Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi  
English 5375-001, Creative Writing

MW 5:30-6:45 pm, Bay Hall 112  
(3 hrs. credit)  
Office Hours: 10:00-11:00 am TR; 3:30-5:30 pm MW  
& by appointment  
Dr. Robb Jackson  
257 Faculty Center  
825-2464 (voicemail)  
robb.jackson@tamucc.edu  

Fall Semester 2012

**Purpose**
You will gain practical experience in the craft of writing poetry and short fiction in an informal workshop setting. You will study the principles of writing prose fiction and poetry, with an emphasis on the elements and critical terminology of each genre. You will learn how to accept and use (or reject) the criticism of your peers, and finally you will increase your skills as a useful critic of the work of others.

**Course Materials**
- a three-ring binder with four dividers.
- Resources to make photocopies for everyone in the class of what you submit to the workshop.
- Resources to buy a copy of the class magazine at the end of the semester.

**Objectives**
By the end of the semester, you will have
- learned and developed techniques useful to creating poetry and short fiction;
- significantly improved your own writing, analytical, and critical skills;
• become familiar with the appropriate critical terminology needed to provide your peers with accurate, insightful feedback on the fiction and poetry submitted to the workshop;
• produced both original fiction and original poetry;
• revised the pieces submitted to the workshop, selecting from and/or rejecting the critical comments of your peers as you deem appropriate;
• and helped produce a class magazine of the creative work you have done this semester.

Student Learning Outcomes
Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to
• write original works of short fiction and poems, employing appropriate and varied techniques from the range available to the “creative” writer.
• critique the work of their peers, using specific, helpful, and appropriate critical language;
• revise their own work, using written and oral critical comments from their peers;
• produce a portfolio of original work that demonstrates a clear writing process for each included piece, from early draft to the draft submitted to the workshop to the final revised version.

Course Requirements
For the “Techniques & Preferences” Sessions
We will be using the course readings as resources for your personal discovery of the techniques of creative writing as well as your exploration of your preferences as a writer. In order to accomplish these goals, I will ask you to keep a writer’s notebook or journal (part of your task will be to name this feature for yourself). For each technique session, you will be asked to read from one of the works, stripmine/extract the selection for technique and/or preference, try it in your notebook/journal, and bring it to class to (possibly) share or discuss in small peer groups (which will feed into a larger whole-group discussion). In this part of the class you will have the opportunity to create poems, stories, “blobs,” etc. to bring to the workshop sessions later on in the semester. (See “The Writer’s Notebook/Journal” below.)

For the “Workshop” Sessions
While this isn’t a class that calls for tests, papers, or other, more usual academic evaluation methods, it does ask of you a high degree of professionalism. You will be expected to be in class on time at the start of each class period, to do every assigned reading and to be fully prepared to discuss every piece of your peers’ submitted work throughout the semester, whatever else is going on in your life! A studio approach only works if all its participants are willing to give, and to be engaged with the group at all times.
• You will submit pieces to the workshop two times during the semester, one time in each of two separate “rounds.” Each time you come up, you will submit a maximum of twenty-five pages of prose (double-spaced) or one long poem or up to three shorter poems. Don’t submit too much, and don’t submit a piece of work for which you don’t genuinely want feedback.

• You must provide copies for each class member no later than one class session before your work is to be considered. (All drafts must be computer-generated.) If you are scheduled for a Wednesday, and you are intending to present a long prose piece, it would be a courtesy to bring your copies to class the Wednesday before, rather than waiting till the Monday. You will also get better feedback if you do this.

• You will also be a primary respondent two times during the semester; i.e., you will be responsible for starting the discussion of a submitted piece of work by giving us your carefully considered evaluation of the piece.

• You must respond in writing to all works submitted to the workshop, even if you miss class.
  * All responses must be done before class, though you may add to them in class if you have further thoughts.
  * You should respond on the work itself, both by jotting notes where appropriate on the text itself, and by writing an endnote suggesting strengths and weaknesses, possible avenues of revision, etc. Please assume that what you are reading is a work-in-progress, and that the author wants helpful feedback.
  * Whether you “like” or identify with the subject matter of your peers’ works is not really important. It’s your comments on the more practical and/or technical aspects of the submitted piece(s) that will most help the author revise. The weight of our discussions will be on construction and effect, not on the (un)suitability, political slant, personal value, therapeutic nature, implied insult, etc., of the content.
  * All responses must be signed.
  * These responses should be handed to the author after we have considered his/her piece. The author must give these responses back to me in the next class period, so I can record them. I will then return them to the author.
  * Points will be assigned as follows: 2=good, 1=ok, 0=not done or late.
You are expected to attend every session, and to be there on time, unless you have a remarkably good excuse. If you do miss a class, you are responsible for finding out what you missed, and for getting hold of the pieces for the next class. If, without notifying me in advance, you do not turn up to class on the day your work is to be discussed, or on the day you are to be a primary respondent, you will lose 5 points off your final grade.

Any form of plagiarism will result in an automatic 'F' and expulsion from the class.

We will assemble a class magazine at the end of the semester, to which you will be expected to contribute both a piece (or pieces) of writing and time & effort. You will also be expected to buy a copy of the magazine.

At the end of the semester, you will submit a portfolio of original work to me, which must have been written, or at the very least extensively revised, during this semester, and which must contain
* both fiction and poetry,
* drafts and revisions,
* all your workshop pieces, in original and revised forms,
* your notebook/journal.

Portfolio guidelines will be distributed well before the end of the semester.

Attendance
I expect you to attend all class sessions. You are responsible for securing copies of authors’ drafts, etc. on your own, and for keeping up with the responses you missed during any absences.

Grading Policy
Although I expect everyone to participate in class and in the class magazine and authors’ tea, you will be graded primarily on your portfolio and on your responses, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writer’s Notebook/Journal</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop pieces (draft/revisions)</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop responses</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Respondent</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in Magazine Project</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Reflection</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final grades will be assigned with absolutely no exceptions whatsoever as follows:

110-99 = A
The Writer’s Notebook/Journal

In order to create material for your own and your peers’ edification (and for class discussions), I’d like to ask each of you to create four different short documents each week, each one to be kept in a different section of your notebook/journal each week to keep the threads separate, searchable, and focused. Please make sure that you label each entry, assign it a number (e.g. R1, MIC1, P1, IC1), and record the date you wrote the entry.

1) **Response (R):** The focus in a response is your personal articulation of your meaning-making out of the assigned weekly reading assignment: for instance, what is new to you in what you’ve read this week? What will you note to revisit later on in your writing/teaching practice. What seems most useful or remarkable to you in your personal understanding?

2) **Musings, Insights, & Connections (MIC):** Try to make note of any musings, insights, and connections you see amongst what you’ve already studied and experienced this far in your masters program, the assigned readings, and your overall writing process. The focus here is synthesis: to begin to build a unified, “big-picture” of your emerging understanding of your personal journaling and your “creative writing” given your study this semester.

3) **Process (P):** Try at least one of the journaling exercises in the reading selection that appeals to you most. Create notes and reflect upon the process you employed and the insights you’ve gained about yourself and/or your writing and/or the technique you employed itself. It is the process you will discuss in class, not the content of your journal writing itself.

4) **In-Class (IC):** I will be asking you to do short in-class writings from time to time during the semester. Keep these in a separate section of your notebook/journal along with any notes you keep as you go along.

**Academic Advising**

Upon entering the MA in English Program, each student is assigned a faculty mentor by the Graduate Coordinator. You should make an appointment to meet with your faculty mentor every semester to develop a degree plan and monitor your progress toward graduation. Your faculty mentor can also answer questions and provide valuable information about the comprehensive examination, other degree requirements, Ph.D. programs, and career opportunities. To finalize your degree plan and register for
graduation, you must also meet with the Graduate Student Academic Advisor in the Academic Advising Center for the College of Liberal Arts. This office is located in Driftwood 203E and can be reached at (361) 825-3466.

**Notice to Students with Disabilities**
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom, or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance.

**Grade Appeal Process**
As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

**Engl 5375.001 Creative Writing Syllabus — Fall 2012**

**Week 1**
22 August/W Distribute course materials, discuss course goals, etc.

**Week 2**
27 August/M Expressivism & Creative Writing
29 August/W Elbow, I *Some Essentials*, pp. 3-46.

**Week 3**
03 September/M No Classes — Labor Day Holiday
05 September/W Adams, I *The 79c Therapist*, pp. 3-68.
Week 4
12 September/W  Adams III Putting It All Together, pp. 203-234.

Week 5
17 September/M  Elbow, III More Ways to Revise, pp. 121-175.
19 September/W  Adams, Intro, Springboards, Character Sketch, Clustering, pp. 71-93.

Week 6
24 September/M  Elbow, IV Audience, pp. 177-235.
26 September/W  Adams, Captured Moments, Dialogue, Lists, pp. 94-137.

Week 7
01 October/M  Elbow, V Feedback, pp. 237-277.
03 October/W  Adams, Stream of Consciousness, Steppingstones, Time Capsule, pp. 148-166.

Week 8
08 October/M  Elbow, VI Power in Writing, pp. 279-373.
10 October/W  Adams, Topics du Jour, Unsent Letters, Perspectives, Dreams & Imagery, pp. 167-199.

Week 9
15 October/M  Murray, Crafting a Life, pp. 1-54.
17 October/W  Murray, Shoptalk, pp. xi-42.

Week 10
22 October/M  Murray, Crafting a Life, pp. 55-122.
24 October/W  Murray, Shoptalk, pp. 43-88.

Week 11
29 October/M  Murray, Crafting a Life, pp. 123-165.
31 October/W  Murray, Shoptalk, pp. 89-140.

Week 12
05 November/M  Murray, Shoptalk, pp. 141-164.
07 November/W  Murray, Shoptalk, pp. 165-198.

Week 13
12 November  /M  Workshop 1
14 November/W  Workshop 2
**Week 14**
19 November/M  Workshop 3  
28 November/W  Workshop 4

**Week 15**
26 November/M  Workshop 5  
01 December/W  Workshop 6

**Week 16**
03 December/M  Authors Tea/Magazine  
10 December/M  Portfolios Due, Robb’s office FC257