English 5375.B01-Creative Writing | Summer I 2015 | Hybrid Course

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Phone: 361-825-3627
Office hours: MW– 2:30-4:30 or by Appointment

Course Meets: MW 12:00-1:55 in O'Connor Bldg, Room 222

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Required Texts and Material


Must be able to print out drafts for workshops, and print out online readings, or bring laptop.

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.

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Course Design and Objectives

This course is designed for students to continue developing their craft in writing poetry, short fiction, and creative non-fiction in a studio/workshop setting. This writing/revising intensive course invites students from a diversity of creative writing background and experience. The course teaches the principles of writing prose fiction and poetry, with an emphasis on the elements and critical terminology of each genre. Students will practice writing in each major genre, and will also choose one genre on which to focus their craft. Students learn how to accept and use (or reject) the criticism of peers, and finally increase skills as a useful critic of others. Students turn in a final portfolio as well as submit polished pieces to literary journals.

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Student Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of the course, students will have:

- demonstrated knowledge of various literary techniques through written exercises that employ these techniques;
- significantly improved their own writing, analytical, and critical skills;
- become familiar with the appropriate critical terminology needed to provide peers with accurate, insightful feedback on the work submitted to the workshop;
- revised the pieces submitted to the workshop, selecting from and/or rejecting the critical comments of peers as deemed appropriate;
- written original works of short fiction and poems, employing appropriate and varied techniques from the range available to the “creative” writer;
- compiled a portfolio of revised work and submitted polished pieces to journals.
What in the World is a Hybrid/Blended Course?

At Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, the term “online course” refers to a fully distance education course (85% or more of course content) offered via the Internet; while the term “hybrid course” refers to a course with more than 50% but less than 85% of course content offered via the Internet: [https://iol.tamucc.edu/def_of_courses.html](https://iol.tamucc.edu/def_of_courses.html)

For more than 50% of the time, we will be meeting on-line through the Blackboard Portal to work on assignments, participate in discussions, and interact with each other. The only differences are the venue and your responsibilities. In order to be successful in this course, you must be self-disciplined and possess a strong sense of self-initiative, independent thinking, and intrapersonal communication skills.

Course Requirements and Grade Distribution

Grades will be determined according to the following percentages for each component of the course requirements:

- Professionalism: 10%
- Technique Responses and Exercises: 20%
- Facilitation: Primary Responses: 10% | Peer Reading Responses: 10% | Final Portfolio: 50%

For the **Technique Responses and Exercises (20%)**: 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 respond to and engage with the reading assignments. For each text reading, you will be asked to read an assigned work, quote from at least one or more significant passage, and respond to that passage, exploring what you learned from the techniques employed, such as how to develop character, setting, style, point of view, dialogue, complexity, etc. For some readings, you will be asked to do an exercise that may develop into a longer piece. I will instruct you to bring it to class or submit on the Blackboard Discussion Forum to share or discuss with peers. You will include your most significant responses and exercises in your final portfolio. See Announcements on BB for all assignment instructions.

Submitting to Workshop

• You will submit at least two pieces to the face to face workshop during the semester, one time in each of two separate “rounds.” Each time you come up, you will submit a maximum of eighteen pages of prose (double-spaced) or one long poem or one to two shorter poems. You will also submit micro fiction and other exercises on the Discussion Forum.
• When you “come up” for workshop, 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. We will have sign-ups for each round.

**Responding to Workshop (20%)**

• You will also facilitate discussion (i.e. be a primary respondent **twice** 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 and after class if you have further thoughts.
*Responses should be very specific and techniques-based, not reactionary-based. Guidelines and examples are forthcoming.

**Final Portfolio (50%) will contain:**

**Critical Reflective Letter (10%)**

**The Fiction and Creative Non-Fiction Section (20%)**

• a minimum of one polished short story, one micro fiction, and one creative non-fiction piece with any other stories, or beginnings of stories, that you have written during this period of time, with all drafts.

• Technique responses and exercises that have helped to develop the work you have done and the progress you feel you have made in this section of the course

**The Poetry Section (20%)**

• 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
• Technique responses and exercises that have helped to develop 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.

**Literary Journal Submissions Option:** If your work is at the level of “submissions-ready,” you may choose to submit your work to journals rather than submit a final portfolio. This takes a great deal of researching the markets, and I can work with you independently on cover letters and the contemporary websites that provide calls for submissions and links to journals accepting submissions. As a part of your final, you will be asked to show evidence of submitting your polished poems or prose pieces to at least seven different places (including submitting a reflective letter to me as your final).
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.

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 12 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.

Absence Policy: It is impossible to earn an A after two face to face absences, and very unlikely to earn a B after three absences. So, try to save your absences for unexpected illnesses and crises. 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.

**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.
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 class to work on assignments for other classes.
- Computers are to be used for creative writing 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 and the Student Code of Conduct 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
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. **June 19th, Friday** 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/](http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/Rules_Procedures/)

The first step is a meeting with the instructor.

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**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 Announcements, updated daily, Monday-Thursday.**