I wrote The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test and then waited for the novels that I was sure would come pouring out of the psychedelic experience...but they never came forth. I learned later that publishers had been waiting, too. They had been practically crying for novels by the new writers who must be out there somewhere, the new writers who would do the big novels of the hippie life or campus life or radical movements or the war in Vietnam or dope or sex or black militancy or encounter groups or the whole whirlpool all at once. They waited, and all they got was the Prince of Alienation...sailing off to Lonesome Island on his Tarot boat with this back turned and his Timeless cape on, reeking of camphor balls.

— Tom Wolfe

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COURSE DESCRIPTION
The genre of creative nonfiction seems to have sprung to life fully formed in the 1960s. Of course this was not the case, and in this class we will look at the canonical texts and historical influences which led up to the development of a literary phenomenon that seized the public imagination with the unorthodox writing of practitioners like Truman Capote, Hunter S. Thompson, and Gay Talese. We’ll examine how these authors created a genre which has been a major influence on American culture ever since.

REQUIRED TEXTS
With the exception of The New Journalism, all books should be available at Spartan Bookstore.
The New Journalism; Tom Wolfe
Gay Talese Reader; Gay Talese
In Cold Blood; Truman Capote
Slouching Toward Bethlehem; Joan Didion
Armies of the Night; Norman Mailer
Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test; Tom Wolfe
Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas; Hunter S. Thompson
This is a craft. This is an art form.
I'm writing stories, just like fiction writers, only I use real names.
— Gay Talese

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES
Students will demonstrate the ability to:
1. Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, or rhetoric.
2. Show familiarity with the genre's major literary works and critical approaches.
3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject.
4. Develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively.
5. Articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts.

ASSIGNMENTS
Here are the major assignments required for this course:
1. Students will turn in two-page response papers for each reading assignment that demonstrate familiarity with the text. (SLO 1,3,5)
2. Each student will give a 10-15 minute presentation, working in teams to cover the readings. These presentations will include the author's use of creative nonfiction techniques, background information on the author, particularly his or her professional career; and social and historical factors which influenced the work. (SLO 1,4,5)
3. Our major semester project will be a five to ten-page critical essay analyzing works from class and the student's own reading. Students will choose a theme such as the Vietnam War in creative nonfiction; development of the first-person narrator in journalism; or perhaps the origination of the nonfiction novel, and create an original exploration of how our texts connect to this theme. (SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

GRADING POLICY
Final grades will be calculated thus:
20% two-page critiques
20% presentations
20% class participation
40% final paper
There are no examinations for this class.

DEPARTMENTAL GRADING POLICY
The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the official SJSU Catalog (“The Grading System”). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A = excellent; B = above average; C = average; D = below average; F = failure.
I was as sick as I have ever been when I was writing “Slouching Toward Bethlehem”; the pain kept me awake at night and so for twenty and twenty-one hours a day I drank gin-and-hot-water to blunt the pain and took Dextedrine to blunt the gin and wrote the piece.

— Joan Didion
CAMPUS POLICY ON COMPLIANCE WITH AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT
If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities register with the DRC to establish a record of their disability.

I’m an alcoholic
I’m a drug addict
I’m a homosexual
I’m a genius
— Truman Capote