

**Personal and Exploratory Writing, English 217**

**Chris Schnick**, E225, Pecos Campus, 480-732-7186  
chris.schnick@cgcmail.maricopa.edu

**Office Hours:**

Mon-Thurs 2:00 pm–3:00 pm and by appointment

**Class Meeting Days & Times, Rooms, and Sections:**

MW 11:15 am–12:30 pm, IRN127, Section 21158

**Class Website:** go to <http://chrisschnick.wordpress.com/>

**Official Course Description:** Using writing to explore one's self and the world one lives in; emphasis on expository writing as a means of learning. Prerequisites: ENG101 and ENG102.

**Extended Course Description and Goals**

This semester we will write, revise, edit, share and learn together as we grow as writers and people. We will write personal explorations in response to writing prompts. Personal exploration means reaching inside to uncover and discover what is there. After we get our writing down, each of us will choose what and when to share from our personal space, our journal. Then we will work together to help each other get better pieces of writing. We will learn from each other about memoir writing through small group projects and presentations. We will also help community writers develop their stories outside of our class this semester in the Chandler Writes! project.

The specific goals we will work on this semester are to:

- Journal and use the journal as a source for public writing.
- Use writing effectively to explore one's thoughts and personal experience.
- Use writing to enhance critical thinking skills in examining ideas and issues.
- Develop effective invention, drafting, revising, and editing strategies as used by serious writers.
- Use peer workshops skillfully as a technique for giving, receiving, and using feedback to revise writing.
- Read, analyze, and interpret published author's words.
- Effectively work with community members to help them write and thereby learn more about the writing process, our community, and ourselves.
- Reflect on writing and learn from that reflection.

**Course Content, Format and Expectations**

For the first part of the semester, the rhythm of the class will involve journal writing, choosing writing from your journal to revise and polish, sharing your writing, and receiving feedback on your writing. We will go through this cycle for three pieces of writing. Then you will produce a portfolio highlighting your writing. After that you will craft a memoir. Additionally, you will write with the community in the Chandler Writes! program and write a reflective essay about your Chandler Writes! experience. Along the way this semester, you will read, work with others to prepare a writing lesson on, and teach us about one memoir. You will end the semester with a letter to the class.

Interaction between you and other students and between you and I is essential in this class; therefore, there will be a lot of small-group and whole class activity and very little lecturing. Free-writing, writing, revising, receiving feedback from peers or an instructor, and discussion of readings, others' writing, and ideas will be a significant part of the class and are meant to help you develop as a writer.

Active participation is necessary on your part. That means be prepared with out-of-class work (reading responses, pre-writing, writing assignments, etc.), ask questions, get involved in class discussions, participate in group activities, and generally be mentally prepared to write and learn.

### **Required Texts and Materials**

- ❖ *bird by bird* by Anne Lamott
- ❖ A three-ringed binder for your class work, drafts, and essays.
- ❖ A blank journal.

### **Statement on Course Curriculum/Materials**

Course material (readings, activities, assignments, projects, etc.) has been carefully planned to provide a direct match to course goals, competencies and campus wide outcomes. Topics, assignments, projects, films, etc., are the result of professional decision making and are intended to provide a heightened awareness of relevant topics and an interchange of diverse ideas as should be expected in a college level course.

Objection to sharing ideas, to hearing those of others, or to participating in course activities is not appropriate in the open forum of the college environment. No alternative material or assignments exist as options in this course.

### **Attendance and Promptness Policy**

- Regular attendance and class participation is necessary if you are to be an active part of this class.
- In every class period there are assignments that count towards your final grade. Missed in-class assignments cannot be made up. However, if you miss a class, check on the class web page and contact another student and find out what is due for next class. And if you know you will miss a class, get the homework to me before the class you will be missing starts.
- Excessive absences (more than five classes) may result in your withdrawal from the class. Emergency room visits, car problems, doctor's appointments, illnesses, work, other appointments, family emergencies are absences. Tardiness and leaving early will be documented, and three latenesses or early departures of more than ten minutes will equal one absence. Showing up for less than 50% of the class will count as an absence.

### **Late Work Policy**

- You will lose points for homework not turned in when it is collected no matter what the circumstances. All late homework will be docked 50%; homework will be accepted up to one week after it was assigned. After that, you can get no credit for it.
- You must make arrangements with me prior to the start of a class if you wish to get credit for homework you e-mail me.
- An essay will lose one letter grade for every 24-hour period that it is late.
- Presentations including sharing of writing must be made when scheduled; they cannot be made up.

**Assignments and Grades** You will be graded on the following:

First three pieces of writing (15%) You'll be producing three pieces of writing in the first part of the semester. Part of your grade will be involve turning in rough drafts, workshopping, revising and sharing your writing.

Journals (10%): Journal writing is an important part of this class. I will check your journal periodically so that I can award you points for thorough completion of guided writing activities.

Reading and Viewing Responses (7%): You will complete typed responses to readings and a campus event.

Community Writing Project (8%): You will work for about eight hours with youth from San Marcos Elementary School or Si Se Puede as a part of the Chandler Writes! program. You will write a reflective essay about your Chandler Writes! experience.

Small Group Memoir Project (7%): You will read one memoir and work with 2-3 other students to prepare a writing lesson on the memoir telling us about the writer, her work, and approach to memoir writing. And you will engage us in a writing activity.

Portfolio (25%) Two-thirds of the way through your semester, you will select, revise, and reflect on some of the writing you have done previously and turn these in for a grade.

Memoir (25 %): Your fifth essay will be a 5-7 page essay about three segments of your life.

Letter to Class (3%) At the end of the semester, you will write a letter to the class talking about you, writing, and the class.

**Grading Policy**

You must turn in all essays to receive a passing grade. Your semester grades will be determined by the percentage you receive of the total available points on the following scale:: A = 90% - 100%, B = 80% - 89%, C = 70% - 79%, D = 60% - 69%, and F = below 60%

**Policies and Important Information for Syllabus**

Carefully review the Policies and Important Information which are at <http://chrischnick.wordpress.com/>. They are a part of this syllabus.

**Student Responsibility**

Students are responsible for the information in the syllabus and college policies included in the college catalog and student handbook.

**Changes to Syllabus**

Students will be notified by the instructor of any changes in the course requirements or policies.

*“Writing...can get you to start paying attention, can help you soften up, can wake you up.” –Anne Lamott*