ENGLISH 4368.002  
Creative Writing Senior Thesis  
Fall 2020  
Thursdays, 6-8:30PM

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Office hours: 11:00-1PM (MW), 8:30-9:30AM (TU), and by appointment.

Course Description:  
A two-semester progression of senior thesis culminating in a well-crafted book-length creation of either poetry or prose.

Official Credit Justification  
ENGL 4368 “Senior Thesis” (3 credits) is a supervised independent study for creative writing majors undertaking a substantial final project: the composition of a novel, a collection of short stories, a volume of poetry, or collection of creative essays. Typically students meet one-on-one with faculty for approximately an hour each week to discuss composition and revision strategies. Assigned reading varies dependent on the student’s project, but may include both creative and critical texts. Writing expectations are demanding: at minimum, fifty to sixty pages of prose or twenty pages of poetry, plus drafts of revised work. These activities average a minimum of nine hours of work to prepare outside of classroom hours.

Prerequisites  
✓ The student has 15 credits of creative writing, including ENG 459, ENG 461 or ENG 462  
✓ The student has consent of faculty adviser.

OBJECTIVES  
The official Program Learning Outcomes for this course include:  
✓ The student will demonstrate close reading skills and recognize strategies used by professional creative writers.  
✓ The student will employ techniques and strategies for crafting carefully composed, competent creative work.  
✓ The student will demonstrate strategic revision on completed creative work.
✓ The student will compose and sustain a complete, polished manuscript of substance in the focus-genre.

The Student Learning Outcomes for this senior level project are:

- Ability to discuss elements of fiction in one’s own work
- Ability to discuss the influence of strategies used by professional, contemporary writers on one’s work
- The ability to improve a body of work (short stories or novella) through revision
- The ability to complete a significant part of a finely polished full-length work.

GRADING BREAKDOWN

ATTENDANCE (of meetings) 10%
DRAFT (for first semester students) 50%
REVISION OF MANUSCRIPT 40%

ATTENDANCE (of meetings) 10%
The student will attend scheduled meetings with instructor. If the meeting must be cancelled, twenty-four notice must be given and an alternative meeting time must be scheduled.

ROUGH DRAFTS 50%
A thesis should be roughly 100-plus pages of prose or 40-50 pages of poetry to be considered substantial. Rough drafts must be of complete stories or poems, not fragments. A novel project, clearly, moves via a clear progression of chapters.

REVISION OF MANUSCRIPT 40%
The entire manuscript will go through an edit for the final of the course. The manuscript must be arranged in a cohesive fashion. It should be presented professionally, spiral-bound and clean. There must be a title page, table of contents and a one-page afterword/discussion of the completion of the manuscript.

Grading:

- All work MUST be turned on assigned due dates. Otherwise, you will receive an F for that assignment.
- All stories/chapters will be graded on professional format, spelling, etc.
- All drafts must be typed on clean paper.
- Make sure you follow professional format.
- All comments will focus on how well you employ the elements of fiction and can improve the story/novel.

A For prose students: compelling plot with well-drawn characters, consistent point of view and well-established conflict, well written dialogue and excellent details, professionally presented in correct format. For poets, an excellent sense of craft and originality.
B A well-defined plot with good characters, consistent point of view and
good conflict, well written dialogue and good details, professionally
presented in correct format. Not as exceptional as an A but could get there
with revision. Poetry—well-crafted, but not as original or polished as “A”
work.

C Simplistic or derivative plot, flat characters, conflict needs to be developed
or point of view is inconsistent, professionally presented in correct format.
Average poetry: competent, but not compelling.

D Poorly developed plot, characters, conflict or dialogue, minimal details OR
incorrect format, errors in terms of grammar or in terms of meeting
assignment requirements. Incoherent or technically flawed poetry.

F plagiarized, grammatically unreadable, incomplete, does not fulfill
assignment, not handed in.

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/

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.

PLAGIARISM
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

Tentative Calendar

*For first semester students, the goal is to produce as much work as possible, so you are in a comfortable by the beginning of the second semester. For second semester students, the goal is revision of the final manuscript.

**WEEK ONE**
Go over Syllabus/Policies. Set up meeting times. The following weeks will be largely dependent on the size of the project, the pace of the student’s writing, and the demands of revision. These are simply suggestions which will change depending on the needs of the project.

**WEEK TWO**
Discuss first half of project and how much to achieve in the semester.
HW: Write Story 1 or first chapters for collection/8-10 pages

**WEEK THREE**
Turn in work. HW: Write 8-10 pages.

**WEEK FOUR**
Discuss first pages/submission. HW: Write 8-10 pages.

**WEEK FIVE**
Discuss work. HW: Write 8-10 pages.

**WEEK SIX**
Discuss work. HW: Write 8-10 pages.

**WEEK SEVEN**
Discuss work. HW: Write 8-10 pages.

**WEEK EIGHT**
Discuss work. HW: Write 8-10 pages.

**WEEK NINE**
Discuss work. HW: Write 8-10 pages.

**WEEK TEN**
Discuss work. HW: Write 8-10 pages.

**WEEK ELEVEN**
Discuss work. HW: Read suggested material.

**WEEK TWELVE**
Discuss work. HW: Write 8-10 pages.

**WEEK THIRTEEN**
Discuss work. HW: Write 8-10 pages.

**WEEK FOURTEEN**
Discuss final edits. HW: Finish final version of manuscript of first half of project or full project. Editing.

**WEEK FIFTEEN**
Discuss final edits & format. Plans for second semester of course, if needed.

**WEEK SIXTEEN**
Turn in final manuscript Friday of finals week.