

## WONDERWORKS

and the

Jack J. Valenti School of Communication,  
University of Houston

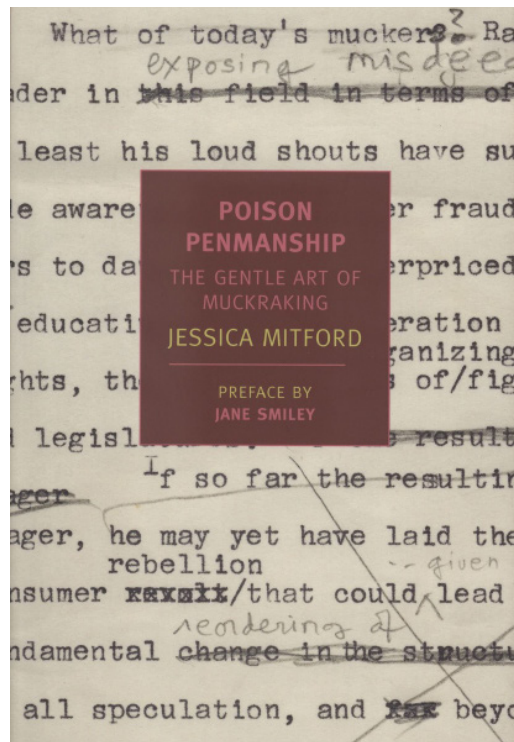
present

a reading-intensive introduction  
to nonfiction and journalism,  
plus documentaries and films  
based on true stories, and  
individual/group journalism projects

11 JUNE – 13 JULY 2018

10 AM – 4 PM, MONDAY – FRIDAY

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON



Jessica Mitford (1917-1996) came to journalism in middle-age, acquiring a muck-raking eminence and peerless style of her own – witty, incisive, and wickedly understated – that eventually led to an appointment as visiting lecturer at Yale in 1976. Nearly 200 students competed for eighteen available spots in her class, since she was by then, at least in some circles, the journalistic equivalent of rock star. As she later recalled, “each student (or group of students if they preferred to work in teams) chose his or her own subject to investigate. Those who tackled hot issues on campus, such as violations of academic freedom, or failure to implement affirmative-action hiring policies, turned in excellent work; but the lad who decided to investigate ‘waste in the Yale dining halls’ was predictably unable to make much of this trivial topic.”

A collection of her shorter journalism, *Poison Penmanship*, originally published in 1979, was reissued in 2010 by New York Review Books (left). J. K. Rowling, the inventor of Harry Potter, called Mitford “my most influential writer, without a doubt.” David Bowie chose her best-known (and best-selling) *The American Way of Death*, as number 20 among his 100 favorite reads. Manuscripts and papers related to her three book-length works of investigative journalism are in the Harry Ransom Center of the University of Texas.

# STRANGER THAN FICTION

**STRANGER THAN FICTION** is open to high school students of special promise and ability who will be entering grades 10, 11, or 12 next fall or who will have just graduated from high school this spring. Students admitted to the program must have at least a 3.0 cumulative grade point average on a 4-point scale or its equivalent.

Tuition is \$500. Scholarships are available, but only for students demonstrating true financial need. Admissions are determined on a need-blind basis. No student will be prevented from participating in the program because of inability to pay tuition.

Classes are held at the University of Houston, Monday – Friday, except 4 July. This program is meant to be enjoyable, but it is also challenging and requires focused effort and commitment.

To apply, fill out the student section of this form and then have a teacher or counselor who knows you well complete the recommendation section. Your teacher or counselor should then mail the completed form along with an unofficial transcript reflecting your grades and PSAT scores plus any additional documentation required for scholarship consideration to:

Wonderworks  
PO Box 667550  
Houston, TX 77266-7550

To ensure full consideration, applications must be received by 4 May; early applications are encouraged.

All applicants will be notified of acceptance by 28 May; early applicants will be notified earlier. Late applications will be considered only if space remains available. If you have questions or need additional information, e-mail [info@wonderworkshouston.org](mailto:info@wonderworkshouston.org) or call 713.301.4882.

*Truth is stranger than fiction, but it is because Fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities; Truth isn't.*

MARK TWAIN *Following the Equator: A Journey Around the World*, 1897

*It had the austere simplicity of fiction, rather than the tangled woof of fact.*

RAYMOND CHANDLER *The Big Sleep*, 1939

*Whereas journalists once felt humbled by the novel, we now live in an age in which the novelist lives in a state of anxiety about nonfiction. You see it most clearly with films in the lust to be able to put at the end of the film, “This is a true story.”*

MICHAEL LEWIS interviewed by Robert S. Boynton,  
*The New New Journalism*, 2005

*The search for truth is the noblest occupation of man; its publication a duty.*

MADAME DE STAËL *De l'Allemagne*, 1813

Very few things are as simple as they might seem. **STRANGER THAN FICTION** will introduce you to a world of often hidden complexity and nuance, the ins and outs of which can rival even the best mystery books. You'll read page-turning long-form articles and excerpts from books by Lytton Strachey, A. J. Liebling, E. B. White, George Orwell, Joseph Mitchell, Joan Didion, Hunter S. Thompson, Jessica Mitford, James Baldwin, Calvin Trillin, Oliver Sacks, Jane Kramer, Michael Lewis, Janet Malcolm, and Emily Nussbaum among others. Each “morning after” you'll retrace your steps and you'll discuss the pieces you've just read in a seminar-like setting to see what makes them tick as narrative, analytic, or critical propositions. In the afternoon, you'll watch unforgettable films based on true stories that will keep you on the edge of your seat, while also providing the grist for post-mortem appraisals of how and why they work as they do.

The readings and screenings will cover a multitude of topics: people, places, food, war, politics, nature and the environment, medicine, art, music, sports, fashion, space exploration, and more. Since seeing can lead to doing, you'll also have the opportunity to develop portfolio-ready short projects based on your own observations and reporting, individually and/or in groups. For avid readers (and watchers) only!

**1 GENERAL INFORMATION**

To be completed by the student:

Which program are you applying for? (circle one)

- By Design: **ARCHITECTURE**
- Moving Pictures: **FILMMAKING**
- Closer Looks: **ART HISTORY/APPRECIATION**
- Story Lines: **FICTION/FILM STUDIES**
- Stranger than Fiction: **NONFICTION/JOURNALISM**
- Play by Play: **THEATER**

name (last, first, middle)

street address

city/zip code

e-mail (your own or that of a parent or teacher – specify)

home telephone                      cell telephone

date of birth                              sex

high school

grade you will enter next fall (10, 11, 12, college)

school district

mother/female guardian's name

address

telephone                              e-mail (if any)

occupation                              college graduate?

father/male guardian's name

address

telephone                              e-mail (if any)

occupation                              college graduate?

**2 NEED-BASED FINANCIAL AID**

To be completed by the student and parent or guardian ONLY if applying for financial aid:

Do you receive a federally subsidized free or reduced-cost lunch at school?  yes  no

If yes, have a school official verify below:

signature of school official

printed name of school official

title

As proof, please also attach a copy of the official determination of eligibility.

Are you enrolled in the Texas Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)?

yes  no

• Be sure to redact Social Security numbers from all copies of documents submitted •

If yes (and you do *not* receive a free or reduced cost lunch), please attach a copy of the enrollment certificate.

If the answer to either question above is yes, you qualify for a tuition waiver, and need not provide family income information below.

If the answer to both questions is no, but your family cannot afford the tuition, please provide the following information:

**My family's ADJUSTED GROSS INCOME for 2017 (or 2016 if the 2017 return has not been filed—circle one) was: \$ \_\_\_\_\_.**

As documentation, you MUST attach a copy of a signed and filed first page of Form 1040EZ or the first two pages of Form 1040 or 1040A and, if self-employed, Schedule C "Profit or Loss from Business" from Form 1040. If parents are divorced and/or file separately, **both** must provide copies of tax returns.

**For all tuition waiver applicants:**

I affirm that the information provided above is true and correct and that this is a full disclosure of our family's financial circumstances and also that we truly need assistance.

signature of parent or guardian

printed name of parent or guardian

All information provided in this section is subject to independent verification. False or misleading statements and/or material omissions will cause the application for enrollment as well as financial assistance to be denied.

**3 ACADEMIC PROFILE**

To be filled out by a teacher who knows you well and/or a counselor. Your teacher or counselor should then mail this application, along with an unofficial transcript and unofficial copies of PSAT score reports plus any supporting documentation for financial aid, directly to:

**Wonderworks, PO Box 667550  
Houston, Texas 77266-7550**

Your application cannot be processed without an unofficial transcript and PSAT scores.

Cumulative grade point average: \_\_\_\_\_  
(If other than 4 point scale, please specify.)

Class ranking (approximate):

- top 10 percent                       other (explain)
- top 25 percent

PSAT	Score	Percentile
Reading/Writing	_____	_____
Mathematics	_____	_____
Combined	_____	_____

Month and year taken	_____	_____
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Please provide unofficial copy of score report.

The student's curriculum can best be described as:  honors/gifted  college prep  regular

The student's behavior is:

- always courteous and respectful
- usually courteous and respectful (explain)

Overall I would recommend this student:

- most highly
- highly
- with reservations (explain)

Any additional comments you feel would help us assess the student's abilities. (Attach a separate sheet if necessary.)

signature

printed name

title

daytime and evening telephone numbers

e-mail address



**\*Have you remembered to include an unofficial transcript and an unofficial copy of PSAT score reports?**

**EARLY DECISIONS FOR EARLY APPLICATIONS** ☺