First Year Seminar/2931: Writing & Therapy  
Fall 2015/12:30 to 1:45 MW  
Medbury 116

Instructor: Nancy Reincke  
Office: 223 Howard Hall; 271-3778; nancy.reincke@drake.edu  
Office hours: 2:00 to 3:30 MW; 10:00 to 11:00 TR and by appt  
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Goals of First Year Seminars:  
1. Help to establish a sense of community among members.  
2. Encourage active participation by students in the class.  
3. Help integrate first-year students into an academic culture.  
4. Foster methods of analysis and creativity that enhance first-year student academic development, and help students make the transition from the concrete and dualistic approaches of younger learning levels to the analytical and critical thinking skills necessary for college.  
5. Sharpen students’ writing and verbal communication skills.  
6. Focus on a topic, approach, or issue.  
7. Focus on ways of knowing and learning, as well as on content.

Our topic is writing and therapy. This focus will allow us to explore different functions and facets of writing; it will also allow us to read about and discuss a variety of human experiences.

Texts  
Cheryl Strayed, Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail (2012)  
Selected readings (handouts or posted on Blackboard)

Books are available from University Bookstore. Always bring the text under discussion to class as we will have occasion to refer to it as we talk or write. Keep all of the writing you do in this class until the end of the semester as I may ask you to hand it in again for review as I determine midterm and final grades. Unless you explicitly request otherwise, all of your writing may be shared with classmates.

Format  
This is a discussion and activity course. Requirements include small group work, reading assignments, frequent short writing assignments, several longer papers (four to five pages), and a final research project. I may also require you to attend campus events if they are relevant to our topic.

I will make appropriate accomodations for students with disabilities. Please see me if you require special accomodations.
Week One
- Wednesday, September 2nd: David Sedaris, "I Like Guys."

Week Two
- Monday, September 7th: Labor Day.
- Tuesday, September 8th: School Trauma paper due by 6:00 pm.
- Wednesday, September 9th: Louise DeSalvo, chapters 1 and 2 from *Writing as a Way of Healing*. Discuss selected student papers.

Week Three
- Monday, September 14th: Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper."
- Wednesday, September 16th: Gurdon, "Darkness Too Visible"; Alexie, "Why the Best Kids' Books Are Written in Blood."

Week Four
- Wednesday, September 23rd: Alexie, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* through end.

Week Five
- Monday, September 28th: Revision assignment.
- Wednesday, September 30th: Mary Gaitskill, "On Not Being a Victim"; Judith Herman, "Disconnection."

Week Six
- Monday, October 5th: Jennifer Baumgardner, from *It Was Rape*.
- Wednesday, October 7th: Workshop student papers.

Week Seven
- Monday, October 12th: Play paper assignment due.
- Wednesday, October 14th: Revision of paper assignment.

Week Eight
- Monday, October 19th: Fall Recess
Wednesday, October 21st: Student conferences. No class.

**Week Nine**
- **Monday, October 26th:** Student conferences. No class.
- **Wednesday, October 28th:** Cheryl Strayed, *Wild* through Chapter 9 (page 145).

**Week Ten**
- **Monday, November 2nd:** Strayed, *Wild* through Chapter 14 (page 234).
- **Wednesday, November 4th:** Strayed, *Wild* through Chapter 19 (page 311).

**Week Eleven**
- **Monday, November 9th:** Strayed, *Wild* synthesis. Research project annotations.
- **Wednesday, November 11th:** 9/11 and National Trauma.

**Week Twelve**
- **Monday, November 16th:** Leslie Jamison, "The Empathy Exams."
- **Wednesday, November 18th:** Attend Jamison reading, November 19th.

Paper due.
- **Monday, November 23rd:** Thanksgiving assignment.

**Thanksgiving Break*** Thanksgiving Break*** Thanksgiving Break

**Week Thirteen**
- **Monday, November 30th:** Scott Stossel, "This Is Anxiety."
- **Wednesday, December 2nd:** Student research projects.

**Week Fourteen**
- **Monday, December 7th:** Student research projects.
- **Wednesday, December 9th:** Concluding activities.

**Final Exam:** Monday, December 14th from 9:30 to 11:20.