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# Writing Your Life, A Part Of It Anyway

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## **OSHER 689-001**

**Dates:** Tuesdays: September 3 – October 6

**Time:** 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

**Location:** Online via Zoom

**Instructor:** Phyllis Barber

### **Course Overview:**

#### **Week 1:**

Introduction to Class / Getting to know each other / Each person tells about him/herself for five minutes, including his or her reasons for wanting to write about their life

Discuss the idea that we can only write parts of our life, certain incidents that mirror the larger self. 24/7 is a lot of time to cover. Much of that is boring and much of that includes sleep, but how does one choose what to tell?

Discussion of excerpts from other memoirs to see how other writers have written their story (Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Teresa Jordan, Lawrence Sutin)

Assign each class member their dates for a critique of their work (two dates—one for a newly-written FIRST DRAFT, the second for a REWRITE/REVISION of the first draft)

#### **Week 2:**

Discussion of (1) chronological telling, poetic (using poetry) telling, other methods such as using pieces from a collection such as quilts, notebooks, stamp collections, etc., (2) finding the unique aspects of yourself you can use to tell your story. What is unique to you? What is the theme of your life?

Workshop of FIRST DRAFTS that have been emailed to each student.

## **Week 3:**

Using the five senses in your telling—sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste. How to approach your readers by making your writing come alive, by making your reader feel as though he/she is there with you. Immediacy.

Workshop of FIRST DRAFTS that have been emailed to each student

## **Week 4:**

Revision: how to approach it; how to make it part of the process of writing rather than a criticism of your work and, consequently, you; ideas to make revision suggestions feel uncritical; learning that writing is rewriting.

Workshop of FIRST DRAFTS that have been emailed to each student

## **Week 5:**

How to differentiate between fiction and nonfiction? How does memory work? Is a writer bound to remember the correct color of a room? Can a writer remember everything or do some things have to be imagined? What matters?

Workshop of REVISIONS that have been emailed to each student

## **Week 6:**

Questions regarding the writing process; a celebration of the unique story you have to tell

Workshop of REVISIONS that have been emailed to each student