

**Important  
document!**

Keep this someplace  
where it's easy to  
refer to.

WOC190 ~ Creative Nonfiction:  
People and Places

INSTRUCTOR: AUSTIN WOERNER

**Course Handbook**

*How Class Works:*

*Questions and Answers*

**Q: How do I contact Austin?**

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A: WeChat. I much prefer WeChat to email. You may message me any time of day and I'll respond as soon as I can. *(Please note the **time difference**. For most of this class I'll be on on U.S. Eastern time.)*

If you don't hear back from me within 24 hours, message me again saying, "Just checking, did you get my message?"

**Q: How do I meet with Austin outside of class?**

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A: If you would like to meet with me, all you have to do is message me on WeChat and we'll find a time! My Zoom ID is **721 869 9461**, passcode **austin**. In general I'm able to accommodate students quite quickly, usually within 48 hours of the time I get the request. So please don't be shy about making an appointment!

**Q: How will I know what the homework is?**

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A: In most cases I will explain the homework in class. In addition, I will always post homework instructions on the course website, <https://www.awmemorypalace.com/woc190>.

Even if I've already talked about the instructions in class, please **read** the instructions online carefully. It's important that you read them because there may be details there I didn't have time to mention in class. If you don't read them, you might miss important information.

If I need to make any last-minute changes or have any last-minute announcements to make, I will do so in our **class WeChat group**.

**Q: I'm already in soooooo many WeChat groups! Can I just mute our class group and ignore it?**

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A: Sure, you can mute it, but don't ignore it. I may send out important announcements over WeChat!

For example, if I want to make sure everyone brings their computers to the next class session, I'll announce this over WeChat. If you're the only one who shows up without it... it will be awkward!

**Q: What if I'm confused about something but I think it's a stupid question and I don't want to bother you about it?**

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A: Ask me anyway. There is **no such thing** as a stupid question! I like getting questions from students. I'd much rather you ask me directly than ask your classmates. Your classmates might not have accurate information – but I do!

**Q: When is the homework due?**

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A: Unless I state otherwise, homework is always due **next class**. Please always complete the assigned homework before the start of next class.

**Q: How do I hand in homework?**

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A: Unless I say otherwise, upload your assignment to our **SharePoint folder**. (Follow the link on the course website.) All assignments in this class are meant to be shared with your classmates, so in this folder you'll be able to see everybody's writing.

Format your assignment neatly – I recommend Times New Roman, 12 point font, **double spaced** (so I can write between the lines).

**Q: Ack! I uploaded the wrong document and now I can't delete it!**

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A: Don't worry! I set it up so no one can delete or edit documents once they've submitted them, so that nobody accidentally deletes or changes their classmates' work. Just upload the right document, message me on WeChat to let me know, and I'll delete the old one.

**Q: What happens if I hand in an assignment late?**

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A: Handing in an assignment late won't affect your grade on the assignment itself. However, if you hand in multiple assignments late, it may affect the “commitment” part of your grade (see below).

**Q: How will my grade for the course be calculated?**

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I'll explain all this in detail later in a separate handout. In a nutshell, the answer is that to earn an A in this class, a student needs to demonstrate three things: **1) commitment, 2) skill, and 3) improvement.**

Right now the main thing you need to know is this: To earn full credit for “commitment” you must: a) show up to class (on time), b) do all your homework, c) meet deadlines, d) follow directions, and e) take assignments seriously. However, I **do not** grade on “participation” – how much you speak. How much you talk in class won't affect your grade at all.

Please note that being late to class once or twice or handing in one or two assignments a day or two late will **not** likely lower your grade. What **will** lower your grade is if I notice a **pattern** (e.g. a student is frequently late to class, hands in assignments late, etc.) or if a student submits an important assignment extremely late.

**Q: What kind of writing assignments will we be doing in this course?**

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A: We'll be writing three short literary essays in the course of the session, plus a number of shorter writing exercises. At the end of the session, you'll choose one of these short essays to revise and submit as your final project.

**Q: When will the essays be due?**

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A: I can't tell with 100% certainty when the essays will be due – I like to maintain a little bit of flexibility so I can respond to the needs of the class as we go – but the *tentative* schedule I have in mind is this:

- **Essay 1:** Due before class on Mon. Mar. 27 (Week 2 of class)
- **Essay 2:** Due before class on Mon. Apr. 10 (Week 4 of class)
- **Essay 3:** Due before class on Mon. Apr. 24 (Week 6 of class)
- **Final project (revision):** Due during exam week (date TBD)

**Q: What if I need to miss class because I'm sick or for some other important reason?**

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A: That's fine – all I ask is that you tell me **in advance**, and that you message me **yourself**.

Don't tell me after the class you missed, and don't delegate a classmate to tell me (unless it's a true emergency and you're incapable of contacting me yourself). If I don't hear from you personally before your absence, I will still mark you absent without an excuse.

You don't need to give me an official excuse from the school. Just letting me know in advance is fine.

**Q: Can I ask for an extension on an assignment (i.e. get permission hand it in late without a penalty)?**

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A: Yes, you can. If you know in advance that you will have trouble meeting a deadline, you may ask for an extension. Legitimate reasons for asking for an extension include things like: important school obligations, job interviews, serious medical issues, and family emergencies.

If you will need more time to finish an assignment for one of these reasons, you must notify me **at least 24 hours** in advance of the deadline. Last-minute requests for extensions will not be granted for any reason (except for a genuine emergency).

**Q: Can I speak Chinese in class?**

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A: I have no problem with you speaking Chinese in the classroom as long as we can use it as a learning tool – for example, discussing a Chinese concept or trying to figure out how to express it in English – and as long as we are able to explain the meaning to students who don't speak Chinese.

**Q: Can I speak Chinese with you outside of class?**

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A: Absolutely, I'm happy to speak with you in whichever language you prefer. DKU has no rules about what language to speak to faculty in outside of class.

In general I'll respond in whichever language you address me in, so if you speak English, I'll respond in English; if you speak Chinese, I'll speak in Chinese.

Since this is an English class, though, and since I know many of you are working to improve your spoken English, when in doubt I'll assume the language you prefer is English.