

Writing 303

“THE ART OF NONFICTION: TELLING STORIES”

with Visiting Writer in Residence Winter Quarter

ALEX KOTLOWITZ

Mondays 2:00-5:00 pm



Alex Kotlowitz, CWA Writer in Residence for Winter Quarter 2012. Award-winning author of *There Are No Children Here*, *The Other Side of the River*, and *Never a City So Real*. Contributor to *The New York Times Magazine* and public radio's *This American Life*. Alex Kotlowitz is renowned for his narratives of particular individuals whose concrete life experiences illuminate broad aspects of our nation's social and political landscape.

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is open by application only to undergraduates.

This course will-through both reading and writing-explore the art of what is often called literary journalism, narrative nonfiction, or what John McPhee calls "the literature of fact." The best of nonfiction narrative wields a fierce power, poking and prodding our preconceptions of the world, pushing us to look at ourselves and others through a different prism. What makes for a compelling story? (What tools might we borrow from fiction?) Why employ the use of narrative? How does it help form our view of people and events? We'll explore the craft of reporting and research which borrows from a variety of disciplines, including anthropology, history and sociology - and work with rigor and discipline on the art of good writing. We'll read nonfiction narratives-both book and magazine articles-on a host of subjects, ranging from war and poverty to the environment and sports. We'll work in this class as a professional writer might, from draft to draft. There will be regular writing assignments, and students will be asked to craft a longer narrative on a subject of interest to them. The course will be run as a seminar, so there will be an emphasis on critical class discussion.