COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introduction to the writing of poetry, fiction and non-fiction with opportunities for practice and peer workshop.

REQUIRED TEXTS


COURSE REQUIREMENTS

WEEKLY EXERCISES

You will be responsible for writing weekly poetry and nonfiction pieces in response to creative writing exercises offered either in class or in your form and technique manual (*Telling It Slant* or *The Poet’s Companion*, depending on our genre of study). You must bring hard copies of these to class, in addition to posting them in the weekly course Dropbox. This will allow me to both log their submission and respond to them using GradeMark.

FORMAL WORKSHOPS

Every week, we will have small-group mini-workshops during the last 30 minutes of our class session over exercises generated in response to weekly creative writing exercises. Each student will be placed in groups of 3 (we will have six groups total, appropriately titled Group 1 (A, B, and C) and Group 2 (A, B, and C) and each member must provide hard copies of their work—enough for everyone in the small group subsection, plus the professor. Each group member must also post these responses to the
weekly Discussion Board on D2L. During these mini-workshops, students will “cold read” each other’s work, giving instructive, holistic feedback—initial reactions, broad-stroke comments, and noting places that are particularly strong/need additional development.

In addition to the weekly mini-workshops, there will be two formal workshops where each student will submit a draft of a poem (revised or extended exercise) or nonfiction work (revised or extended exercise) as assigned for detailed feedback from peers and instructor. In addition to submitting individual work, each student will be required to read and respond to all drafts submitted by every student in our class. In addition to marking their work with margin comments, each student will submit a typed critique (250 words). These critiques will be turned in for grading, and you will also pass them on to the appropriate writer.

NOTE: A detailed model with instructions, etiquette, and expectations for workshop will be provided prior to the first formal workshop. Due dates for submitting drafts and submitting feedback will also be provided.

**FINAL CREATIVE WRITING PORTFOLIO**

You are to submit a final creative writing portfolio composed of revised final versions of your original, creative work. The portfolio will contain revised versions of your formal workshop pieces and revisions of at least 8 of your weekly creative writing exercises (poetry and nonfiction). Your portfolio must also include an 5-8 page preface statement summarizing, synthesizing and reflecting on the writing and revising process—discussing and evaluating the ways in which the work has changed, evolved, and improved as a result of the revision process/in-class workshopping and close discussion of model nonfiction and the study of craft, as well as your understanding/appreciation of the form of poetry and creative nonfiction.

The portfolio must include all of the following:

1) ‘Table of Contents’ page listing all pieces in portfolio including page numbers

2) Preface Statement
   Some Additional Notes on Preface Statement:
   A. Responses to written comments/suggestions for revision with a thoughtful, substantive revision of each piece included in the final creative writing portfolio.
   B. As you approach each of the eight pieces, you should aim to discuss your own revision process, uses of narrative techniques as discussed in class, notes on your own writing process, reactions to any feedback received that may have been useful in revision, notes on thematic goals for the work, and thoughts on the completed work.

3) Original and final drafts of eight completed exercises and two workshop pieces.

All work must be compiled in an electronic document, formatted using MLA standards, and uploaded to the appropriately labeled Dropbox on D2L.
Notes on Grading Criteria:

This portfolio assignment is worth a total of 300 points (roughly 30% of final grade). The portfolio will be scored by completeness of assembled work, attention to detail and description in analyses for each piece submitted, obvious attempts at development and revision in creative work, and obvious ability to utilize subject specific terms discussed in class throughout the semester.

Portfolios are due via electronic submission on Dropbox. If you wish to turn the portfolio in early, you may feel free to do so as soon as you have completed your workshop and received feedback on your creative nonfictions. Due to the nature of final exam week, late portfolios will not be accepted. Thus, it is imperative to work with your schedule ahead of time, and arrange for an earlier submission if you know that other obligations occur around the deadline.

SHORT PAPERS

You will be asked to write two short papers (750-1,000 words) on topics of significance to writers and creative writing. One of these papers must include the additional research component. You will be expected to demonstrate fluency in expository writing skills in these assignments, and cite your sources in appropriate MLA format.

GRADING

Weekly Exercises (9 at 33 points per exercise): 300 points (30%)
Final Creative Writing Portfolio: 300 points (30%)
Short Papers (100 points each): 200 points (20%)
Formal Workshop Critiques (75 points per workshop) / Participation: 150 points (15%)
General Participation: 50 points (5%)

Total: 1000 points

Note: Because this is a studio workshop, I expect each student to participate fully in class discussion and attend class. Lack of attendance and participation will negatively impact your grade.

Grading Standard:

A (excellent performance): 90-100.
B (above average performance): 80-89.
C (average performance): 70-79.
F (failure): 0-59.
COURSE POLICIES

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Desire2Learn (D2L)

D2L will be used to facilitate some aspects of the course. In D2L, you will be able to:

- Access additional required materials not found in your textbook (additional assigned readings on elements of craft and additional poems or stories which illustrate those elements).
- Access your course grades.
- Access supplemental resources/activities which are not required but may be useful.

Email

Course news and updates will be sent to you via email, so you will be responsible for checking your SFA email account regularly. Emails sent to the instructor on weekdays (Monday-Friday) will receive a response within 24 hours.

ABSENCES

Because this is a hands-on, activity-oriented studio class, attendance is a significant factor for success in this course. You will be allowed three absences during the course of the semester. For each absence beyond this, there will be a half-grade deduction in your final grade (a final grade of 95 would be reduced to a 90). It is up to the student to arrange to meet with the instructor to discuss missed course material. Make-up work will not be arranged or accepted for any missed peer-to-peer workshop or class presentation.

Students who miss three or more class meetings, regardless of circumstance, will receive a course grade of “F.”

Valid excuses are limited to health, religious observation, family emergencies, and participation in certain SFASU-sponsored events. Students must provide written documentation from which a decision will be made regarding the absence’s excusability. Without written documentation, the absence will automatically be considered unexcused. Students with acceptable excuses may be permitted to make up work when the nature of the work missed permits. However, no absences beyond the allotted number will be permitted, whether unexcused or excused. Whether an absence is excused or unexcused, students are still responsible for all course content and assignments. Note also that you must turn in all major assignments to pass the course.

I take attendance at the beginning of class; arriving more than five minutes after class begins will result in your being marked absent.
Please note that I DO NOT make distinctions between excused and unexcused absences, and an absence always counts as an absence. I will expect you each to manage your own attendance accordingly. Please let me know ASAP if you have specific concerns or questions.

LATE WORK

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the assigned due date. Late work will be accepted for all major assignments, but a 10% late penalty will be applied for each day past the deadline. For example, if a paper is due at the beginning of class on Monday, there will be a penalty of 10% if turned in by Tuesday, and 20% if turned in by Wednesday, and so on. This applies to all major assignments (papers, portfolio, workshop critiques, weekly exercises) only. You should save your work in multiple places; I highly recommend using online storage options such as OneDrive, which is included as a free service in the university’s downloadable subscription of Microsoft Office 365, to prevent lost work.

COURSE CITIZENSHIP

Sleeping or reading other materials during class are not acceptable. All cell phones must be turned off prior to coming to class, and no text messaging or web surfing will be tolerated. Laptops and cell phones should not be used unless I indicate that you may use them for a particular activity.

Although students with disciplinary problems tend to be few and far between at the college level, if behavioral disruptions persist within a single class meeting (or, for that matter, across multiple meetings), the student in question will be asked to leave the class with a lowered participation grade and an absence for the day.

Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance available to help SFA students succeed.

ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION

All written work will be submitted electronically via D2L into the appropriate Dropbox for grading and administrative purposes, as well as on the course Discussion Board for student electronic access. All work submitted for mini-workshops and formal workshops must also be submitted hard-copy to class colleagues, plus professor. Assignments are due by class time on their due date. All files must be formatted in either .doc or .docx (compatible with Microsoft Word). I will not accept Mac Pages or Word Perfect, for example. I will return feedback to your assignment via written commentary (for exercises and workshop drafts) and D2L.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Adhering to academic integrity standards at all times by producing your own work and successfully attributing others’ ideas to them is a necessary aspect of university communication. 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) falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assignment; 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 include, but are not limited to: (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 the Internet or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper or presentation without giving the author due credit.

Any appeals on academic integrity cases must be made within thirty days after the first class day of the next long semester. Students should appeal to the instructor first then to the chair if the situation is not resolved. Further appeals can be made to the dean and provost if necessary.

Please read the complete policies at: http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp and http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic-appeals-by-students.pdf.

COURSE EVALUATIONS

Course evaluations will be available online near the end of the semester. I highly encourage you to take advantage of the opportunity to give feedback about how effective this class and my teaching was, particularly because I read evaluations to help make decisions about future classes. In other words, your feedback can help my future students have a good class experience.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES (PLOs)

1. The student will demonstrate close reading skills and recognize strategies used by professional creative writers.
2. The student will employ techniques and strategies for crafting carefully composed, competent creative work in a variety of genres (fiction, poetry, literary non-fiction).
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 and sustain a complete, polished manuscript of substance in the focus-genre.

ACCOMMODATIONS

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 your instructors and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations, and no accommodations can be made except through the ODS. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.
COURSE SCHEDULE

*** This schedule is tentative. I reserve the right to change its contents and will post changes to D2L. Where noted, the acronym TIS indicates the collection *Telling It Slant*, the acronym PC indicates the *Poet’s Companion* guide, while the acronym TA indicates the *Touchstone Anthology*.

Week 1—Course Introduction: Write What You Know

Aug. 29  
Course Introduction
Homework: PC “Writing and Knowing” (19-29); “Fast Gas” by Dorianne Laux (handout); “What I Mean When I Say Truck Driver” (handout)

Aug. 31  
Introduce Rubric for Poetry, Discussion
Homework: PC “Images” (85-93); “Song” by Brigit Pegeen Kelly (handout); “Happy Hour” by Lee Ann Roripaugh (handout); Complete Exercise #1

Week 2—Poetry and Imagery

Sept. 5  
Discussion and Mini-Workshop 1
Homework: Ross Gay’s “Burial” (handout); James Crews’ “My Father Asks for One Last Thing” (handout)

Sept. 7  
Discussion; Talk About Paper 1
Homework: Lynda Hull’s “Chiffon” (handout); Mark Doty’s “Brilliance” (handout); Marie Howe’s “What the Living Do” (handout); Complete Exercise #2

Week 3—Simile and Metaphor

Sept. 12  
Discussion and Mini-Workshop 2
Homework: PC “Simile and Metaphor” (94-103); Jeffrey McDaniel’s “The Church of Michael Jordan” (handout); Dorianne Laux’s “Facts About the Moon” (handout); Ocean Vuong’s “Kissing in Vietnamese” (handout)

Sept. 14  
Discussion
Homework: PC “The Family: Inspiration and Obstacle” (30-38); Natalie Diaz’s “Why I Hate Raisins” (handout); Maggie Smith’s “Good Bones” (handout); Mark Wunderlich’s “The Son I’ll Never Have” (handout); Complete Exercise #3

Week 4: Who We Are, Where We’re From

Sept. 19  
Discussion and Mini-Workshop 3
Homework: PC “The Music of The Line” (104-114); Terrance Hayes’ “The Golden Shovel” (handout); Kevin Young’s “Song of Smoke” (handout); Meg Day’s “On Nights When I am Almost Always a Mother” (handout)

Sept. 21  
Discussion
Homework: PC “Poetry of Place” (74-81); Oliver de la Paz’s “In Defense of Small Towns” (handout); James Wright’s “Autumn Begins in Martins Ferry, Ohio” (handout); Complete Exercise #4
Week 5: Shape of the Body, Shape of the Poem

Sept. 26  Discussion and **Mini-Workshop 4**
Homework: **PC** “Voice and Style” (115-128), “The Energy of Revision” (186-192); Danez Smith’s “Dinosaurs in the Hood” (handout); Kim Addonizio’s “What Do Women Want?” (handout); Carl Phillips’ “Domestic” (handout)

Sept. 28  Discussion and Review of Workshop Protocol
Homework: **TIS**: “Playing with Form: The Lyric Essay and Mixed Media” (107-126); Resources on Flash Nonfiction (Handout); examples from *Brevity* (handout); **TA**: “Leap” (165-166); **Complete Exercise #5**

Weeks 6: Poetry Workshops

Oct. 3  Group 1(1/2)

Oct. 5  Group 1(1/2)

Week 7: Poetry Workshops

Oct. 10  Group 2 (1/2)

Oct. 12  Group 2(1/2)

Weeks 8—Week 12: Nonfiction, Paper 2

Schedule TBA

Week 13: Thanksgiving Holiday (no classes)

Week 14: Nonfiction Workshops

Nov. 28  Group 2 (1/2)

Nov. 30  Group 2(1/2)

Week 15: Nonfiction Workshops

Dec. 5  Group 1 (1/2)

Dec. 7  Group 1 (1/2)

Week 16: Final Exams

**Final Portfolio Due by Monday, December 12 at 10 am on D2L**