Course Meets
MW – 3:30-4:45 p.m., CS 108

Required Texts and Materials
• A notebook (electronic notebook, laptop, iPad, or paper notebook for exercises and journaling)

Course Design and Objectives

This course is designed as an introduction to the discipline and art of creative writing (for an audience) 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.

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, creative non-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:
Journal Responses: (10%)  
Throughout the semester, I will assign readings and exercises from Starkey’s text, YouTube clips, and other material. I’ll ask for you to respond to them in your journal. I’ll also ask that you enter daily musings, observations, and ideas for stories and poems as you think of those. Try to get in the habit of writing at least one paragraph a day. If you carry your journal around, you can jot notes down throughout the day. I’ll collect journals from each group throughout the semester. I’ll announce beforehand; be sure to write in your journal at least every other day, and especially in response to a reading or video clip. Writers read and keep some form of a journal or notebook.

General Workshop Procedures

While this isn't a class that calls for tests 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. From time to time, I may assign a short in-class reading quiz.

Submitting to Workshop

• 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 eighteen pages of prose (double-spaced) or one long poem or one to two 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 two class periods before your work is to be considered. We will have sign-ups for each round.

Responding to Workshop

• Primary Responses: (15% of Course Grade): 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.

- General Peer Responses: (15% of Course Grade): You must respond in writing to all works submitted to the workshop, even if you miss class. Each workshop, I’ll collect randomly from three general responses.
- All responses must be done before class, though you may add to them in class if you have further thoughts.
  *Responses should be very specific and techniques-based, not reactionary-based. Guidelines and examples are forthcoming.

**Writer’s Presentation: A Reading (10%):** Final Exam

- You will read an excerpt from your prose or a poem or two.
- Discuss the impulse for the subject matter, and influence, tradition, and innovation of technique.
- Discuss your writing process of this piece from rough draft to final.

**Final Portfolio (40%) will contain:**

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

- assigned exercises and prompts (both in and out of class), placed in the order in which they were assigned
- a minimum of two short stories and one creative non-fiction piece, with significant drafts, peer and instructor comments.
- a 2-4 page 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 (20%)**

- assigned exercises and prompts (both in and out of class), placed in the order in which they were assigned
- a minimum of three poems, with significant drafts, peer and instructor comments
- a 2-4 page 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.

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**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. Reading quizzes will count toward professionalism. You need to plan to attend every class, be in class on time, and stay until the end of class.

**Blackboard Policy**

You are responsible for checking our course on Blackboard every T/TR. Check Announcements for daily assignments and messages from me. Download the free BB app, if you have a smartphone!

**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. - 5 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 three absences, and very unlikely to earn a B after five 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.

**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.

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**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.
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 our class to work on assignments for other classes.
- 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.

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 7th** is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

**Grade Appeals Process**
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, 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 Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures (available at [http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf](http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf)). For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, [http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html](http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

**Student Resources**

**Disability Services**
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, Room #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 at (361) 825-5816.

**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 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. See Announcements for weekly updates.

Week 1
Course introductions. Reading Assignments from Starkey and workshop procedures.

Week 2
Suggested fiction readings, kickstarts, and materials. Bring your notes for Round 1, Fiction Discussion. Sign up for Round 1 of Fiction Workshop.

Begin Round 1, Fiction Discussion and Peer Review 1.

Weeks 2-6:
Round One Fiction Workshops. Round 2 Sessions (Poetry) begins when Round 1 has been completed (meaning each student has facilitated at least one discussion).

Weeks 6-10: Suggested poetry readings, kickstarts, and materials from Starkey text and online. Bring your notes for Round 2, Poetry Discussion.

Begin Round 2, Poetry Workshops
Week 9:

No Workshops for Spring Break: March 13-17.

**Weeks 11-15:** Begin Round 3, Creative Nonfiction Workshop Begin Round 3 sessions when Round 2 has been completed (meaning each student has facilitated at least twice).

**Week 15:** Final Creative Nonfiction Workshops and Portfolio Prep April 26

Monday, **May 1st:** Last Class Day: Wild Card Workshop Day: Bring Any Genre (May 3rd is Reading Day):

Monday, **May 8th:** Final Exam/Presentations from 1:45-4:15 p.m. & Portfolios Due.