Course Meets

Tues/Thur – 5:30-6:45 p.m., Business Hall 205

Required Texts and Materials


*A writer’s notebook*. This may be anything you like, bound or unbound, plain or fancy, handwritten or computer-generated, as long as you *use* it.

Course Design and Objectives

This course is designed as an introduction to the discipline and art of creative writing and is a core course for the Minor in Creative Writing. The course will focus on the techniques involved in the writing of short fiction and poetry. During the semester, the class will explore a range of techniques and tools used by writers of literature; you will try these techniques yourself, and you will study poems and stories to see how the techniques have been used by published authors.

The objectives of the course are

- to introduce you to the terminology and to give you practical experience in using as wide a range as possible of the creative writer’s “tools”
- to expose you to a broad and eclectic selection of modern and contemporary poetry and fiction, i.e., to what is being written in your own time
- to allow you to experiment, stretch, and take risks with your writing through a series of exercises not all of which will “work” or result in brilliant, finished pieces
- to encourage and enable you to produce at least one or two brilliant, finished pieces during the semester that will surprise you
- to prepare you for entry into ENGL 4330, or any other creative writing workshop

Student Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to

- demonstrate knowledge of various literary techniques through written exercises that employ these techniques;
- write original works of short fiction and poems, employing appropriate and varied techniques from the range available to the “creative” writer.

Course Requirements and Grade Distribution
Grades will be determined according to the following percentages for each component of the course requirements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Portfolio</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Responses</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Final Portfolio (60%) will contain:**

**The Fiction Section (30%)**

- all the assigned exercises (both in and out of class), placed in the order in which they were assigned
- a minimum of two short stories, with all their drafts and peer reviews
- any other stories, or beginnings of stories, that you have written during this period of time
- your notes on the assigned readings
- a self-evaluative cover letter that addresses the work you have done and the progress you feel you have made in this section of the course

**The Poetry Section (30%)**

- all the assigned exercises (both in and out of class), placed in the order in which they were assigned
- a minimum of three poems, with all their drafts
- any other poems you have written during this time, also with all drafts and peer reviews
- your notes on the assigned readings
- any stories that you have revised since your fiction portfolio was graded
- a self-evaluative cover letter that addresses the work you have done and the progress you feel you have made in this section of the course

Both portfolios will be graded on their evidence of the work you have put into the course, the results you have achieved, and on the self-assessment of your work and your progress.

**The Writing Exercises** will not be formally graded, but will simply be checked off as done or not done. However, as your portfolios will be partially graded on how much work you have put into the course, skimpily done exercises will inevitably count against you. I hope you will put as much into these as you can, not just for the grade, but for your own forward progress as a writer.

I would suggest that you try keeping a **writer’s notebook** (or journal or day book, whatever you want to call it), in which to store ideas, snippets, observations, useful quotes, images, musings, etc. This might be a leather-bound book, a spiral notebook, pocket note-cards, or a computer file—it’s entirely up to you. I am not making this mandatory, but I encourage you to experiment and, if it works, to place the notebook in your portfolios when it comes time for grading.

**Professionalism: (20%)**

Your professional conduct is an urgent part of what will help you and our community of learners in this course successful. In other words, you are one of the parts that make the whole. Your professional contribution to our community of creative writers requires your **attendance, daily preparation,**
participation, and interaction. Participation in physical and virtual class discussions is an important part of this course. This course sees professionalism as the ways you prepared, contributed to/engaged in the processes of reading, writing, discussions and inquiry, peer-draft reviewing, drafting, revising, and critical thinking. This also includes your final creative presentation. You will read one finished poem or an excerpt from one of your stories and talk about its inspiration and evolution.

You need to plan to attend every class, be in class on time, and stay until the end of class. Bring your English notebook--your reading notes--and be prepared to stay engaged by taking notes. No cell phones shall be visible or audible during class period (unless you have a child, elder, or other family member with special needs, under your care, in which case you may have your phone on “vibrate”). I urge you to utilize time management! Use a planner, and schedule time and space to accomplish each course assignment. The old Procrastination Devil is a smooth operator.

Establish Partnerships and Communicate: Make a pact with at least two colleagues in your group to stay in contact about the course in the event of one’s absence. You are encouraged to take responsibility for each other and for information missed. If you are absent, make sure a colleague picks up necessary handouts, worksheets, and takes careful notes and gathers information for you. Though I do respond to e-mails from students who have very specific questions, I never respond to vaguely addressed e-mails or text-messages, such as “hey, slept thru alarm. what’d I miss?” (A note about sororities and fraternities: they exist to support you along your own path to self-fulfillment. Always keep this in mind).

Absence Policy: It is impossible to earn an A after four absences, and very unlikely to earn a B after seven absences. So, try to save your absences for unexpected illnesses and crises (i.e, don’t use them all up recuperating from all-night festivities). Typically, an “A” student exemplifies outstanding community professionalism and self-initiative.

Late work Policy: In the case that a document is turned in or posted late with no prior arrangement with me, that document’s grade will be lowered ten percentage points for each class meeting that the student fails to turn it in. If the student has made arrangements with me prior to class, due to job, sports team travel or family crisis, late work may be accepted with no grade penalty.

Reading Responses: (20%) Throughout the semester, I will assign in-class reading responses at the beginning of most class meetings. You will often be given several questions regarding the assigned text—the literature as well as the historical contextual information. This will require a short written answer or reflection, sometimes a paragraph or two. You may use your notes from your journal. (Really?) Yes. This requires that you come extremely prepared, having thoroughly read and taken notes on the entire assigned text. Typically, the “A” responses demonstrate a thorough and engaged reading of the assigned text.

From time to time, I will ask you to submit a reading or discussion response to be typed out of class, sometimes on the Blackboard Discussion Forum. To receive an average grade, a “C,” out of class response should be at least one typed page, double-spaced. Typically, “A” students turn in two typed pages, demonstrating a thorough engagement with the reading.

Extra Credit: I encourage you to attend literary events, performances, and lectures within and around the campus community. To that end, I award you extra credit for attending a literary, scholarly, creative, and/or performance-based event, in full, and typing at least a two-page detailed reflection, using literary concepts and vocabulary that you are learning in class. I announce these events on Blackboard and in
class, and welcome your own announcements of such events hosted by any student organizations and extracurricular groups in which you are active.

### Grading Standards

**A (90%-100%):** Outstanding work. An A document superbly addresses all components of the assignment. It clearly and logically expresses and develops an idea for a particular audience in an interesting way. A writing is highly polished and generally contains no errors in the use of English.

**B (80%-89%):** Very good work. A B document does a better than average job of addressing all components of the assignment. It expresses and develops an idea in a clear, logical way, and it is well adapted to the needs of its intended readers. B writing contains few or none of the common errors in the use of English. The professional appearance of B work is generally neat and polished.

**C (70%-79%):** Competent work. A C document manages to address most of the components of the assignment and develops an idea for its intended readers, but does little to create a positive or lasting impression on them. C writing avoids serious errors in the use of English. The professional appearance of C work is acceptable but unremarkable and needs revision, polish, or redesign.

**D (60%-69%):** Unsatisfactory work. A D document is flawed by one or more of the following: insufficient attention to the assigned task and its audience, poorly developed ideas, inaccurate information, errors in the use of English.

**F (50%-59%):** Unacceptable work. An F document is flawed by one or more of the following: failure to accomplish the assigned task and adapt to its audience, failure to develop an idea, serious errors in the use of English language.

### Special Accommodations

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.

Academic Advising: It is imperative that all students visit regularly with an academic adviser. Each college within the university has an academic advising center, staffed by full-time, professional advisers to assist students with course selection, degree plans, and other academic matters. To find out how to contact the right adviser, go to: [http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/advising.php](http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/advising.php). Students who have yet to declare a major are advised by the Academic Advising Transition Center. For more information, go to: [http://www.tamucc.edu/~aac](http://www.tamucc.edu/~aac)

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.

Major Assignment Schedule Follows:

Fall Semester 2013
September 4, Wednesday Classes begin
September 11, Wednesday, Last day to late register or add a class
October 2, Wednesday, Introducing Portfolio Requirements
October 16, Wednesday, Peer Critique Workshops

November 6, Wednesday, Peer Critique Workshops
November 15, Friday Last day to drop a class
November 28-29 Thursday-Friday Thanksgiving Holidays
December 6, Friday Creative Presentations
December 9, Monday Last day to withdraw from the University
December 10, Tuesday Last day of classes || Final Portfolios Due || Last day to apply for May 2014 graduation
December 11, Wednesday Reading Day
December 12-13, Thursday-Friday; Final examinations
16-18, Monday-Wednesday; Final Examinations
December 19-20, Thursday-Friday Grading days
December 21, Saturday Fall Commencement