What’s Your Story? Writing the Memoir

Course outline

1. The story only you can tell

A story needs a plot
Map it out
Consider structuring your story by delineating scenes
Find your voice
   Exercises: 1) Create a time chart of your life. 2) Explore 2 scenes through sensory detail.
            3) Feedback on a sample of your writing.

2. How do you structure your story?

Why is structure so important?
Three-act story structure secrets
The inciting incident
   Exercises offer critique of your pages.

3. Dealing with memory gaps

“I remember”
Autobiographical writers and memoirists can still “tell” hard truths
Writing through the hard stuff, finding redemption
Navigating rough roads
Memoir writing is not without risks
Courageous truth-telling
   Exercises help you write vividly of a place.

4. Themes, Scenes, and Dialogue

Themes: finding and working with themes
Scenes: creating emotional arcs and “beats” in your story
Managing shifts in time
Dialogue: tips from pro memoir writers
   Exercises help you develop turning points and effective dialogue.
5. The tickle room and those pesky legal, emotional, and ethical concerns

The tickle room (balancing serious with humor)
Don't we all need a tickle room?
Just a bit on revision
Pesky legal and ethical concerns
  Exercises help you polish the opening 10 or 20 pages.