Do you have something to say? A story to tell? An original voice? This course will nurture that voice, help shape the stories, sharpen your skills. The personal essay is a popular form of nonfiction writing, cherished by both writers and readers, but crafting a successful essay is a difficult skill. How can we be self-revealing without being self-indulgent? How can we make our own experiences powerful for others? In this course students will read some of the best essays around, from Langston Hughes to Joan Didion to Oliver Sacks to Marjorie Williams, and write their own, taking each one through several drafts. The heart of the course will be close reading and editing of students' work.

READINGS

The following books will be available at the NYU Book Center:

Phillip Lopate, ed., The Art of the Personal Essay
Adair Lara, Naked, Drunk, and Writing

Daily readings will be handed out in class or posted online on NYU Classes.

SYLLABUS

7/7 Introduction to the course. In-class writing assignment.
7/9 Personal Essay 1: Five brainstorming assignments. Reading assignment: all essays in Readings: Life and Love folder.
7/14 Draft of Essay 1 due. Workshopping.
Learning Objectives

In this course, students will:

- Write clear, accurate and engaging prose in an audience-appropriate manner
- Demonstrate critical thinking, independence, and creativity appropriate to the role of journalism in a democratic society
- Experiment with different forms of narrative structure and style, producing three personal essays of different types, styles, and lengths
- Read and analyze a variety of published essays
- Work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness, and diverse perspectives
- Work toward developing a personal literary “voice”
A Word About Grading

This class is an intensive writing workshop, which means that student engagement is key. It is expected that you will attend all class sessions; each one is equivalent to a week in a regular semester. This grading rubric is not applied rigidly and there is room for flexibility, but in general, your final grade will be calculated roughly as follows: discussion and participation, 25%; three major writing assignments, 25% each.

Accommodations

Students with disabilities that necessitate accommodations should contact and register with New York University’s Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at 212-998-4980 or mosecsd@nyu.edu. Information about the Moses Center can be found at www.nyu.edu/csd. The Moses Center is located at 726 Broadway on the 2nd floor.

Diversity & Inclusion

The Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment. The Institute embraces a notion of intellectual community enriched and enhanced by diversity along a number of dimensions.