English 465: Topics in Creative Writing
Retellings & Reimaginings
T-Th 9:30-10:45/Fall 2018
Ferguson 177
Dr. Christine Butterworth-McDermott
SFASU Department of English

Where To Reach Me:
E-mail: mcdermotc@sfasu.edu (this is the easiest & best way to communicate with me)
Phone: 936-468-2059; leave a message.
Liberal Arts 227/Office Hours: 11-12 MW; 11:00-12:30 TR; & by appointment

Official Course Description:
Advanced study of a special topic. Variable topics may include screenwriting, graphic novels, horror fiction, the history of literary magazines or other related topics. May include workshop component or seminar paper. Prerequisites: ENG 261 and six hours of 300-level creative writing courses.

Specific Course Description:
This semester we will discuss the successful retelling. How do we create one? What is the purpose of the reimagining? Then, we will read and talk about published work: why it is successful, what did the author intended to do with the work and how did he/she achieved that effect. You will complete a collaborative project, and 10-20 pages of your own work. There will also be plenty of workshopping of your own and others’ work. Hopefully it will be a busy but fun semester. This is an open genre course—but all works must be well crafted.

Required:
Besides being able to give careful attention to all reading material, you need to be dedicated to both producing & polishing your own work and making others’ work the best it can be.

Grade Breakdown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Discussion</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Project</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Large Group Wksp.</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drafts</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submission to a Journal</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Attendance (5%)**

If you want to do well in this course, I would strongly suggest you attend every class period. There will be numerous discussions, group interactions, and several assignments. Your eventual grade will benefit from high attendance and active participation.

If you aren’t here, I count you as absent. If you are asleep in my class, you are absent. Please plan your absences wisely and please inform me if there are extenuating circumstances to you not attending class.

- 0-1 absences = A
- 2 absences = B
- 3 absences = C
- 4 absences = D
- 5 absences = F
- 6 absences = **fail the course**
- sleeping in class = 1 absence
- coming in late/leaving early = 1/2 absence*

*Depending on when you leave; after the first five minutes, that’s a full absence. If you arrive for the last 5 minutes, that’s a full absence. If you come in after the first ½ hour of class, that’s ½ an absence. If you can only stay for 40 minutes, that’s ½ an absence.

Being absent is **not an excuse for missed information or assignments**. You should either e-mail a classmate (or me) to find out what went on in class if you are not able to attend. You should pick up any missed packets or material. You must be responsible for all the material discussed in class on the days you were absent.

**Extra Information**

- Work will not be accepted late.
- If you do not show up to your workshop day, you may not include that material in your final project.
- All assignments and drafts should be meticulously proofread and presented in the most professional manner. If you do not, you will receive one grade lower than the creative content will warrant.

**Cell Phone Policy:**

Phones must be kept in pockets, purses, or backpacks—unless you are waiting for a notification during a family emergency (please tell me before class begins). If you text in class, you are marked absent and you will receive 0s on your participation. Clearly this would affect your overall grade. Repeat offenders will be dropped a letter grade.

**Class Discussion (10%):**

We will have class discussions regarding the professional work we read. You must participate in class conversation to earn an A in the class. You do not have to love
everything you read, but you have to be willing to express an opinion about it.

**Collaborative Project (15%)**:  
I’m going to put you into groups and give you a well-known story/myth. As a team, you are then going to write a collection of 3-5 different takes (flash or poem length—no more than a 500 words each) on the story/myth. These must be connected but how they are connected is up to you. How original and memorable can you make them? This will be a short term project and is most concerned with the fun of myth making, and getting things to connect. What details will you highlight? What part of the story will speak to you/your audience? You can choose to have everyone in the group write separate pieces that connect, or have them “talk” to each other, or team write—it’s up to you. Explicit instructions will be given soon.

**Professionalism (10%)**
A portion of your grade is devoted to your ability to be professional and turn in all materials neatly and on time. This includes Rough Drafts, Assignments, and Final Portfolios. I will grade you on:

a) whether you’ve emailed a copy of your work to mcdermotc@sfasu.edu  
b) you turned in all your copies.  
c) you turned things in on time  
d) everything is included and all requirements are met  
e) everything is neat, easily readable (i.e. no faded printing), complete, ordered correctly and stapled.  
f) everything is in the correct format (heading, correct genre format, correct font).  
h) your ability to work collaboratively.  
i) your written responses pre workshop

This grade also includes email correspondence and ability to send work via email in a timely manner.

**Drafts for Workshop (10%)**
You will have retellings/reimaginings of your own workshopped twice. You may turn in (each time) any of the following.

a) a short story (any style) not exceeding 3500 words  
b) an essay (any style) not exceeding 3500 words  
c) a group of 3 poems or a 3-4 page single poem (any style)  
d) a play not exceeding 10 pages

Each retelling must come with an attached paragraph that details what original tale you’re retelling/reimagining and why. **The retelling & paragraph must be emailed to me prior to your workshop.**
**Standard Format:**
- Poems need to be typed, single spaced on a sheet of white paper.
- Prose should be typed, double-spaced.
- Plays need to be in correct manuscript form (play or screen)
- All work should be typed in a readable, 12 point *serif* font with one inch margins.
  - Times New Roman, Cambria, or Georgia are acceptable fonts.
- Your heading (name, class title, etc.) need only appear on the first page of the packet, but your last name should appear on each subsequent page in the upper right corner.

Do not double side your work. I may do this for example work, but when you turn in your work it should not be double sided. Remember, too, all formatting affects the overall feeling/reading of the poem, so don’t put something into columns or double-space unless you intend to.

**Grading for Workshop:**
- All work MUST be turned in on the due date (at the beginning of class) or it will not be counted. You must have enough hard copies for the entire class. If you do not turn in your work on time *in class*, I will not accept it, you cannot workshop it, and it cannot be revised. You will receive a 0/F for that assignment.
- All work will be graded on professional format, spelling, etc. It is not your peers’ responsibility to correct typos/spelling errors, etc.
- After I get your packets, I will include comments about how you can improve. All comments will focus on how well you employ craft. I expect a level of sophistication in terms of poetic technique or storytelling.
- I will see how well you take my suggestions in your portfolio (how thoughtful, extensive, etc. your revisions are).

Except for work not turned in (and thus not accepted), all creative work can be improved in the revision process.

**Group Workshop (20%)**
Each student will have a large group workshop on 2 packets. Your job as peers is to:
- A) Write significant, astute notes on each work (10%)
- B) Speak about those poems in class in an intelligent and respectful fashion (10%).

I will grade you on your in-class comments and also collect written peer responses after each workshop, evaluate them, then return them to the writer. If you have poor handwriting or very small handwriting, please type up your end comments.

- In-depth written comments on peers’ work in large group workshop are expected.
- Thoughtful/constructive oral comments in large group workshop are expected.
Promptness, neatness of getting work to me, group students will be graded.
Attendance and oral/written activity in group is mandatory.

Revision (25%)
At the end of the semester, you will turn in a revision of one of the major workshops with the original graded copy.

Submission (5%)
This should be as close to publishable as you can make it. It will also need to be submitted to a professional magazine/journal. I can help you with this.

I will FAIL the following
- Late work.
- Work with insufficient number of copies; this will count as late work. Make sure you get your copies done well in advance of class. Remember if your printer breaks down the library has printers & copy machines.
- Incomplete work—all creative work must be presented in its entirety.
- Assignments/creative work not typed in standard format
- Work with an abundance of spelling/grammatical errors
- Plagiarized papers will result in failure of the course (see university policy below)

University Policies You Need to Know:

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
WITHHELD GRADES SEMESTER GRADES POLICY (A-54)
Ordinarily, 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.

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/

ACCEPTABLE STUDENT BEHAVIOR
Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. 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 that is available to help SFA students succeed.

To Keep In Mind During Workshop (and in general)

Be Constructive
There is a fine line between being constructive and being destructive. Harsh criticism can hurt. Try to be honest, but fair. Point out the strengths of a work, not just its negatives. At the same time, don’t just say “it’s good” or “I like it” or “it’s relatable”—come up with concrete ways to discuss how the work could be improved, or why it should remain as is. Never ever ever say a work “has no point.” It may not have a noticeable point to you as the reader at that particular moment, but I will say that to the writer it definitely has a point.
Try to come from that place of understanding. You can say, “I’m not sure I’m getting this, but I think it’s is about…” is acceptable. “This has no point” is not. There’s a difference between “This poem is repetitive and I found it boring,” and “I’m not sure the repetition is working to help the message of the poem.

Be Open
Always remember that as artists, none of us are exactly the same. We each are trying to achieve different things for different reasons. Never try to make someone else’s work into your own; let it exist by its own rules. Meanness, prejudicial comments, etc. Don’t treat anyone in a way you wouldn’t like to be treated yourself. Arrogance, rudeness, general nastiness doesn’t fly here.

Be Patient
In writing our egos sometimes get in the way of someone else’s. Don’t give up. There will be times when communication will fail, there will be times when someone will say something stupid, there will be times when someone will inadvertently hurt you, but keep trying, eventually there will be a breakthrough.

Have Fun
Enjoy yourself, experiment, get enthused. Find a consuming passion.

Writing has laws of perspective, of light and shade, just as painting does or music. If you are born knowing them, fine. If not, learn them. Then rearrange the rules to suit yourself.

–Truman Capote

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**Calendar for English 465-Topics in Creative Writing**
*(Retellings & Reimaginings)*
Subject to Change (depending on enrollment)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Schedule</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/28</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Introduction to course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/30</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Discussion of retellings/how-to/what editors look for. <strong>For Next Time:</strong> Read retellings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/4</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Discuss retellings. <strong>For Next Time:</strong> Read retellings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/6</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Discuss retellings. <strong>For Next Time:</strong> Read retellings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/11</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Discuss retellings. <strong>For Next Time:</strong> Do Group Assignment prep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/13</td>
<td>R</td>
<td><strong>Group Meetings.</strong> <strong>For Next Time:</strong> Compose work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/18</td>
<td>T</td>
<td><strong>Turn in Group Assignments.</strong> <strong>For Next Time:</strong> Students 1 &amp; 2 prepare workshop material</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/20 R</td>
<td>Discuss Editing/Workshop. <strong>For Next Time:</strong> Comment on Student 1 &amp; 2’s works. Students 3 &amp; 4 prepare workshop material.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9/25 T</td>
<td><strong>Workshop Students 1 &amp; 2.</strong> Students 3 &amp; 4 hand out work. <strong>For Next Time:</strong> Comment on Student 3 &amp; 4’s works. Students 5 &amp; 6 prepare workshop material.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/27 R</td>
<td><strong>Workshop Students 3 &amp; 4.</strong> Students 5 &amp; 6 hand out work. <strong>For Next Time:</strong> Comment on Student 5 &amp; 6’s works. Students 7 &amp; 8 prepare workshop material.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/2 T</td>
<td><strong>Workshop Students 5 &amp; 6.</strong> Students 7 &amp; 8 hand out work. <strong>For Next Time:</strong> Comment on Student 7 &amp; 8’s works. Students 9 &amp; 10 prepare workshop material.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/4 R</td>
<td><strong>Workshop Students 7 &amp; 8.</strong> Students 9 &amp; 10 hand out work. <strong>For Next Time:</strong> Comment on Student 9 &amp; 10’s works. Students 11 &amp; 12 prepare workshop material.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/ 9 T</td>
<td><strong>Workshop Students 9 &amp; 10.</strong> Students 11 &amp; 12 hand out work. <strong>For Next Time:</strong> Comment on Student 11 &amp; 12’s works. Students 13 &amp; 14 prepare workshop material.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/11 R</td>
<td><strong>Workshop Students 11 &amp; 12.</strong> Students 13 &amp; 14 hand out work. <strong>For Next Time:</strong> Comment on Student 13 &amp; 14’s works. Students 15 &amp; 16 prepare workshop material.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/16 T</td>
<td><strong>Workshop Students 13 &amp; 14.</strong> Students 15 &amp; 16 hand out work. <strong>For Next Time:</strong> Comment on Student 15 &amp; 16’s works. Students 1 &amp; 2 prepare workshop material.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/18 R</td>
<td><strong>Workshop Students 15 &amp; 16.</strong> Students 17 &amp; 18 hand out work. <strong>For Next Time:</strong> Comment on Student 17 &amp; 18’s work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/23 T</td>
<td><strong>Workshop Students 17 &amp; 18.</strong> For Next Time: Students 1 &amp; 2 prepare workshop material.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/25 R</td>
<td>Discuss submitting. Students 1 &amp; 2 hand out material. <strong>For Next Time:</strong> Comment on Students 1 &amp; 2’s works.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/29 T</td>
<td><strong>Workshop Students 1 &amp; 2.</strong> Students 3 &amp; 4 hand out work. <strong>For Next Time:</strong> Comment on Student 3 &amp; 4’s works. Students 5 &amp; 6 prepare workshop material.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/1 R</td>
<td><strong>Workshop Students 3 &amp; 4.</strong> Students 5 &amp; 6 hand out work. <strong>For Next Time:</strong> Comment on Student 5 &amp; 6’s works. Students 7 &amp; 8 prepare workshop material.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/6 T</td>
<td><em>Workshop Students 5 &amp; 6.</em></td>
<td>Students 7 &amp; 8 hand out work. <strong>For Next Time:</strong> Comment on Student 7 &amp; 8’s works. Students 7 &amp; 8 prepare workshop material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/8 R</td>
<td><em>Workshop Students 7 &amp; 8.</em></td>
<td>Students 9 &amp; 10 hand out work. <strong>For Next Time:</strong> Comment on Student 9 &amp; 10’s works. Students 11 &amp; 12 prepare workshop material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/13 T</td>
<td><em>Workshop Students 9 &amp; 10.</em></td>
<td>Students 11 &amp; 12 hand out work. <strong>For Next Time:</strong> Comment on Student 11 &amp; 12’s works. Students 13 &amp; 14 prepare workshop material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/15 R</td>
<td><em>Workshop Students 11 &amp; 12.</em></td>
<td>Students 13 &amp; 14 hand out work. <strong>For Next Time:</strong> Comment on Student 13 &amp; 14’s works. Students 15 &amp; 16 prepare workshop material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/20-11/22</td>
<td><strong>Thanksgiving</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11/27 T</td>
<td><em>Workshop Students 13 &amp; 14.</em></td>
<td>Students 15 &amp; 16 hand out work. <strong>For Next Time:</strong> Comment on Student 15 &amp; 16’s works. Students 17 &amp; 18 prepare workshop material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/29 R</td>
<td><em>Workshop Students 15 &amp; 16.</em></td>
<td>Students 17 &amp; 18 hand out work. <strong>For Next Time:</strong> Comment on Student 5 &amp; 6’s works. Students 7 &amp; 8 prepare workshop material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/4</td>
<td><em>Workshop Students 17 &amp; 18.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>12/6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion of final project/portfolio. Everyone submits one story, poem, essay, etc. to a professional venue and gives proof to Dr. C.</td>
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