with. Be specific in your notes to demonstrate that you did all the assigned reading.

CLASS POLICIES

II. Attendance: This is essentially a workshop / seminar course, so attendance is extremely important. Basically, students are allowed two absences without grade penalty and without having to explain the absences. But please carefully note the following policies.

-PERFECT ATTENDANCE BONUS: Perfect attendance (no absences of any kind; no more than one late arrival or early departure) will raise your grade by one increment (A- to A, B+ to A-, etc).

-Three absences before midterm or six absences total will trigger de-enrollment. If de-enrollment is before midterm, there is no record. If de-enrollment is after the last day to drop, the grade will be F.

-More than two absences will lower your participation grade.

-More than four absences total will lower your final total grade by one letter per absence.

-After the second occurrence, late arrivals or early departures will count as half-absences.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

"Excused" Absences: The only "excused" absences are those authorized by the Provost, usually for official school activities (sports, music, speech, etc.). Your coach or activity sponsor will notify the Provost if you are involved in an excusable activity, then the Provost's office will notify all your professors.

Excessive "Excused" absences: If you know that you will be missing several classes for approved sports, music, or field trips, you should consider either taking another course that doesn't conflict so heavily with your class schedule or taking this course another semester when it doesn't conflict so much. In any case, please notify me by the second day of class if you will be missing more than three classes for official school activities.

Exceptions to the above: If you have a serious accident or illness, the attendance policy and assignment schedule will be modified, provided you notify me as soon as possible. Please also notify me immediately if you have a schedule conflict that may cause you to be late for class more than three times in the semester.

III. Writing Assignments

An assignment sheet is attached, but the schedule may be altered as circumstances indicate---we want to be open to creative opportunities. I will announce any changes in the schedule; if you are absent, it is your responsibility to call or e-mail so I can keep you informed of alterations. If you become confused about assignments or due dates, see, call or e-mail me immediately. **NOTE: If you wait until an assignment is due to express confusion about it, you have waited too long.**

A NOTE ON COMPLETION OF ASSIGNMENTS: My experience as a writer has taught me that (a) waiting for inspiration is usually a waste of time, (b) working under pressure often produces inspired work, and (c) writers are not usually the best judges of whether their work is inspired. With those ABC's in mind it's important to complete assignments as best you can and turn them in, no matter how awful the work seems to be turning out. To be counted for credit, all assignments must be turned in on time.

Late printing caution: Assignments are due at the beginning of class. Always allow for long lines and jammed printers in the campus computer labs---don't wait until a few minutes before class to print. *Coming to class late because of printer trouble will count against your absence total and the dropped score provision will apply to your assignment.*

PRINTER TROUBLE? Do this instead: E-mail a copy of your assignment by class time on the due date. Then come to class on time and let me know you had late printing trouble. Unless you develop chronic printer trouble (i.e. using this method more than twice), you won't be counted late.

III. Writing Assignments (continued)

Grades for Writing Assignments

I will give written feedback and evaluation on your writing assignments, and to help you understand how close you are to publishable-quality work, I'll give provisional letter grades. "A" means you're there--- send it out. "B" means you're getting close. "C" means you need to dig in and leap the gap between writing for school and writing for professional markets. I will be happy to read rewrites and raise the provisional grade as each piece improves. **Though provisional grades are for informational purposes only, rewrites are a fine way to show "willingness to work at the craft of writing" and as such, can raise your overall class grade.** See the Evaluation section for complete instructions on how to get the final grade you want.

WHAT TO TURN IN WHEN A CLASS OR TEXTBOOK EXERCISE / WRITING ASSIGNMENT IS DUE:

Think of each assignment as a three-part package that looks like this:

1. On Top: The final draft of the item. This clean draft follows the format and all of the writing mechanics guidelines given in the "How to Send CNF" handout or the Précis model.
2. Below the Top Draft: At least one MARKED draft of the item. A marked draft is a printout that has ink or pencil corrections/notes on it. It may be that you usually do all your corrections on the computer; if so, try this marked draft method anyway while you're in this class. Trust me, writing on a typed draft provides a new dimension to editing.
3. Rough notes or brainstorming notes, either written or typed.

WHAT TO TURN IN WHEN A CNF (formal Creative Nonfiction) ASSIGNMENT IS DUE

Think of each assignment as a five-part package that looks like this:

1. On Top: The final draft of the item. This clean draft follows all of the writing mechanics guidelines above.
2. Below the Top Draft: At least one MARKED draft of the item (see "marked draft explanation" in the previous section).
3. Second to last: A complete draft brought to class on "complete draft day" that has been read and commented (in writing) upon by your peers.
4. On the bottom: Précis + first draft or rough notes, either written or typed.

THE FIRST FOUR PACKAGE ITEMS (4 pages minimum) ARE STAPLED TOGETHER. **First drafts or incomplete packages are not acceptable; the dropped scores policy will apply.**

5. Virtually there: An e-mail copy of the final draft only, sent before class on the date due.

Writing mechanics: All work turned in should be prepared as if each piece were being submitted to those picky souls who publish creative nonfiction. You will receive a "How to Send Creative Nonfiction" handout that models the professional format you'll use to send out your work. Use that format for every assignment in this class, beginning with the first one. **Also be sure to staple, spell check and proofread carefully, avoid odd fonts, and use 12 pt. type.**

Using folders: Hand in your work in your everyday double-pocket folder (be sure to get the kind that has a white, writable surface inside). Write your name is on both sides of the folder. Use post-its or other notes if you have specific items you'd like comments on or specific questions about your work you'd like answered.

Work handed in at the end of each class session should include

- A. that day's reading notes
- B. that day's writing exercise(s) and final-draft CNF assignments
- C. that day's in-class writing
- D. Any rewrite(s) you've completed

When you get your work back, take it out of your everyday folder and put it in your storage folder. Keep your storage folder in a safe place, and **NEVER THROW ANYTHING AWAY UNTIL YOU GET YOUR FINAL GRADE FOR THE COURSE.** If there is ever any question about grades or missing assignments, you'll want to have everything available to show me.

III. Writing Assignments (continued)

Daily in-class writings: We'll write for 10-15 minutes almost every day on a given topic. You should be in class and prepared to start writing at precisely 3:00. To receive your daily writing credit you should (A) be present for the entire daily writing time, and (B) Label your daily writings with your name, the date, and the topic for that day. Do your daily writings in longhand rather than on the computer.

These daily writings are not supposed to be finished or even "good"--they're raw material you may be able to use later. Don't worry about punctuation, spelling, handwriting, or organization--as long as you can read it, it's fine. On the other hand, the writings ARE NOT OPTIONAL. If you don't "feel" like writing, write anyway. No one should be talking, doing other work, looking over returned papers, or staring into space for more than a few seconds during the writing period.

Dropped scores on writing assignments: To allow for absence, illness, writer's block, friends who need counseling, relatives in town, not reading the above instructions carefully, etc. etc., one missing or incomplete CNF piece, two class or text assignment, and three daily writings can be missed, incomplete, or substandard without affecting your final grade. Missing or late annotated worksheet assignments won't be dropped. Please don't ask for extensions or waivers once you've used your drops.

How to get credit for a Text exercise or CNF assignment if you miss the class in which the assignment is due: *If you are absent, have a friend bring your assignment or otherwise get it to me by the beginning of class time for full credit.* You may also e-mail your final draft as an attachment, **BUT to receive credit, you must bring a hard copy of the entire package by the next class day.**

An important note on Plagiarism, copying, and recycling: I don't imagine anyone will be copying memoirs and trying to pass them off as original, but just in case here is the policy for the LJML department: All work must be written with no help beyond workshop suggestions from classmates. Copying words, phrases, and ideas from books or journals and failing to note quotes or attribute the material is plagiarism. Downloading material from the Internet without attribution, including sentences, phrases, and ideas, also constitutes plagiarism. We won't use formal MLA citations and works cited for our writings, but you should follow the rules you learned in WRI110 for quoting and paraphrasing other authors, always giving due credit. Do not recycle or revise writing you have previously written in (or are currently writing for) other courses. **"I didn't mean to plagiarize" is not an excuse for plagiarism.**

MISCELLANEOUS IMPORTANT NOTES

1. THE FINAL EXAM will be a portfolio & reading of your work. Our scheduled date and time is **Tuesday, December 13, 4:30 – 7:00p.m.** The final accounts for 10% of your evaluation; if you miss it, your final grade will be lowered one full letter. Since our final is a public event, it can't be made up or rescheduled for individuals. Therefore, **please do not schedule travel, buy tickets, schedule elective doctor's appointments, or make any other plans that will cause you to miss the final exam time.**

2. CLASSROOM DEPARTMENT: How you dress is your business, and you certainly don't have to check your personality at the door, but adult classroom deportment is expected in this community of writers. Crucial high-school-level specifics to avoid include:

- a. Texting in class /leaving your cell phone ringer on.
- b. Doing work from other classes during class time.
- c. Holding private conversations during class discussions or while the professor is talking or while someone is asking a question.
- d. Using your notebook computer for anything other than computer assignments for this class.
- d. Any other distracting or disruptive behavior.

Repeated instances of any of the above will lower your class participation grade and may trigger de-enrollment.

Evaluation Grades will be based on successful completion of the following components

- formal writing (CNF) assignments
- textbook or class-generated exercises (EX)
- annotated worksheets for formal workshops
- final Portfolio and reading
- documented class participation
- attendance (see attendance policy)

Again, Grades will NOT be based on your innate talent or lack thereof, your subject matter, writing style, or whether or not you agree with me in class discussions and workshop sessions. In other words, you can get an A even if your writing talent is the “worst” in the class, and you can get a D or F even if your writing talent is the “best” in the class. Rewrites are welcome and will take them into grade consideration.

The following guidelines will determine final grades. Cases that do not fall exactly within the guidelines will receive pluses and minuses as appropriate.

How to Insure an A in the course:

1. Complete all CNF assignments (meeting all draft deadlines). Zealously follow all format and mechanical guidelines. Hand them in on time and show more than the minimum drafts on each. Rewrite after evaluation.
2. Complete all daily writings and exercise assignments (EX) on time, following all the guidelines.
3. Complete all annotated worksheets and participate conscientiously in all workshops.
4. Follow the guidelines for the final portfolio demonstrating outstanding willingness to work and improve.
5. Miss no more than 1 class and show up late (and/or leave early) no more than twice.
6. Attend at least 2 one-on-one conferences following the guidelines.
7. Participate enthusiastically in every class discussion, peer group, and workshop.

How to Insure a B in the course:

1. Miss or substandard no more than one CNF (meeting all draft deadlines) and hand them in on time, following correct format and mechanics guidelines. Packages should show the assigned number of drafts. Rewrite most after evaluation.
2. Complete all but two exercise sheets and two daily writings on time, following all the guidelines.
3. Complete all annotated worksheets and participate conscientiously in workshops.
4. Follow the guidelines for the final portfolio demonstrating above-average willingness to improve.
5. Miss no more than 3 classes and arrive late no more than 3 times.
6. Attend at least 1 one-on-one conference, following the guidelines.
7. Participate in every class discussion, peer group, and workshop.

How to Insure a C in the course:

1. Complete all but two CNF assignments (meeting most draft deadlines)
2. Complete all but two exercise sheets and all but three daily writings following guidelines more often than not.
3. Complete all but one annotated worksheets and participate in workshops.
4. Follow the guidelines for the final portfolio demonstrating average willingness to work and improve.
5. Miss no more than 4 classes (no more than 3 before midterm) and show up late no more than 5 times.
7. Participate voluntarily in class discussions, peer group, and workshops.

How to insure a D or F:

1. Come late and/or unprepared for several classes.
2. Miss more than four classes.
3. Miss more than 3 draft and assignment deadlines or bring incomplete drafts.
4. Don't engage with the class and/or distract other students.
5. Skip assigned material or read it right before or during class.
6. Pay little or no attention to the syllabus and course guidelines.

A FINAL NOTE: The class policies above have been developed through actual course experience over many years and crafted so that the creative heart of the course can flourish. I'm always open to new ideas, new writing exercises, and alternative assignments---let me know your interests and ideas. Your comments, criticism, and suggestions are always welcome.

OFFICIAL POLICY STATEMENTS FROM PLNU ADMINISTRATION AND THE LJML DEPARTMENT

PLNU Mission Statement: To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service becomes an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

WRITING PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students who complete the WRITING program will be able to:

1. Apply creative and advanced skills in various forms and genres of writing.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the conventions and terminology of creative and advanced writing within literary and non-literary texts.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of major literary-theoretical perspectives and terminology.
4. Develop connections between the literature and language studied and the contemporary world.
5. Engage in writing and editorial processes through campus publications and external internships.

Official Message from the Vice-Provost on course attendance and changes in registration: *It is the student's responsibility to maintain his/her class schedule. Should the need arise to drop this course (personal emergencies, poor performance, etc.), the student has the responsibility to follow through (provided the drop date meets the stated calendar deadline established by the university), not the instructor. Simply ceasing to attend this course or failing to follow through to arrange for a change of registration (drop/add) may easily result in a grade of F on the official transcript.*

OFFICIAL ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS STATEMENT FROM THE UNIVERSITY

"While all students are expected to meet the minimum academic standards for completion of this course as established by the instructor, students with disabilities may require academic accommodations. At Point Loma Nazarene University, students requesting academic accommodations must file documentation with the Disability Resource Center (DRC), located in the Bond Academic Center. Once the student files documentation, the Disability Resource Center will contact the student's instructors and provide written recommendations for reasonable and appropriate accommodations to meet the individual learning needs of the student. This policy assists the University in its commitment to full compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act of 1990, and ADA Amendments Act of 2008, all of which prohibit discrimination against students with disabilities and guarantee all qualified students equal access to and benefits of PLNU programs and activities.

OFFICIAL PUBLIC DISCOURSE STATEMENT: *"Much of the work we will do in this class is cooperative, by nature of the class discussions and general feedback given to written work and/projects; thus you should think of all your writing and speaking for and in class as public, not private, discourse. By continuing in this class, you acknowledge that your work will be viewed by others in the class."*

Official FERPA Statement: "In compliance with federal law, neither PLNU student ID nor social security number should be used in publicly posted grades or returned sets of assignments without student written permission. This class will meet the federal requirements by (each faculty member choose one strategy to use: distributing all grades and papers individually; requesting and filing written student permission; or assigning each student a unique class ID number not identifiable on the alphabetic roster.). Also in compliance with FERPA, you will be the only person given information about your progress in this class unless you have designated others to receive it in the 'Information Release' section of the student portal. See 'Policy Statements' in the undergrad student catalog."

Official PLNU COPYRIGHT POLICY

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

RICK HILL'S SCHEDULE Office Phone: x2670		OFFICE: BAC 112 Home Phone: 858-270-5227		Fall 2016 E-mail: rhill@pointloma.edu	
<i>Feel free to knock with a question anytime I'm in the office</i>					
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
9:45- CHAPEL 10:30	9:30 - 10:45	9: 45- CHAPEL 10:30	9:30 - WRI220 Intro to Creative Writing 10:45	9:45- CHAPEL 10:30	
10:40 11:30	11:00 WRI220 Intro to Creative Writing in BAC151 12:15	10:40 OFFICE (BY APPOINTMENT) 11:30	11:00 WRI220 Intro to Creative Writing in BAC151 12:15	10:40 11:30	
12:00 LUNCH 1:00	12:30 LUNCH 1:15	12:00 LUNCH 1:00	12:30 LUNCH 1:15	12:00 LUNCH 1:00	
2:00 OFFICE BY APPOINTMENT 2:50	1:30 - WRI 315 Advanced Composition in BAC 151 2:45	2:00 OFFICE (DROP-IN) 2:35	1:30 - WRI 315 Advanced Composition in BAC 151 2:45	2:00 OFFICE (BY APPOINTMENT) 2:50	
3:00 OFFICE (BY APPOINTMENT) 3:50	3:00 WRI323 Creative Nonfiction Writing in BAC 151 4:15	2:45 Faculty / Department /Committee Meetings OR OFFICE (BY APPOINTMENT) 4:30	3:00 WRI323 Creative Nonfiction Writing in BAC 151 4:15	3:00 OFFICE (BY APPOINTMENT) 3:50	
4:00 OFFICE BY APPOINTMENT 5:00	4:30 OFFICE (DROP-IN) 5:30	4:30 WRI 216 Lit Magazine Lab in BAC 151 5:30	4:30 OFFICE (DROP-IN) 5:30	4:00 OFFICE (BY APPOINTMENT) 5:00	

WRI 323 COURSE CALENDAR (subject to adjustment and additions)

Abbreviations: **TTTT** = *To Tell the Truth* text **CH** = Chapter **pp** = page(s) **HO** = Handout or email
ICW = In-class writing **EX** = writing exercise **WKST**: Worksheet

WEEK # DATE	READ BY BEGINNING OF CLASS	WRITING ASSIGNMENTS DUE	ACTIVITY / TOPIC	ICW & NOTES
Week 1 Thursday 9/1	Syllabus: Please read your email version on screen BEFORE today's class; you need only print out your syllabus quiz	Syllabus Quiz. Complete and print the syllabus quiz; bring it to class on the first day. You will receive a paper copy of the syllabus in class.	Class intro. What is creative nonfiction? Review syllabus & "How to Send" Model	True family story that defines some aspect of my character
Week 2 TU 9/6	HO Heath "Yard Work" (With Syllabus)	EX 1 Write 1-2 pages of a family story, using "Yardwork" as a general model.	- Syllabus questions - True Story readings - How to Read Like a Writer	The family story from another Point of View (POV)
Week 2 TH 9/8	TTTT: CH 1 (ALL)	1. EX 2 Précis for CNF I Family story with a point (see précis model) 2. EX 3: After reading TTTT CH 1, Do ONE of the practice strategies on pp 34-35	- General Description - CNF 1 response groups	A return to Someplace Special or Someplace Strange
Week 3 TU 9/13	Heath "Father's Hair" (via email) TTTT CH 2 (ALL)	CNF IA: Complete Draft: Family story with a point (1000-1200 words)	Using fiction techniques in CNF: Rising action / conflict and resolution Pick CNF response/ workshop groups	Compare a scene from your real life to a scene from literature
Week 3 TH 9/15	TTTT CH 3 (ALL)	1. CNF 1B Complete Draft: family story revised shorter version (600 words max) 2. EX 4 After reading TTTT CH 3 Do one of the Prewriting Practice Strategies on pp 79-80	Narration and point of view. Poetry on Point mini-Field trip TBA	Second person: Use the "YOU" POV for effect POP TBA
Week 4 TU 9/20	TTTT CH 4 pp 82-100	CNF 1C Complete Draft: family story, even shorter version (300 words max)	Scenes and dialogue Everything you wanted to know about workshops.	Travel notes: A SCENE from your travels
Week 4 TH 9/22	David Foster Wallace, "Consider the Lobster" Available via internet: type author and title + PDF	CNF 1D. Final Draft: Family Story (~1000, 500, or 250 word version) (Bring two copies of the final draft--2 nd copy is for workshop)	Don't try this at home	Awareness of mortality
Week 5 TU 9/27	Worksheet 1 TTTT CH 4 pp 101-115	1. On Worksheet 1, write your name on the first page of each CNF piece. Write notes on all the pieces: what works, what doesn't, what could be clearer. 2. EX 5 After reading CH 4, do one of the Research and Practice Strategies on pp 113- 115.	Workshop # 1	

WRI 323 COURSE CALENDAR (subject to adjustment and additions) CONTINUED

Abbreviations: *TTTT* = *To Tell the Truth* text CH = Chapter pp = page(s) HO = Handout or email
 ICW = In-class writing EX = writing exercise WKST: Worksheet

<u>WEEK #</u> <u>DATE</u>	<u>READ BY BEGINNING</u> <u>OF CLASS</u>	<u>WRITING ASSIGNMENTS DUE</u>	<u>ACTIVITY / TOPIC / TIPS</u>	<u>INW or ICM &</u> <u>NOTES</u>
Week 5 TH 9/29	TTTT CH 5: pp 119-133	EX 6: Précis: CNF 2: From an in class writing or book exercise.	Workshop # 1 Leftovers	
Week 6 TU 10/4	TTTT CH 5: pp 134-153	1. CNF2A: Rough draft (2 pages) of CNF2 2. EX 7 After reading CH 5, do one of the Research and Practice Strategies on pp 153-155. (one page)	More description: How much is too much? How little is too little?	Friend or family member's unexpected reaction to something you thought trivial.
Week 6 TH 10/6	TTTT CH 6 pp156-164	CNF 2B Complete Draft of CNF2	Readings/ Discussion	Nostalgia: Pain or Pleasure?
Week 7 TU 10/11	TTTT CH 6:pp 165-190	EX 8: After reading CH 6, do one of the Research and Practice Strategies on pp 189. (one page)	Writing real characters that really seem real	Open Topic
Week 7 TH 10/13	Poetry day handout	After attending the poetry day reading(s), write a draft of a CNF piece on the reading—not a review, but some other form or approach we've studied.	Try to get to both the afternoon and evening events.	Afternoon Reading & Talk: 3-4:30 (Fermanian) Evening Performance: 6:30-8:00 (Fermanian)
Week 8 TU 10/18	1. Worksheet 2 2. TTTT CH 7 pp. 191-199	WKST 2: Write your name on the first page of each CNF piece on Worksheet # 2.. Write notes on all the pieces: what works, what doesn't, what could be clearer.	Workshop #2	
Week 8 TH 10/20	TTTT CH 7 pp 200-226	EX 10: After reading CH 7, do one of the Research and Practice Strategies on pp 225-226. (one page)	Workshop # 2 Leftovers	Animal or vegetable or open topic
Week 9 TU 10/25	TTTT CH 8 (ALL)	EX 11: After reading CH 8, do One of the Research and Practice Strategies on pp 249-251. (one page)	Research Writing Travel Writing	Nearest to Heaven / Nearest to Hell
Week 9 TH 10/27	TTTT CH 9 252-260	EX 12: Ten annotated topics to research and write someday + a half-page start on the most promising one. (one page total with list and start)	Using Research in CNF: Who was president in 1905 and why does it matter?	Nature / Anti-Nature
Week 10 TU 11/1	TTTT CH 9 261- 280	EX 13: Précis for CNF # 3 from your annotated topics list.	The difference between research papers and CNF with research Class readings	Signatures of God
Week 10 TH 11/3	TTTT CH 9 280-294	EX 14: After reading CH 9, do one of the Research and Practice Strategies on pp 292-294. (one page) CNF 3A: Rough draft (2pp) of CNF # 3		Big Issues in little: The ant farm as Global Politics, etc.

WRI 323 COURSE CALENDAR (subject to adjustment and additions) CONTINUED

Abbreviations: *TTTT* = *To Tell the Truth* Text CH = Chapter pp = page(s) HO = Handout or email
 ICW = In-class writing EX = writing exercise WKST: Worksheet

<u>WEEK #</u> <u>DATE</u>	<u>READ BY BEGINNING</u> <u>OF CLASS</u>	<u>WRITING ASSIGNMENTS DUE</u>	<u>ACTIVITY / TOPIC / TIPS</u>	<u>ICW / NOTES</u>
Week 11 TU 11/8	TTTT LAST READING: Appendix pp 393-303	CNF # 3B: Complete draft of CNF # 3 for response groups	Ethics	I'm still mad at ____ after all these years because _____
Week 11 TH 11/10	Reading Break	CNF # 3C: Final draft package (Bring two copies of final draft---2 nd copy is for workshop	Class Readings	Open topic
Week 12 TU 11/15	WKST # 3	WKSHT 3: Write your name on the first page of each CNF piece. Write notes on all the pieces: what works, what doesn't, what could be clearer.	Workshop # 3	
Week 12 TH 11/17	Heath "Breathing Room" (via email)	EX 15 Précis for CNF 4: Spiritual autobiography: A short dip or prose poem okay too.	Humor and Spirituality?	The family tree Odd relatives
Week 13 TU 11/22	TBA	CNF # 4 Complete draft for response groups		Out in the weather or open topic
Week 13 TH 11/24	Thanksgiving!	Take notes on family dynamics	Eat big, write big	
Week 14 TU 11/29	TBA	CNF # 4: Final draft package (Bring a second copy of final draft ---2 nd copy is for workshop	Cover Letters, Queries, and Proposals The Writer's Market	Family Thanksgiving: the good, the bad, and the ugly.
Week 14 TH 12/1	WKST # 4	WKSHT 4: Follow the usual procedure.	Workshop # 4	In praise of a small inanimate thing
Week 15 TU 12/6		CNF #5 Cover and Query letter draft for response group +Revision of your favorite piece for Mailing		Work stories: interesting SCENE: some- one's workday.
Week 15 TH 12/8	TBA	Final Portfolio and Mailing	CLASS WRAP: PRACTICE FOR FINAL	"Growing as a writer means"
FINALS WEEK: Tues 12/3 4:30-7:00		Marked script for final reading	Final Reading	

NAME_____

SYLLABUS QUIZ

Briefly answer all questions using a short paraphrase from the syllabus or the professor to back up your answer. You may type your answers in and print, or write in the answers after you print.

1. Is it okay to call the professor at home? If you can't get hold of the professor anywhere, what should you do?
2. Do you really need to buy a stapler and two double pocket folders for this class, or are those things just optional purchases for nerds and teacher's pets that you can pick up whenever, if at all?
3. What should you do if you would like more professor feedback on a piece of writing after you get it back?
4. What happens if you miss three classes before midterm or five classes before the end of the semester?
5. What happens to your grade if you miss 2 classes total in the semester?
6. What happens to your attendance record if you show up late five times?
7. What happens to your grade if you miss, forget to bring, write instead of type, or do a poor job on one of your writing assignments?
8. What can you do to raise your "willingness to learn the craft" score if you get a C on a CNF final draft?
9. What happens to your grade if you miss, forget to bring, write instead of type, or do a poor job on three of your writing assignments?
10. What does a paper "package" consist of?
11. What happens if you turn in a writing assignment one day late?
12. True or False: To eliminate clutter, you should discard rough drafts and notes and throw away papers the professor has already graded.
13. What should you do if you're writing in the library and you see the library printer is messed up right before class and you will be late with your paper due today if you wait?
14. If you have a health or learning problem that may affect your our performance in the class, what should you do?
15. True or False: This is a creative writing class, so spelling, grammar, and format don't really count when you turn in CNF assignments. Creativity is everything.

16. True or False: Plagiarism isn't really serious if you don't do it on purpose.
17. True or False: Since this is college, it's okay to have a private conversation with a friend while the professor is talking, as long as you're sitting in the back and keep your voice low.
18. True or False: The course calendar is set in stone and will not be adjusted, so if you are absent, you don't need to check with the professor.
19. True or False: This is a writing class, so it's okay to write fiction, poetry, songs, letters, to-do lists or assignments from other classes during this class.
20. True or False: If students have any other questions about the course or the course guidelines after reading the information sheet and syllabus and taking this quiz, they should just keep those questions to themselves because the professor will get mad and pouty and give them an F if they don't think he's explained everything perfectly.

Grade the following students, using the Evaluation section of the syllabus as a guideline.

1. Celeste is a gifted writer, able to produce better Creative Nonfiction than anyone else in the course without resorting to second drafts. Her work is usually late, not because she doesn't finish it on time, but because she is not into "anal schedules". She hates computers and won't use them, but her handwriting is at least as good as the teacher's. She misses a half- to a whole class every week, but when she does attend and feels like participating, her comments are brilliant. She wins the campus CNF contest, gets 10 CNF pieces accepted by outside magazines, gets a Stanford graduate fellowship in writing, and goes on to win a Nobel Prize for literature at age 23, just as she expected she would.

GRADE FOR CELESTE _____

2. Clara is taking this course only because it is required for the Comm major. Actually, she doesn't really like creative writing that much. She does show up every day and asks what she knows are dumb questions about writing, and she does plow through the assignments. But though she grinds out draft after draft, her work seems embarrassingly dull next to Celeste's. Clara brings in neatly typed, stapled drafts and schedules conferences with the teacher every couple of weeks; she completes 30 pages of original writing— but she can tell she'll never be a great writer. Sure enough, the CNF she sends to an outside magazine come back with little skunks stamped on them, and the campus magazine doesn't publish her work.

GRADE FOR CLARA _____

3. Gus talks more than anyone in class, usually offering interesting opinions. He writes extensive notes on worksheets, pointing out specific problems with the writing. He forgot to bring two annotated worksheets, but told everyone what he had written. He follows the guidelines pretty much (except for a few deadlines here and there and not proofreading too carefully) and goes to see the teacher the second-to-last day of class to see how he can raise his grade. He is late four or five times and misses three classes altogether, but only because of scheduling conflicts with his job. However, he always calls afterwards. *Driftwood* takes two CNF pieces he submits, and he promises to send all his stories out soon. He is going to stage one of his CNF pieces as a dramatic reading for the congregation at his church, as well. He tells the professor several times that this is the best class he has ever taken.

GRADE FOR GUS _____

SAMPLE PRECIS

Rick Hill
WRI 323
February 5, 2009
Précis model

Précis: CNF # 2

Tentative Title: “If Anybody Asks, Your Dad’s name is Gerald”

Topic: My stepdad, the brilliant-but-not-greedy, small-time hustler.

Theme: Parents affect our perception of and behavior in the world more than we think they do.

Genre, Strategy, Style: Personal essay. Unfold the theme through family stories---the blue chip stamp scheme, the coupon scheme, buying and abandoning houses, multiple names and IDs, five schools in the first grade, etc. Never being able to tell friends we were moving. Use the OBJECTIVE REPORTER approach.

Goal: A loving but honest portrait of a complex personality and how it affected the family, collectively and individually.

NOTES, POSSIBILITIES:

Positives: Adventure, family unity, respect for survival skills, great stories to tell later.

Negatives: Unfounded sense of superiority, suspicion, having to overcome the “I don’t have to follow the rules” attitude.

Dad Bio: Thread through the anecdotes---no more than a short paragraph at a time.

Quotes from family members---casually interview sis, bro, mom: their versions of the stories I remember + stories I don’t remember.

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About 625 words
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Here's How to Prepare a Creative Nonfiction Manuscript
by Rick Hill

Here's a model for submitting all your CNF and EX (exercise) assignments in this class, beginning with the first assignment. This model will also work for submitting to magazines. You may see variations to my suggestions here and there, and you should always go by the guidelines of the individual magazines in the *Writers' Market*, which may occasionally deviate from this default mode. But if you don't hear otherwise, this way will work, and, again, it is the required format for all class assignments.

Starting in the top left corner, you put your name, address, phone number, and e-mail. If you use a pen name or nickname for the story, you'll type that under your title. Up here should be the name you cash checks by. Editors who pay for stories need a social security number; you might as well include it. *For this class, you can use your student number instead of your Social Security number.*

In the top right corner, put the **approximate** number of words (**rounding off in increments of 25**) right after the word "About." Directly under your word count, type your name with a "©" in front of it (in Microsoft Word, typing a "(c)" will usually get you a "©"). This copyright symbol tells the editor you're offering North American serial rights, which means that if the magazine buys it, they get to print it once for their money. Sometimes magazine guidelines say "buys all rights," which means they own the story forever and can print it all they want without even checking with you first. If the magazine you're sending to does have an "all rights," policy, then you have to decide if you want to sell them the story for all time. Usually it's worth it to do so in order to be published, especially for a new author. If you do decide to sell all rights, put the words "copyright optional" or "all rights offered" instead of your name and the little copyright sign.

Use this header: Your name / Short Title / 2 of 2

How to Title

Once you have the top matter squared away, space down a few double spaces to a bit above the middle of the page and center your title in a regular font (no caps, bold, italic, quote marks etc.). Underneath the title, center “by” (lower-case b) followed by the name you want used in the publication—either the same name as at the top, or a nickname, or a pen name. (Nick Danger? Lance Starfire? Tiffany La Amour? Sarah Shiloh?)

Now you get to the body of the piece. Double space again, go back to left justified, indent your first paragraph, and start typing. All essays should be sent double spaced, with one-inch margins, regular size type, and regular typing paper, on one side of the page. It’s best not to right-justify text. A few neat handwritten corrections used to be okay, but in the age of computers, editors expect no crossouts or additions, and they’re sticklers for well-proofread copy. So am I, by the way, so if you find any typos in this manuscript you can laugh heartily at me. Your essays may use subheads, as this model does, if they work well.

Second Page Header

Starting with page two of your story, you should have a header with your last name, a short title (or “slugline), and the page number in the top right corner. Some people put the slugline on the right and the page number on the left. Either way is okay; just be consistent. After the header, simply continue typing page after page with headers until the end. I used double side printing in this example to save paper, but when you send for publication, you should print on one side of the page only. When you get to the end of the essay (as I have gotten to the end of this model) you should either write “The End” or the symbol # # # , like so:

#

Yard Work

By Kevin Heath

Mowing the lawn was a man's job in my family. Neither my mother nor my sister ever cut the grass, nor for a very long time did I, not until my mid teens, very late in life compared with my friends. Their fathers put them to it as soon as they could push a mower, and while excited to have the job, they met with trouble now and again: a shoe top split open like a tennis ball, a rock shot into the siding. The last was a phenomenon that my father dealt with soberly. He permitted no one to come within twenty-five feet of him while he mowed lest an eye be put out or worse, some Goliath-like blow. He had a fertile imagination for worst-case scenarios, my dad. He played the odds. If I needed to speak with him while he was mowing, I stood in the yard until he saw me. I signaled, he idled down the mower, I approached.

When I finally began mowing our lawn, I was sloppy. Sometimes my mind wandered and other times fixed itself so hyper-acutely to the task at hand that just pushing a lawnmower in a straight line became a drill in steadiness, chancy, like trying to walk while balancing a book on one's head. I swayed. I converged. Irregularities camouflaged by the grass—mounds, roots—jarred me off course. I would finish a row only to look back dumbfounded at the strip of grass I'd left uncut and the snaky line the wheels had made. I lacked some power of concentration that my father possessed. Maybe I took after my fluttery mother, an absent minded driver, who steered a car in an arcing, discursive way. She seemed to always be drifting back to her point.

I regretted that I couldn't mow the lawn better because I was a dutiful son, eager enough to please, but also fundamentally lazy. In the summers, I watched hours of television in our basement and I can remember the buzz of the mower closing in, and the pit of my stomach hardening whenever the mower reached the window wells, hovering there like a great mechanical hornet or some satellite pausing long enough to snap intelligence photos. It was my conscience come to call. Even today, I hear a lawnmower and my heart sinks because the sound summons the uncomfortable, momentary notion that I should be out there helping. From the top of the basement stairs, my mother urged me to get up and *do* something, spot my dad for awhile so he wouldn't have a heat stroke and I wouldn't go blind from watching television in the dark. I'd shamble out obediently, blinkingly, into the stifling air, wait for my father to come around, and then shout at him over the clamor of the mower.

"MOM SAYS I SHOULD TAKE IT FROM HERE!"

"TELL HER I'VE JUST GOT THE BACK TO FINISH!"

The lawn was my father's primary aesthetic outlet. Nothing else, with the possible exception of cleaning the car, gave him such a degree of artistic satisfaction. We moved often when I was growing up, and each house became a place to invoke old landscaping motifs and experiment with new ones. He came to believe in berms to such a degree that

he clustered the backyard of our last house with all manner of humps and knolls, spaced so as to seem random topographical changes. In contrast to the billiard table plane of the surrounding lawns in that subdivision, ours undulated, bulged, heaved—the earth's crust surging under our yard alone. My father believed in watering in the morning and evening, and to this day uses the curious sprinkler he owned when I was young—part tractor, part helicopter. It creeps around the yard as imperceptibly as a minute hand, guided by its front wheel, which is grooved to hug the garden hose. My father believed in split-rail fences and copious tree-planting and concrete patios. My and my sister's handprints and initials are on patios in three states.

When it came to yard work, my father was a man of habitual action. He had a set of lawn-mowing clothes: a pair of beat-up brown dress shoes tinted by grass stains around the edges; a clingy, double-knit golf shirt with wide collars and a penguin on the breast pocket. On warm days he put on cotton swimming trunks that fit him when he was trimmer. In the 1970s when he surprised us all by growing sideburns and a moustache, he added a straw cowboy hat he'd bought at K-Mart and that he'd decorated with a blue bandanna—inspired by a run of Burt Reynolds' movies playing then. I loved my father, so I took the outfit on the face of things: there he was mowing the backyard, *Smokey and the Bandit* meets *Marcus Welby, M.D.*, with shiny-smooth legs and fleur-de-lis swimming trunks that had ripped at the hem. But I think about his anti-fashion now when I get dressed to mow. I am compulsive at the other end of the spectrum and stand gaping in my closet and dresser drawers for minutes, waiting for the spirit to move. What do I want to wear *this* time?

As a boy, worse yet a teenager, I never fully understood my father's concern about the lawn, and I now find that to my disadvantage, seeing that I've become more concerned about mine. Mowing the lawn seemed necessary, of course, but not worth the attention he gave it, nor was I interested then in the issues that were at the bottom of it—why it satisfied him, what it said about him, about men in general, how it altered our relationship, what it might have taught me had I paid more attention, asked questions. The embarrassing state of my own lawn has got me thinking about all this. Unlike any of my father's yards, mine has a blotchy, grafted quality to it—moss and scrubby grass, a peninsular section of thick clover, and where I planted new seed, the grass has grown in too lushly and is a different variety with broad blades that are a shade of optic green.

My yard's problems bug me, more so because I feel weak-willed to do anything other than the minimum. Once a week I cut the lawn with a demolition derby mower, a hand-me-down from the in-laws, and deal with a reflexive, nagging sense that as a son of a man with well-kept lawns, I should be doing more. But there's the rub. I didn't ask. I don't remember him offering. I have a standard fixed in my mind, but no wherewithal to achieve it. Ditto for some of the rest of my life. My father was successful, a star athlete and later a college president, but what to do with that now? Every interview he gave on television, every meeting with a governor, every speech, every commendation from an alma mater that exhilarated me as a boy is shaded around the

edges these days with this lengthening self-doubt cast by the inferences one can't help but draw from the father's life to the son's. "Like father, like son" as changing mood and mood changer: in the indicative when one is a boy, the imperative when one is a teen, and for some, the subjunctive when one is an adult. Were it not so, I'm stuck between where my father has gone and where I am. In this case, figuratively and literally, the grass is greener on the other side.

*

When there was sufficient rain and growth, my father mowed the lawn twice a week. He never let the blade get dull. He had extras hanging in the garage and sharpened them on the motorized blade sharpener bolted to the workbench he kept in the garage. It was a hypnotizing procedure to watch, particularly at night. My father moved the blade edges slowly across the wheel. The low hum from the machine would rise like a siren for a moment when the blade touched the wheel. A comet's tail of white sparks cascaded down and were extinguished on the concrete. He examined the blade edge, tested it with the flat of his thumb, guided the blade over the wheel a second time. He never set the mower's wheels so low that the blade would cut the grass too short. You *trim* the lawn; you do not cut it. When we drove around town, he was as alert as a hunting dog to yards we passed and was never lax to point out yellowish-green grass—the telltale sign of a mower set too low.

My father had no hobbies outside the home and no close friends, no friends at all that I remember, except me. He was like most of the fathers I knew whose individual lives had long been lost or forgotten or simply absorbed into the family. He golfed. But when he golfed, he took me along. He fished, but generally when I asked him to. His avocation was the lawn and the lawnmower. But for all the time he spent maintaining the mower, he knew next to nothing about how the mower worked. The time spent sharpening blades and seeing to the mower's cleanliness was illusionary, a ritual. When the mower did fail, we hoisted it into the car trunk and took it to mysterious places on the edges of the towns where we lived, the country of small-engine repairmen. Lawnmower fundamentalists, men my father must have felt a kinship with, fixed our mowers—in barns, in sheds, on back porches, in front yards—and with hardly a word between my father and them.

"Won't start," my father might say.

"Won't start, huh?" would come the reply, the both of them staring at the machine.

Outside of the repairmen, I don't remember my father talking to another man about his lawn, nor do I remember any other man in our neighborhood talking to my father about his. Yet there were times when four or five men were simultaneously at work mowing their lawns, fertilizing their lawns, edging, trimming, spading, seeding, smoking a cigarette while soaking a bank of phlox. They never acknowledged each other. They hardly ever looked up. They carried out their duties like woodsmen from some time in the past when there were no neighbors. My father's life, a man's life, struck me then, as it does now, as an incremental act of withdrawal from the community, a series of doors and

windows and shutters and lids quietly closing until it was just you and the family, you and your wife, and, in the end, finally just you.

My solitary father. He is given to putting distance between himself and the rest of us. No one comes near a man who's mowing; it's an exclusionary state of being. It is the tableau of my father: cut off by all that noise, walking up one row and then down another, singularly, a man with his own life and troubles, brooding, slightly hunched over, working his way further and further from the house, me, us. In my family, nothing had the dramatic force of lawn mowing, which separated one of us from the rest and left us there to be contemplated.

*

Yesterday I mowed the yard for the first time this season, and this morning my hands still smell like gasoline. Early spring is a testy period for me, full of spirits. The smell of my hands, the smell of cut grass, the smell in the shed where I keep the lawnmower, the sound of mowers off in the distance—all raise ghosts. My lawn has the April mange—bare patches and tufts of grass. The perennials aren't up or, where they are, they're nothing more than tips in the dirt. I become aware of the inattention I've given the lawn and aware of my father, who, when he visits and sees the patchy, thatchy, irregular condition of the grass, keeps his amazement to himself.

It discourages me, too, this yard, but like the other areas of my life, I'm on my own. I can't sharpen a blade. I raise or lower the mower's wheels at the risk of minor bodily harm; when finished, I'm as scraped up of knuckle and shin as if I've taken a spill on a bike. I'm not exactly clear on when to fertilize. I have no idea how to revive a dying section of grass near the fence that has up and surrendered to something subterranean. And it's too late to ask. That door has shut. Whatever is doing its subterranean work in me, in my father, though no longer spreading, is past treating. And besides, the whole thing would take years for him to explain and years for me to understand. More likely it's beyond explanation. No son quite knows what to do with his father and no father quite knows what to do with his son. Like my Dad, the unmechanical son of a mechanic father, like me and my son, we just have to learn things for ourselves.

So no hard feelings. Nobody's to blame. Really. These are conditional days when it comes to manhood, and rites of passage are, it turns out, provisional, if existent at all. The truth is that, like most of my generation, I've gone through nothing much more trying than the earning of a driver's license and a handful of diplomas. My life has been so seamless, so undisturbed, that it seems foreshortened. I don't feel significantly different at thirty-five than I did at ten and am genuinely taken aback when I realize that I am as old as my father was when I was about as old as my son is now—my son who, with a toy mower that blows bubbles for exhaust, follows me around the yard when I mow. We pass each other occasionally, walking up and down our separate rows. The expression he wears while mowing is an imitation of mine, inherited from my father: tight-lipped, serious. I give my boy a wink and a thumb's-up as he approaches. He sees me and keeps going, two hands on the mower, eyes on the grass in front of him, all business for the moment.