This is a course focusing on the craft of creative nonfiction/fiction, improving/enhancing writing skills and providing a platform for creative outlet.

**Course Objectives:**
The course intends to:

- Instruct students about the basic principles, methods and techniques of using language as an effective tool to convey a given idea, feeling or thought convincingly
- Revisit common errors in everyday writing and make a conscious choice for error-free writing
- Exercise writing skills in different genres.
- Get you down to writing and overcoming writer’s block.

**Required Texts:**


**Required Work and Grade Break-down:**

1. Reading two chapters from the prescribed text each week and writing a short “original” piece every week as per the prompt. Later analyzing and critiquing at least two of your peers’ pieces and actively participating in the ensuing discussion, comprising 40% of the final grade.

2. Writing three long “original” pieces (assignments), each at least five pages long and each worth 20% of the final grade.

**Methodology:**

The primary exercise is doing your own writing. The secondary exercise involves reading and critiquing your peers’ written pieces by mainly applying and locating few rules you will be reading from LaRocque’s prescribed text every week.

**Plagiarism**

Please refer to the *Statement on Academic Ethics* and the *Senate Resolution on Academic Dishonesty* as found in the *Senate Policy Statements (page 2)* and distributed at registration and available in the Senate Office.

**Critiquing Peers’ Creative Writing**

Honest feedback provided with a sense of clarity and non-judgmental attitude is vital to improvement. See if you can embody this while writing critiques for others. Saying ‘I like it’ or ‘I don’t like it’ is not really helpful to the writer in a larger sense as it does not offer concrete feedback for potential improvement.

How do you critique a piece? Start with identifying one strong point and one weak point, then find a way to justify each point.
Formatting and Other

Double spaced text is easy on the eye, as is a proper font size (use at least 11 font size). Always give a title to your piece.

Assignment Submission:
All the assignments must be submitted in time to pass the course. In case of failure (only in the case of medical emergency), a reminder and a new date will be given.

Course Schedule:

Jan 8
Read Chapter 1 & 2 of LaRocque’s *The Book on Writing*. Question and discuss what you understood.

Jan 15
Read Chapter 3 & 4 of LaRocque’s *The Book on Writing*. Write a short “Essay” in approximately 200 words. Try using the words “red”, “blue” and “green” or any three colors of your choice in this piece. See if you can apply LaRocque’s suggestions that you’ve read so far.

Jan 22
Read Chapter 5, 6 & 7 of LaRocque’s *The Book on Writing*. Discuss. What is it that irks you the most in life? Write about it in an “Open letter” in approximately 200 words.

Jan 29
Read Chapter 8 & 9 of LaRocque’s *The Book on Writing*. Discuss. Write a “Drabble”. (100 words exactly)

Assignment due- Feb 2, before 5pm: Write a humorous piece and at the back of your mind always remember some of the points you’ve learned from the handbook so far.

Feb 5
Read Chapter 10 & 11 of LaRocque’s *The Book on Writing*. Discuss. Write a “Ballad”/ a “Sonnet”/ a “Haiku” or anything in “Free Verse”.

Feb 12
Read Chapter 12 & 13 of LaRocque’s *The Book on Writing*. Exchange views. Write a short “Travelogue” capturing the details from any of your recent travels. (200 words approximately)

Feb 26
Read Chapter 14 & 15 of LaRocque’s *The Book on Writing*. Share with everyone (anything that is worth sharing, a confession?), contents of your “Private Journal”. (200 words approximately)

Mar 5
Read Chapter 16 & 17 of LaRocque’s *The Book on Writing*. This week we do a daisy chain in which succeeding students build on preceding students’ words and construct a story. By the end of the chain, see how far the story has developed. Each student will take two turns and write a
100-words paragraph each time. The end of the story will be reached as soon as there is a consensus.

**Assignment due-Mar 9, before 5pm: Write a short-story, keeping in mind the technique and style of writing that you’ve covered so far.**

**Mar 12**
Read Chapter 18 & 19 of LaRocque’s *The Book on Writing*. Write a short piece of “Detective Fiction”. Make use of sensory details of smell, hearing and touch in your piece. (200 words approximately)

**Mar 19**
Read Chapter 20 & 21 of LaRocque’s *The Book on Writing*. Discuss. Write a 200 word piece in the form of a dialogue/monologue/duologue.

**Mar 26**
Read Chapter 22 & 23 of LaRocque’s *The Book on Writing*. Write a short “Book Review” of any book you’ve read recently or in the past.

**Apr 2**
Read Chapter 24 & 25 of LaRocque’s *The Book on Writing*. Write a short “Fable”. Share final thoughts, ideas, queries, and conclusions.

**Assignment due- April 5, before 5pm: Write a “Satire” in prose or verse, not forgetting to incorporate LaRocque’s techniques of good writing.**

**Important Note:**

The instructor, program and the university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If modifications become necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given. Students will be provided with an explanation and an opportunity to comment. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and the course website/LearnLink weekly during term. Any significant change will be made in consultation with the BHSc Assistant Dean.