CREATIVE WRITING NONFICTION CLASS
ART AND AUDIENCE: CRAFTING THE PUBLISHABLE NARRATIVE

Summer Session II from July 2-August 8, 2018  Monday and Wednesdays from 4 -7:10
Instructor: Susan Shapiro  Profsue123@gmail.com
Office Hours: by appointment

TEXT: Please buy course packet at Unique Copy Center
(Phone in advance: 212-420-9198 or email Adam@uniquecopycenter.com)

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Many publications like the New York Times, The New Yorker and
Salon, Narratively, Oprah.com, Teenvogue, Esquire and Marie Claire are all surprisingly open to
publish literary nonfiction by new young writers. Many short essays lead to interest in memoirs
from literary agents and editors. This exciting 6 week course, taught by a seasoned essayist and
memoirist, will focus on reading and writing the type of short narratives that current editors are
looking for. By the end of the class, students will have workshopped 3 finished essays aimed at
specific publications. Guest speakers will include top editors.

COURSE GOAL: To write and publish a great literary essay by the end of class

COURSE STRUCTURE: I’ll be giving 11 short writing assignments due at the beginning of each
class. Everyone should plan on making 18 copies and reading their work aloud as often as
possible. We’ll critique each other’s pages and then revise. Along with this, I’ll assign you to read
corresponding essays from your course packet so you’ll first be studying what you want to be
writing and publishing. I’ll bring in editors from top publications who are open to submissions
from new young writers and have former students who’ve been published come by to read their
work aloud to the class.

CLASS POLICIES
ATTENDANCE: Please come on time. You will only be allowed one unexcused absence for the
semester. After that, your final grade will drop one mark for each absence. (an “A” becomes an A-
etc.) Six absences will result in automatic failure.

PAPER & PRINTING
You will be expected to bring 18 hard copies of your assignments to each class. Please double
space, with your name, address, phone and email on top, a title, collate, staple and only print my
copy on one side of the page so it’s easier for me to read and line edit.

GRADING: Attendance 25%
Participation: 25%
Grades on your papers: 50% (I will only take the top 7 grades on papers.)

Class #1 July 2: Introduction/Personal Essays
First assignment: write a 600-900 word (2-3 double spaced page) “humiliation essay” about the
most embarrassing thing that ever happened to you that you can put your name on, aimed at
aimed at one of the editors in a list I will hand out in class.
Class #2 July 9: Bring in a revision of your personal essay based on comments
Class #3 July 11: Cover letters – Write a short cover letter to send out your piece
Class #4 July 16 Revised Cover letters – Bring in a revision of your letter based on notes
Class #5 July 18: Regional pieces – bring in a short regional piece
Class #6 July 23: Revisions of short regional pieces
Class #7 July 25: Opinion piece
Class #8 Saturday July 28 Bring in a revision of your opinion piece
Class #9 July 30: Timely cultural Commentary
Class #10 August 1 Revision of cultural commentaries
Class #11 August 6 Shouts & Murmur and other humor essays
Class #12 August 8 Last class, ask me anything session

SUE’S WRITER RULES:
The first piece you write that your family hates means that you’ve found your voice.
Write about your obsessions.
Writing is a way to turn your worst experiences into the most beautiful.
Go to readings and panels to support other writers, meet editors & agents & for good publishing karma.
Read what you want to be writing.
Hang out with people you want to be. When in doubt, emulate those you admire.
To be published in newspapers, magazines or literary journals, you have to buy hard copies!
Remember: Plumber’s don’t get plumber’s block. A page a day is a book a year.

CLASS RULES:
*NEVER E-MAIL ME ASSIGNMENTS (but questions& comments are welcome)
*Nothing personal, but I have a policy to never do recommendations (I get asked 10 times a week)
*I can only read/edit one piece per week per student, either new piece OR revision, not both
*Bring at least two hard copies of each piece to class
*Bring 18 copies of your piece to class if you want to read aloud
*Everything must be double spaced but letters
*If I know the editor, start with these words only: My professor Susan Shapiro gave me your name” (and not my professor Susan Shapiro said to send you my piece because you’ll love it, publish me and send me lots of money”)
*Put your name/address/phone/e-mail on top right corner of every piece
*No cover sheets, copyright info or byline after title
*Speakers & Assignments are subject to change last minute
*Please don’t bring guest to class without asking permission
*No question is ever stupid