English 4330.001-Creative Writing Workshop I | Spring 2015
Dr. Robin Carstensen | Office: Faculty Center 281 | robin.carstensen@tamucc.edu
Phone: 361-825-3627
Office hours: T/TR 2-4:15 p.m. or by Appointment

Course Meets

Tues/Thur – 12:30-1:45 p.m., OCNR 222

Required Texts and Materials
No texts. Students must pay for printing of workshop drafts, in lieu of purchasing textbooks.
A writer’s notebook. Must be in electronic format.

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. This writing intensive course invites students from a diversity of creative writing background and experience, from the beginner to the more advanced. The course develops students’ skills as writers and critics of fiction, creative non-fiction, and poetry in a workshop environment. Students will practice writing in each major genre, and will also choose one genre on which to focus their craft and subject matter as well as develop their own unique voice. Assessment via peer responses, journal, and end-of-semester portfolio. No prerequisites.

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:

Professionalism: 10% | Facilitation: Primary Responses: 10% | Peer Reading Responses: 10% | Interactive Journal: 10% | Final Portfolio: 60%
Final Portfolio (60%) will contain:

The Fiction and Creative Non-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

Your portfolio will be graded on its 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.

Workshop Presentation and Response Procedure

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 reading assignment and piece of your peers’ submitted work throughout the semester, whatever else is going on in your life! A workshop only works if all its participants are willing to give, and to be engaged with the group at all times.

- You will submit at least three pieces to the workshop three times during the semester, one time in each of three separate “rounds.” Each time you come up, you will submit a maximum of fifteen pages of prose (double-spaced) or one long poem or one to three shorter poems.
- You will submit an original piece that is as crafted and well-developed as possible, applying the principles that we read and discuss in class. Your purpose is to get feedback on your best work.

- You must post your work onto Blackboard no later than one class period before
your work is to be considered.
• You will also facilitate discussion (i.e. be a primary respondent three times during the semester: 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 possible avenues of revision, etc. Be suggestive, not directive. 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. I will ask for a certain group of responses each week, and 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 class, 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 percentage points off your final grade.
• Any form of plagiarism will result in an automatic ‘F’ and expulsion from the class.
• At the end of the semester, you will submit an electronic 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:
  * a critical reflection
  * fiction and poetry (or fiction, non-fiction, and poetry)
  * evidence of drafts and revisions
  * most significant exercises and dialectical notes

Your portfolio will be graded on its 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.

My Course Policies
**Professionalism:** (10%)  
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 learners 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, organizational work, collaborative work, online and face-to-face discussions and inquiry, peer-draft reviewing, drafting, revising, and critical thinking.

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 read and write with this course as a guide, and develop your skills as a creative writer. Discover your best and favorite physical environments, rituals, and accoutrements for your own most efficient, focused reading and writing. The old Procrastination Devil is a smooth operator. Be a step ahead of him/her.

**Blackboard Policy**  
You are responsible for checking our course on Blackboard every day. Check our Reading and Assignment Schedule for weekly updates. Check Announcements, for daily assignments and messages from me. Also, we will use Blackboard Messages to contact one another and send drafts to our partners.

**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. Again, always check Blackboard.

**E-Communication Policy**
- The best way to contact me is through my email address: robin.carstensen@tamucc.edu.
- I will respond to professional emails that include your subject and class section in the Subject Heading, address me by my professional title, and offer your signature.
- I will respond to email within 24 hours between 9 a.m.- 9 p.m, M-F.
- Though I do respond to e-mails from students who have very specific questions, I never respond to tweets, instant-messages, badly misspelled, and vague, unprofessionally addressed e-mails or text-messages, such as “hey, slept thru alarm. what’d i miss?”
- If you need an appointment with me outside of my office hours, please ask me after class or email me.
- I do not accept Skype/Facebook/Linkedin friend requests (until graduation).
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 reading responses to be completed online before the next class period (via Blackboard) or a reflection after a class discussion (Bb), or an in-class response. You will often be given several questions regarding the assigned text or a video excerpt—the literature, writer’s interview or reading, a journal’s website, writer’s resources, etc. This will require a short written answer or reflection, sometimes a paragraph or two. For in-class responses, 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.

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, 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. http://falcon.tamucc.edu/wiki/JenniferBray/IslanderEvents

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.

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Policies | Student Resources

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. 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.

For undergraduate English majors: The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

Classroom/Professional Behavior

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may
be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

**In-class Conduct**
- In general, treat each other and the instructor with respect and follow standards of common courtesy. Here are a few specifics:
- Please place all cell phones or other electronic communication devices out of sight (in a bag, purse, pocket) while in class. You may think quietly texting someone is not distracting to the instructor or fellow students, but it is.
- Do not use your time in English 1301 to work on assignments for other classes.
- Computers are to be used for English 1301 work only. No shopping, no Facebook, etc.
- Those who consistently violate this policy will be asked to leave. You will also be counted absent and lose credit for any in-class work that day.
- Do not talk or make excessive noise while the instructor or another student is speaking to the class as a whole. (This includes typing on the keyboard or clicking the mouse.)
- When group work is assigned in class, you must work in a group, not as an individual.
- During group work time, please stay on task and work cooperatively with other group members.

**Academic Honesty/Plagiarism**
The University will not tolerate plagiarism or any other form of intellectual or academic dishonesty. Violations of academic honesty will be processed under the Procedure for Academic Misconduct Cases 13.02.99.C3.01 (see [http://ses.tamucc.edu/grievances.html](http://ses.tamucc.edu/grievances.html) and the Student Code of Conduct [http://judicialaffairs.tamucc.edu/assets/2013-2014StudentHandbook.pdf](http://judicialaffairs.tamucc.edu/assets/2013-2014StudentHandbook.pdf)). All cases of academic misconduct are recorded in the student’s file. Consequences are determined by the faculty member and/or the Academic Integrity Hearing Panel. It is sometimes difficult to understand what plagiarism actually is. Students sometimes commit unintentional plagiarism (not citing sources properly, for example), because they are unaware of the standards that apply. Plagiarism includes:
- using the work of another as your own,
- downloading or purchasing ready-made essays off the web and using them as your own,
- using resource materials without correct documentation,
- using the organization or language of a source without using quote marks and proper citation, or
- turning in a researched paper without citing sources in an appropriate documentation style.

Be aware that there are many ways to plagiarize. English 1301 and 1302 courses and the Writing Center at CASA will review rules of academic citation. Information academic citation is available at the Purdue University’s OWL: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/) and/or from our local Writing Center at CASA.

**Dropping a Class**
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student
Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. Please be aware that you are allowed 6 drops in your entire undergraduate career, so these decisions must be made carefully. April 10th is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

Grade Appeal Process
As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that his or her final grade reflects academic evaluation which is arbitrary, prejudiced, or inappropriate in view of the standards and procedures outlined in the class syllabus, may appeal the grade given for the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. 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 the University Rule 13.02.99.C2.01, in the University Handbook for Rules and Procedures: http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/Rules_Procedures/

The first step is a meeting with the instructor.

Student Resources

Students with Disability and Veterans

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.

The Center for Academic Student Achievement (CASA): The Writing Center of CASA provides free writing instruction to any student interested in improving his/her writing abilities. Tutors will assist you with all aspects of writing. The Writing Center’s purpose is not to correct or proofread your drafts but to help you learn strategies that good writers use during the processes of writing. You may visit the Center for assistance with a writing project for any of your classes. It is located in the Glasscock Building (825-5933).

University Counseling Center

We all encounter stress, problems, and difficult decisions in our daily lives. Sometimes, these problems may seem overwhelming or it might be difficult to talk about certain issues with your friends or family. The University Counseling Center is available for all students enrolled at
TAMUCC. Students seek counseling for a multitude of reasons and the University Counseling Center offers individual therapy, group counseling, psychiatric services, psychological testing, consultation, outreach services, alcohol and drug education and prevention programs, and personal skills training. If you are in need of counseling services or just someone to talk to, please call or visit the University Counseling center at (361) 825-2703 in the Driftwood Building. Visit: [http://counseling.tamucc.edu](http://counseling.tamucc.edu) for more information.

**Reminder to English Majors:** As part of the English undergraduate capstone course (ENGL 4351), all English majors are required to submit a portfolio of writings in different discourse genres that they have completed for their college classes. To help you prepare for this assignment, you should **keep a copy** of all essays, research papers, literary analyses, creative and report writing, etc., so that you will have an ample selection from which to choose when the portfolio comes due.

**For the Schedule, see Blackboard Reading and Assignment Schedule, updated weekly. See Announcements for daily updates.**

**Week 1**
Course introductions.
Suggested creative writing techniques and materials—1.
Sign up for Round 1 of the Workshop.

**Week 2**
Suggested creative writing techniques and materials—2.
Bring copies of work for Round 1, Workshop 1, for next class
Begin Round 1, Workshop 1.

**Weeks 3-15:** Workshop Sessions
Begin Round 2 Workshops when Round 1 has been completed
(meaning each author has submitted to the workshop *once* and each workshop member has been a primary respondent *twice*).
Begin Round 3 Workshops when Round 2 has been completed
(meaning each author has submitted to the workshop *twice* and each workshop member has been a primary respondent *twice*).

**No Workshops during Spring Break, March 16-20**

**Week 16**
**May 5th** Last Class Days