



Year of Memoir Curriculum Outline

Format of each two-hour class:

- One hour on teaching principles of memoir, including prompts and sharing
- One hour of coaching/workshopping for three students during each class

January

Topics for the month: Off to the races, with everything you need to get started, including basic story structure, organization, writing the first act of the story, writing with a message and purpose, memoir as literary nonfiction, agreements and ground rules for operating in a small group, writing your why, dealing with self-doubt, setting up a writing practice

Guest instructor: Biographer Elizabeth Hines, co-author of *Black Titan*, on the difference between biography and memoir

February

Topics for the month: Style and tone, voice, characters, scene and setting, the balance of scene/background/meaning, writing an introduction, writing an A story and B story

Guest instructor: NY Times bestselling novelist Julie Cantrell on basic storytelling techniques

March

Topics for the month: Doing research, telling the emotional truth, using specific details, plus a quarterly check-in

Guest instructor: Memoirist Gina Frangello, author of *Blow Your House Down*, on building tension within the story

April

Topics for the month: Revisiting and clarifying your theme, digging deep, making your writing sing

Guest instructor: Activist Peter Staley, author of *Never Silent*, on getting to the heart of your message

May

Topics for the month: Keeping it simple, deciding what to include and what to leave out

Guest instructor: NY Times bestselling memoirist Julie Barton, author of *Dog Medicine*, on finding your focus and writing about one thing

June

Topics for the month: The fine points of writing, elevating your memoir to a literary quality, plus a quarterly check-in

Guest instructor: TBD on making every word count

July

Topics for the month: The legal and ethical considerations of telling your story, including writing about family members and public figures, the difference between fact and opinion, changing names and creating composite characters or scenes

Guest instructor: She Writes publisher Brooke Warner on believing in and greenlighting yourself, plus a preliminary look at paths to publishing

August

Topics for the month: Revision, adding content, weaving stories together

Guest instructor: The art of collaboration, with Hawk Koch, movie producer and former president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and his wife Molly Jordan, co-authors of *Magic Time*

September

Topics for the month: Being true to yourself and your message, making sure you're telling the whole story, revisiting your introduction, plus a quarterly check-in

Guest instructor: TBD

October

Topics for the month: The home stretch, how to end your memoir and complete your first draft, fulfilling the promise of your message

Guest instructor: Literary agents Andy Ross and Laura Mazer on the nitty gritty of publishing

November

Topics for the month: Putting yourself "out there," dealing with rejection, what does success look like for you?

Guest instructor: Lisa Sharkey, senior vice president at HarperCollins, on "From the Publisher's Desk," what publishers are looking for

December

Topics for the month: Completion, celebration and next steps

Guest instructor: Returning faculty members for final thoughts

Note: Topics and instructors are subject to change.