Syllabus for English 261
Introduction to Creative Writing

Course number/section: ENG -261-01
Meeting place: Ferguson 177
Meeting time: TR 9:30 am - 10:45 am

Instructor: Mr. Jerry D. Mathes II
Office: 257 Liberal Arts North, phone: 468-2187
Office hours: MW 10:30 – 1:30 & 3:30 – 4:30
or by appointment
Email: jdmathes2@gmail.com

Course Description:
English 261 is an introductory level creative writing class designed to help students develop the skills for understanding and analyzing the art and craft of writing fiction, literary nonfiction, and poetry. Students will begin to develop critical editorial skills for their and their peers’ work and to articulate how a particular work is successful and how to make it stronger. Students will read a variety of published stories, essays, and poems in terms of craft and learn how to apply the techniques of other writers to their writing.

261 helps to meet these Program Learning Outcomes for the BFA in Creative Writing:

1. The student will begin to demonstrate close reading skills and recognize strategies used by professional creative writers.
2. The student will employ these techniques and strategies, crafting carefully composed, competent creative work in poetry and prose.
3. The student will articulate useful, critical editorial advice for peer writers.
4. The student will demonstrate strategic revision on completed creative work.
5. The student will compose complete manuscripts of substance on the introductory level.

Community of Writers:
I will create a tolerant and supportive environment for discussing writing. It helps if we’re comfortable with each other. In this class, students of all sexual orientation, gender identity, age, race, religion, ability and disability, political affiliation, and writing/reading experience are welcome. We can learn much from each other as long as we remain open to the free exchange of ideas. We do not evaluate on content per se, unless it is handled poorly, that is without art or craft.

Required Texts and Materials:

Grading:
Your grade is based on a 400 point total: 350 to 400 = A; 260 to 349 = B; 160 to 259 = C; 60 to 159 = D; 0 to 59 = F.

The assignments:
Creative Writing Exercises: There will be eight exercises (Four in prose and four in poetry) in this class. Each exercise will be worth 10 points each. Total—80 points.

Short Story/Essay: During the course of the semester, you will write a draft of a short story or essay from 1000 to 7500 words. The workshop draft will be worth 40 points and the revised draft will be worth 60 points. Total—100 points.

Poems: Each student is required to write and workshop a manuscript of five (5) poems, which will be workshopped at one time. The workshop drafts will be worth 40 points and the revised drafts with worth 60 points. Total—100 points.

Written Critiques: The class will be divided into three groups—Group A, Group B, and Group C. On the date your group’s workshop you are required to bring with you a 300 – 500 word informal response for your group-mates (in addition to reading and marking their stories in-draft). The students in other groups must read and mark the draft, but do not need to type a response. There will be six to seven responses, but I will take the top five for your grade. Each will be worth 20 points. Total—100 points.

Quizzes: There will be two quizzes, one on prose and one on poetry covering the basic terminology of each art form. Each will be worth 10 points. Total—20 points.

Attendance: Attendance is important. You may have two unexcused absences, after which I will subtract 10 points from your overall grade for each absence. I will count an absence as excused for the following reasons: (a) required field trips for other classes; (b) participation in university athletics; and, up to a certain point, (c) illnesses for which you have a doctor’s excuse (if you are seriously ill for an extended period, it may not be possible to continue with the class). In the first two cases, you will need to provide a letter or note from the department (the Athletic Department or another academic department) that requires your absence from this class. If you know you must miss a class, try to inform me about it in advance. Remember that you are responsible for making up all the work you have missed.

Grading Standard:
A: 90-100: Students earning the grade of an A on any assignment will have completed work that obviously demonstrates a more than average understanding of the course material and completion of the assignment. The grade of an A is reserved for that work which expertly displays one’s ability to engage the ideas at hand, recognize and dialogue about the complications of such ideas, and translate such dialogue into clear, academic prose that is free of stigmatized errors.

B: 80-89: Students earning the grade of a B on any assignment will have completed work that demonstrates a more than average understanding of the course material and completion of the assignment. The grade of a B is reserved for that work which adeptly displays one’s ability to engage the ideas at hand, recognize and dialogue about the complications of such ideas, and translate such dialogue into clear, academic prose that is free of stigmatized errors. However, the level of thought, while still above average, may fluctuate in terms of analytic abilities and
expression.

C: 70-79: Students earning the grade of a C on any assignment will have completed work that demonstrates an average understanding of the course material and completion of the assignment. The grade of a C is reserved for that work which displays one’s ability to engage the ideas at hand (more so through summary and response rather than analysis), recognize and dialogue about the complications of such ideas (however, the complications recognized will focus more on surface level issues rather than the greater whole), and translate such dialogue into clear, academic prose that is free of stigmatized errors. As can be seen from this description, the level of thought will be acceptable and display that a student has read the assignment, but his/her analytic abilities and level of expression will not be nearly as complicated nor developed. Instead, C work will display a student’s hold to traditional methods of expression (simpler construction of sentence and paragraph development) and his/her struggle to fully develop complex, critical thinking skills.

D: 60-69: Students earning the grade of a D on any assignment will have completed work that either demonstrates a below average understanding of course material and completion of the assignment. The grade of a D is reserved for that work which displays one’s struggle or refusal to engage the ideas at hand, simply summarizes the work under study with no actual recognition of or dialogue about the complications of such ideas, and the translation of ideas into writing is completed in such a convoluted manner that the audience will have difficulty following the conversation.

F: 0-59: Students earning the grade of a F on any assignment will either not have completed the assignment, will have completed the assignment but not followed the guidelines, or will have completed the assignment and demonstrated a complete misunderstanding of the course material. In this case, it will be obvious that the student has either not completed the required reading and/or given him/herself enough time to develop the work. The grade of a F is reserved for that work which does not engage the issues at hand, offers a base (not complete) summary of the work at hand with no critical engagement, and the translation of ideas into writing is either incomplete or the audience will be unable to follow the conversation.

**Assignment Format and Due Dates:**
All work must be typed, double spaced, 1” margins and in Times New Roman 12 point font. Your pages will be numbered in the upper right hand corner and on the first page you must include your name, my name, and the due date. All essays must follow the MLA format. Essays are due the day indicated on the calendar. *If your essay is late I will automatically drop it a letter grade*

**Electronics In The Classroom:**
Frequent, constant, on-going abuse of laptop computer privileges have forced us to initiate the following policy, which applies to all electronic devices, in all my classes: Laptops may not be used during class *without my permission*. All work on laptops during class must pertain to this class. Abusing privileges can result in laptop confiscation. Please turn off all cell phones, MP3’s, iPods, and etc. If I see you texting or have an earbud in you will fail your participation grade.
Withheld Grades - Semester Grades Policy (A-54)
Ordinarly, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

Academic Integrity (A-9.1)
Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

DEFINITION OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

Students with Disabilities
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.
# Spring Semester – ENG 261 Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | 1/18    | 1/20 Introductions and expectations  
Read for next class: 40-61 and write the exercise on pg 44 |
| 2    | 1/25 Read for next class: 174-189 and 256-269 | 1/27 Read for next class: 190-211 & 269-272. Write Character Sketch. |
| 3    | 2/1 Read for next class: 212-224  
Write Dialogue Exercise | 2/3 Read for next class: 225-243 & 278-289 Write A brief scene from a pivotal moment in your life |
| 4    | 2/8 Read for next class: 244-255 | 2/10 Read for next class: Student Prose! |
| 5    | 2/15 Workshops Begin A, B, C | 2/17 A, B, C |
| 6    | 2/22 A, B, C | 2/24 A, B, C |
| 7    | 3/1 A, B, C | 3/3 A, B, C |
| 8    | 3/8 A, B, C  
Read for next class: 101- top of 124  
Write Exercise 1, page 119 | 3/10 Poetry! Read for next class: 124-154  
Write Exercises 1 and 2, page 133 |
| 9    | 3/15 Spring Break | 3/17 Spring Break |
| 10   | 3/22 Read for next class: | 2/24 Read for next class: 155-174  
Write short poem with an objective correlative and explain briefly how it works. |
| 11   | 3/29 Read for next class: Some assigned poems | 3/31 Read for next class: Student Poems! |
| 12   | 4/5 Workshops begin—A, B, C | 4/7 A, B, C |
| 13   | 4/12 A, B, C | 4/14 A, B, C |
| 14   | 4/19 A, B, C | 4/21 A, B, C |
| 15   | 4/26 A, B, C  
Read for next class: 359-373 | 4/28 Revision |
| 16   | 5/3 Conferences | 5/5 Conferences |
| 17   | 5/10 Finals | 5/12 Week |