ENGLISH 2307.002
INTRODUCTION TO CREATIVE WRITING
Spring 2024
Tuesday/Thursday 3:30-4:45AM
Ferguson 177

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Office hours: TR 9:15-11:00 12:15-2:00

OFFICIAL COURSE DESCRIPTION (from the university bulletin):
An introduction to the writing of poetry, fiction, and non-fiction with opportunities for practice and peer workshop.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:
There are no required books for this course.

I will post many stories and poems, plus instructional documents for assignments on brightspace.

You will also need a journal—nothing fancy—for your creative ideas.

OBJECTIVES
The purpose of this course is to get you started writing skillful short fiction and longer fiction along with non-fiction and poetry. There are two ways to improve your craft. The first is to write, which you will be doing frequently—with an emphasis on technique and revision. The second way to become a better writer is to read and analyze the strategies of other writers. With that in mind, you will be reading, discussing, and dissecting multiple examples of poetry and prose. You will also be sharing your work with your classmates and engaging in peer workshops. Be open-minded, willing to offer constructive criticism, and always remember that you are the writer and have the prerogative to accept or ignore any suggestions you receive (though it is probably best to heed any advice I give you—feel free to ignore me all you want after the semester is over). The course demands regular attendance and participation, frequent assigned readings, two craft-analysis papers, a final portfolio of your work, and the keeping of an ideas journal. This should be a fun class, but come prepared to think, act, and behave as if you were a professional writer, eager for deadlines and helpful advice.
Since this class counts for both the Creative Writing major (the BFA) and the minor, our Program Learning Outcomes are as follows:

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 (for this course, that means fiction and poetry).
3. The student will articulate useful, critical editorial advice for peer writers.
4. The student will demonstrate strategic revision on completed creative work.

The Student Learning Outcomes are based on those goals. Let’s put it in plain language: you’re going to read a lot of professional examples and pay attention to the craft; you’re going to write your own original poetry and fiction; you’re going to actively engage in workshop discussions; and you will turn in a portfolio of revised work at the end of the semester.

Since you all want to get a good grade, too, here’s the breakdown:

**GRADING:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Scale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>100-90=A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story Analysis</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>89-80=B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop Feedback &amp; Journal</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>79-70=C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-short story</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>69-60=D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short story</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>59-00=F</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collected Poetry</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-fiction</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Portfolio</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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**ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION**

If you want to do well in this course, you should attend every class period. There will be numerous discussions, some quizzes, group activities, and assorted in-class assignments. Your eventual grade will benefit from high attendance and active participation. I give everyone two free absences. (That’s a week worth of class.) After that, absences will mar your final grade by a half letter grade per absence. Miss more than six class days and you automatically fail the class, regardless of your other work.

Absence is not an excuse for missing assignments. You should either call a classmate or talk to me during my office hours and find out what went on in class if you were not able to attend. **DON’T MISS DAYS ON WHICH YOU HAVE WORK DUE OR WHEN YOUR ART IS THE FOCUS OF DISCUSSION. THAT WILL FURTHER HARM YOUR GRADE.**

I don't accept late work. Ever. And I never give extra credit.

The effort you put into assignments, group work, and class discussion will count toward your grade. If you are absent for either class discussion days or group work, your grade will be affected. If you doze, pass notes, check your cell phone, text message, or act in a disruptive manner (**specifically, talk while others are talking**), expect your grade to suffer accordingly.

Tardiness is rude and annoys me more than you imagine. Be punctual. Every time you’re late for class, you lose points. No kidding.
READINGS
Most of the assignments (and any pop quizzes) relate to the stories, poems, and articles you’ll read for class discussion. Keep up with the readings; they are very important. We will be analyzing them carefully. I expect you to have read and thought about them before you come to class.

HOMEWORK
There will be a variety of exercises assigned. Do them and you’ll improve your writing and your grade. Don’t do them and both will suffer.

DETAILS
Pay particular attention to each assignment description. This should give you a good idea what I am looking for in each piece and the sort of errors I will mark. I will also go over this in class. Please note that if you fail to turn in a major assignment (a poem, a story, a craft analysis, or the final portfolio), you will fail the course.

FORMAT
All in-class assignments must be written in ink. Out-of-class work must be printed by computer; no handwriting for those. Staple sequential pages. Your work must be presented in a neat and professional manner.

PAPERS
You will need to write an analysis paper on an assigned short story. You will analyze work we have not discussed in class. The paper should discuss some element(s) of each as you see it relating to yourself as a writer. The paper should be written in MLA format—and follow all rules of an essay (essay form, excellent grammar, and spelling, etc.).

POETRY
You are going to write three finished poems this semester, varying in style and form. If you consider yourself a budding poet, wonderful. You will enjoy creating striking images, the lure of alliteration and rhyme, the challenge of forms such as sonnets and sestinas. If you see yourself as a fiction writer and don’t like poetry, I promise the skills you develop as a poet can only improve your fiction. Go into every assignment with enthusiasm and an open mind and you’ll be surprised at what you can create.

FICTION
You’re going to write three stories this semester, a full-length story (2000 to 4000 words) a short-short story (under 1000 words), and a full-length non-fiction story (2000 to 4000 words). I don’t forbid genre work.

PORTFOLIO
The last thing you hand in this semester will be an anthology of the work you produced this semester. I expect it to be revised work; nobody produces their sharpest stuff first time out. The work you write must be in a more polished form. We’ll talk more about this as the semester progresses, but my warning now is you must be prepared to revise. Writing is revision. (Say it again: writing is revision. It should be one of your mantras.)

Updated: August 2023
GRADING

How will I grade creative work? It’s subjective, of course, but I will give you some ground rules in both format and content that should clarify what I’m looking for. Effort counts, too. I don’t know who said it, but art really is 98% perspiration, 2% inspiration. Perspire a little—no, perspire a lot—and you’ll pass. If you are spectacularly gifted and turn in sloppy work, you won’t get an A. The race isn’t won by the naturally swiftest; it’s won by the runner who trains the most productively. This course is for the writer-in-training. Consider me a coach.

Oh, the University has asked us all to include information on the WH grade. I rarely use it; the circumstances would have to be extreme.

Academic Integrity (4.1)

Please copy and paste the following information regarding Academic Integrity into your syllabus. In addition, you may include your guidelines for academic integrity as appropriate.

The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outlines the prohibited conduct by any student enrolled in a course at SFA. It is the responsibility of all members of all faculty, staff, and students to adhere to and uphold this policy.

Articles IV, VI, and VII of the new Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outline the violations and procedures concerning academic conduct, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and misrepresentation. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) Copying from the test paper (or other assignment) of another student, (2) Possession and/or use during a test of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, (3) Using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of a non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or using a test that has been administered in prior classes or semesters without permission of the Faculty member, (4) Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one’s self, to take a test, (5) Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work offered for credit, (6) Using any sort of unauthorized resources or technology in completion of educational activities.

Plagiarism is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one’s own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements.

Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam.

Misrepresentation is providing false grades or résumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual or to injure another student academically or financially.

Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (5.5)

Please copy and paste the following information regarding Withheld Grades into your syllabus. Add additional information as needed to meet your departmental or course needs.

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 coursework 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 to compute the grade point average. For additional information, go to https://www.sfasu.edu/policies/course-grades-5.5.pdf.

Students with Disabilities

Please copy and paste the following statement and place it in your course syllabus.

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 promptly may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.
Student Wellness and Well-Being
SFA values students’ overall well-being, mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, emotional well-being, alcohol and other drugs, identities, finances, etc.

If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help, SFA provides a variety of resources to support students’ mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

On-campus Resources:
The Dean of Students Office (Rusk Building, 3rd floor lobby)
www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents
936.468.7249
dos@sfasu.edu

SFA Human Services Counseling Clinic Human Services, Room 202
www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp
936.468.1041

The Health and Wellness Hub “The Hub”
Location: corner of E. College and Raguet St.

To support the health and well-being of every Lumberjack, the Health and Wellness Hub offers comprehensive services that treat the whole person – mind, body and spirit. Services include:

- Health Services
- Counseling Services
- Student Outreach and Support
- Food Pantry
- Wellness Coaching
- Alcohol and Other Drug Education

www.sfasu.edu/thehub
936.468.4008
thehub@sfasu.edu

Crisis Resources:

- Burke 24-hour crisis line: 1.800.392.8343
- National Suicide Crisis Prevention: 9-8-8
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.TALK (8255)
- johCrisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741

AND NOW FOR SOME GRUMPY WARNINGS:

I will fail the following...
Missing your own workshop discussion
Incomplete work
Poems and stories not typed in expected format
Work with an abundance of uncorrected misspellings or typos (more than 2 per page)—professional editors have no patience with thoughtless errors. Neither do I.

Always keep copies of what you write for your own protection in the event your work should be lost or misplaced. It probably won’t be, but the general rule is save everything just in case.

Updated: August 2023
WHEW. DONE WITH THE GRUMPY STUFF. BUT SOME LAST WORDS...

If you don't know, ask. If you can't remember, ask. If you panic, talk to me before the night before. Most importantly, relax.

Lose yourself in your art. That’s the best way to create something astounding. I have faith that each of you can write interesting, well-crafted, perhaps brilliant poems and stories this semester. Throw yourself into this course. It will pay off in artistic gratification, I guarantee. You’ll get a better grade and have more fun.