Note: This is a syllabus from the last time I taught this course. It is subject to change, and will be updated.

ENG 430-002: Advanced Writing Workshop
Lane Hall, Fall 2016
T/Th 12:30-1:45; Curtin 405
Office hours (Curtin 584 or Library Grind) = T/R 8:15am-9:00am & 11:00am -12:00 and by email appointment
Email = lanehall@uwm.edu
Mailbox = Curtin Hall 413

note: the url (http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf) contains official information on course policies and procedures according to University guidelines. This is a good resource that outlines your rights as a student, and also explains things such as academic misconduct. (also, see document “UWM Notes” on D2L)

Course Description
Do you love to write, and find that you often create brilliant fragments, tangents, asides and notes that seem as fresh as they are lost? Have you always been interested in describing your world in rich detail? Do you love language? Are you interested in learning how to make your own zines and chapbooks, or perhaps you are thinking of starting your own small press? If so, then you will be a great fit for this hands-on creative writing workshop in which we focus upon short-form creative nonfiction as we work to gain deeper understandings of how media, design and materials actively construct meaning. We will focus our work on direct description and the power of observation as we develop our creative nonfiction, a category that includes journals, memoirs, personal essays, and other forms devoted to exploring a sense of place. We will also focus on self-publishing our work in the form of zines and chapbooks, and in this context will study DIY movements and the essential dynamics of engaging creative communities. This is a great course if you are wondering what to do with your love of writing once you graduate from college!

Requirements/Grading
• Regular attendance, reading of ancillary texts, participation in discussion, exercises and written responses as needed, attendance at (at least) one literary reading during the semester (with posts on blog), (or) participation in Milwaukee Zine Fest (see D2L for details) and general class participation (25%)
• Personal writing blog including “Local Literary Scene” assignment, in which you are expected to attend at least 1 literary event in or around Milwaukee (can include UWM readings) and write about it somewhat journalistically on your blog. Your blog should have substantial entries each week. They should be polished enough to not be riddled with grammatical and spelling errors, but need not be finished pieces. At times, your weekly focus will be directed to correspond with class material. (25%)
• 5 Creative Projects, as described in syllabus, as well as ancillary grades for workshopping, drafts, exercises, etc. (50%)

About Attendance:
Absences: Being absent more than three times will have a detrimental impact upon your grade (see “attendance percentage of grade” above.
Lateness: If you are more than 10 minutes late for class, it counts as late. Three lates equals an absence. I begin class on time!

It is expected that you come to all of our class meetings and participate fully in the face-to-face opportunity of our workshop. However, if you are sick, please stay home. If you are feeling bad, or will miss a class event, you must let me know in a timely manner. You can stay current on the work via checking D2L and you must still fulfill the writing exercises and project creation.

Texts (books to acquire) (All texts in order of appearance and available at Woodland Pattern, 720 East Locust Street) (check store hours at http://www.woodlandpattern.org/about_us/where_when.shtml )

• Stephen Duncombe, Notes From Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture
• Lydia Davis, Varieties of Disturbance
• access to D2L (some of the reading will be on “content” on the D2L course site).
Projects

Project #1: Class Blog

Objective: Engage the course material through thoughtful weekly reflection in order to synthesize complex information and integrate esthetic, intellectual and ethical challenges posed by various avant-garde movements.

Description: Use either WordPress or Blogger or Tumbler (etc.) I don’t care what you use as long as you can figure out how to do it, but don’t use a blog that you have to pay for! To create a space dedicated to your weekly writing and posted exercises. Send me the url of your blog by this Sunday. You will, throughout the semester, be expected to post at least 3 shorter or 1 longer writing entry each week onto your blog, along with your exercises (details regarding exercises will be given). This “blog writing” (unless otherwise specified) can be in any style, form or process that interests you, though it should be in some way connected to what we are generally doing in class. It is fine to post pix, found text, snippets, thoughts, etc., along with your writing. I am looking for sustained engagement with this format. There is no word count specification, but there must be a weekly engagement with your own writing. This is hard to quantify, but easy to discern. Be sure to label each post clearly with its date and title: (“Sept 6: The Mysterious Neighbor”) just as you might with a journal or diary. At times you will be requested to do analytical writing related to relevant readings. All blog posts are due each week by Sunday, 10:00 pm. Late blog posts are better than no blog posts. I will give partial credit for a late blog posted within the week, and fractional credit thereafter. To do well in the course, you must keep up with the blog posts in a timely manner. Remember, the point is weekly (at best, daily!) engagement with your writing. It is fine to connect your blog writing with your larger, more sustained projects, but not to merely cut, paste and copy from one to the other. (That is, your blog can and should be a generative space, but the objective is sustained informal writing, not polished pieces.) While it is relatively informal, spelling and grammar and structure should always matter to a writer, as a matter of craft. Note: I will not accept blogs with white text on black backgrounds, or other eye-straining color, contrasting backgrounds or font choices. Feel free to customize your space, but please prioritize legibility!

Results: Individual blogs that are dedicated to ancillary writing and/or directed towards intellectual or creative reflection and experimentation.

Blog Grading Rubric

An “A” Blog Project:
The "A" blog demonstrates a full engagement with weekly writing. Work has intellectual depth, sources are cited if applicable, and the writing is relatively free of grammatical and spelling mistakes (within reason for informal writing). The topics are addressed with insight and clarity, and the creative writing explores an important aspect of the focus of current projects. Blogs are long enough to allow depth of development. An “A” blog, over the semester, is consistent, on time and begins to experiment with the form and format itself through excellent writing that is thoroughly engaged in terms of length, depth and creativity.

A “B” Blog Project:
The "B" blog is competent but not striking: the writer engaged analysis in a reasonable manner, if applicable, and the overall effort is “good” but work could use more engagement in depth and/or length. Posts are generally interesting, but could still use more refinement. Writing is good, but at times unclear or awkward. Creative work is promising, though not fully explored or developed. Most postings have been on time.

A “C” Blog Project:
The "C" blog has “done the assignment” but without much sustained engagement. Analysis and reflection has not been deep, and insights are infrequent. Writing is sloppy, work has not been on time, or has been too superficial.

A “D” Blog Project:
The "D" blog is incomplete and generally superficial. Real engagement with the course material is not in evidence. Work is late and/or missing and citations have not been itemized.

An “F” Blog Project:
The "F" project is not completed with work chronically late or lacking citation.

Project 1-5: Creative Non-Fiction Zines

Objective: Explore issues the form, develop personal voice in writing, work with cohesive narrative structure, experiment with process, and develop “field methodology.” Each zine project will highlight a focus regarding process and narrative structure. All zines will deal with issues of format (pamphlet) and design. We pay attention to “voice,”
narrative flow, narrative form, use of language, and story-telling. Zines will be created in stages, with quick turn-around times, that involve rough drafts, feedback, editing, formalizing, layout, and self-publishing.

General Zine Grading Rubric

An “A” Project:
The "A" project demonstrates an understanding of narrative and storytelling. “Voice” is consistent, grammar is flawless, tense is consistent and the narrative is compelling. The zine (artifact) has a solid sense of design that works in conjunction with the text. The piece feels finished, that is, there are no obvious “loose ends” that need further development, editing or embellishment.

A “B” Project:
The "B" project is competent but not absolutely finished: the writer engaged the process in a reasonable manner, but has not fully developed the writing of the original narrative or subsequent edits towards a finished piece. The zine (artifact) is competent, but not outstanding. Use of language is good in places, but not consistently compelling, or can be developed and heightened in general. Individual stories lack editorial polish. Issues of character and setting are solid, but not totally convincing or are lacking finish.

A “C” Project:
The "C" project has “done the assignment” but without much poetic or narrative result. Original text is not a compelling story, or is not very well written. The writer has not engaged the editing process towards refining a finished piece. Language has promise, but the stories are not tight. Honest attempt, only adequately realized.

A “D” Project:
The "D" project is an attempt, but the writer has not understood the intent or purpose of the exercise, and has not bothered to seek clarification. The project is a mish-mash, not realizing the transformative power of the writerly process. The writing has few redeeming linguistic or narrative qualities, or serious issues with structure or tense. Characters are cardboard, or undeveloped.

An “F” Project:
The "F" project is not completed, or incomplete, or totally misses the mark.

(Note: Late work will be downgraded).