



EDITING THE MEMOIR 301

Instructor: Erin K. Brown

COURSE OUTLINE

Memoir writing and reading is on the rise. According to *Publisher's Weekly*, the memoir genre garners a major chunk of nonfiction sales. The memoir focuses on the writer's (the protagonist's) experience, accomplishment, or time of life, telling his or her story with a narrative arc. The memoir is gritty and gutsy, funny and fascinating, self-critical and self-reflective, a unique genre that invites readers to peer into the memoirist's struggle to draw meaning from accomplishments and create transformation for his or her life.

To achieve this requires skill, honesty, great storytelling, stellar writing, and, above all, knowledgeable editing. In four fully packed lessons, this course takes the approach of a developmental edit to teach editors the dynamics of the memoir and then how to build it from an idea to a fresh work agents and readers are looking for.

This course is divided into four lessons outlined below:

Lesson One: The Memoir

- What a memoir is
- What a memoir isn't
- Types of memoirs
- Should your client write a memoir?
- A few rules of the memoir

Lesson Two: A Few Preliminaries and the Writing Begins

- Mistakes to avoid
- What agents don't want
- What agents want in a memoir
- Writing episodes

Lesson Three: Putting the Memoir Together

- Develop the memoir
- Include setting
- The next big step

Lesson Four: Common Problems and Ghostwriting the Memoir

- Identifying and correcting common problems
- What if your client asks you to ghostwrite the memoir?