# Application for ENGL 469 Advanced Nonfiction Writing, Fall 2024 Instructor: Anne Fadiman Thursday 2:30-5:30

Course Description: A seminar and workshop in creative nonfiction with the theme “At Home in America.” Students consider the varied ways in which modern American literary journalists write about people and places, and address the theme themselves in both reportorial and first-person work.

Please fill out this application as a *single document,* including writing sample, and upload it as a PDF file (no Pages or Preview files, please) using the link below. **The title of the document should be “ENGL469\_Your last name, Your first name.”** Optional: add the filename to the header of this document.

[Use this link to upload your completed application](https://forms.office.com/r/BPG7D57z1G): https://forms.office.com/r/BPG7D57z1G. Log in using your Yale email address and password, if prompted. If you are logged into a non-Yale email account in your browser, the page will not load.

Before you fill it out, *please scroll all the way down to read the course description, special instructions, and names of 469 alums who are happy to field questions.*

*N.B. Anne Fadiman will not be teaching English 455 (Writing about Oneself) in Spring 2025.*

Please complete and submit this application by noon on **April 5**. Applicants will be notified of decisions by **April 12**. When registration period begins, admitted students must add the course to their Registration Worksheet and request Instructor Permission in Yale Course Search ([YCS](https://courses.yale.edu/)). Instructors will approve admitted student requests in YCS; approved students must then return to YCS to Confirm Changes and complete enrollment in the course. Admitted students who do not complete enrollment in the course by **May 1** may have their places filled from the waiting list.

Your first name:

Your last name:

Your class year:

Your college:

Your email address:

Your pronouns:

Your major (English majors do not receive preference):

If you’re an English major, are you a current or aspiring Writing Concentrator? If so, in what genre?

Are you a Writing Partner at the Poorvu Writing Center?

Creative writing and journalism courses you have taken at Yale, if applicable (please include the names of your teachers):

Other creative writing and journalism courses to which you are applying this term (if applicable):

Writing honors and publications experience, including writing or editing for Yale periodicals (if applicable):

Paste your letter to me here (see explanation below):

Paste your writing samples here (see explanation below):

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Course description

This is a reading, writing, and reporting class—part lecture, part seminar, part workshop. Its aims are to provide journalists with the opportunity to write more creatively (and learn how to include themselves, when appropriate, in their reported pieces); to provide creative writers with the chance to learn how to report; and to help both become better writers.

We’ll examine and attempt good nonfiction writing through the microcosm of setting. How do we see America (whether urban or rural, east or west, rich or poor) as home? We’ll attempt to dismantle some of the traditional barriers between academic reading and pleasure reading as we discuss works by Hilton Als, Joan Didion, Mitchell S. Jackson, John McPhee, Karla Cornejo Villavicencio, David Foster Wallace, and others. Students will write four pieces (two first-person essays, two reported stories), the last of which is a long-form profile reported in New Haven on someone with an interesting occupation found in the *Greater New Haven Yellow Pages*. They will also critique each other's work both orally and via email. Each student will have at least five individual conferences with me, most of them an hour long, to discuss and edit their work.

“Advanced” sounds daunting, but if you write well, your application is welcome. English 469 has no prerequisites, which means that you may apply even if you have no reporting experience. I'm more interested in the grace of your writing style and the sound of your voice. The class is usually a mix of seasoned journalists and creative writers. Fiction writers, playwrights, and essayists bring valuable gifts to our table. Though most 469ers are juniors and seniors, I accept occasional sophomores (i.e., current first-years).

**Please note the following special instructions for English 469 applications:**

1. Please include a letter to me that explains some things your samples don’t. **You are welcome to write as long a note as you wish.** For instance: Why do you want to take the class? What would you contribute to it? (An interest in fostering a warm sense of community is especially important during the pandemic.) What influences have shaped your writing? Is there anything else that might help me understand you as a writer or a person? **Your note need not be conventional; it should sound like you.**

2. Please submit **two samples, totaling 1,000-3,500 words. (If your samples exceed that length, please mark the sections to which I should pay particular attention.) You may even submit three samples if one is very short (for instance, a Daily Themes one-pager, in which case please note the prompt).**

If possible, your samples should belong to the same genre we’ll be reading and writing (“non-non”—nonacademic nonfiction). **Literary journalism would be appropriate, as would personal or other nonacademic essays.** (If fiction is your strength, one but not both of your samples may be a short story. Similarly, if you’re a playwright, one sample may be a scene from a play. **The other sample should be non-non.**) Be sure to choose pieces that give your style a thorough airing.

Admitted students will be notified by Friday, April 12. **Please be ready to respond with a firm yea or nay** by Friday, April 19, at the latest, so that wait-listers can be swiftly admitted.

If you have questions about English 469 either before you apply or after you hear about admission and are wondering if it’s the right class for you, you’re welcome to write me ([anne.fadiman@yale.edu](mailto:anne.fadiman@yale.edu)). Two 469 veterans have also volunteered to field questions: Owen Tucker-Smith ([owen.tucker-smith@yale.edu](mailto:owen.tucker-smith@yale.edu)), who came to our class from a reporting background, and Kanyinsola Anifowoshe ([kanyinsola.anifowoshe@yale.edu](mailto:kanyinsola.anifowoshe@yale.edu)), who came from a creative writing background.