Course Meets

Tues/Thur – 3:30-4:45 p.m., Island Hall 268

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 a continued introduction to the discipline and art of creative writing and is a core course for the Minor in Creative Writing. This writing and reading intensive course invites students from a diversity of creative writing background and experience, from the beginner to the more advanced. The course continues to develop students' skills as writers and critics of fiction, creative non-fiction, and poetry in a studio workshop environment. Students will choose one genre on which to focus their craft and subject matter as well as develop their own unique voice. Students with hybrid creative on-going projects, such as graphic narratives, memoir-verse, photojournalism, etc, are encouraged to attend to use this space and peer-review environment to develop their projects. No prerequisites.

Student Learning Objectives

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

- 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 basic fundamentals of the craft of fiction, creative non-fiction, and poetry, as well as a clear writing process for each included piece, from early draft submitted to the workshop to the final revised version.

Course Requirements and Grade Distribution

Grades will be determined according to the following percentages for each component of the course requirements: Professionalism: 10%  Final Portfolio: 30%
Facilitations: 20%  Written Exercises: 30%  Final Presentation—A Reading: 10%
The Studio Approach: General Workshop Procedures

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.

Submitting to Workshop

• You will submit at least three advanced 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 18 pages of prose (double-spaced) or one long poem or one to two shorter poems. Minimum of 10 pages of prose.
• 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. The purpose for workshop is to get feedback on your best work.
• You must post your work onto Blackboard, in the assigned Discussion Forum no later than two days before your work is to be considered. We will have sign-ups for each round.

Responding to Workshop

• 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.
*Responses should be very specific and techniques-based, not reactionary-based. Guidelines and examples are forthcoming.

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.

Facilitations (20%): 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 will follow the peer review guidelines distributed in class, and type a 2-3 page response. You will give one copy to me and one to your peer.

The Writing Exercises (30%): Each week, I’ll offer a prompt in class or out of class, from the textbook or online. Your exercises will be reviewed throughout the course, placed in your final portfolio, and used as a place for your growth as a writer, possible development into prose or
poetry, and dialogue with me, if you choose. 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.

**Electronic Portfolio (30%): Final Portfolio:**

**The Fiction and/or Creative Non-Fiction Portfolio (30%)**

- a minimum of five polished prose pieces or chapters, or an agreed-upon length for your
  novel.
- Fiction/CNF can be a mix of flash, short-short, and long, but must present at least two
  long shorts (10-15 pages. 20 max). Must show track changes from intermediate to final
draft, following workshop reviews.
- a self-evaluative cover letter that addresses the process and revision work you have done
  for each piece and the progress you feel you have made in this section of the course.

**OR**

**The Poetry Portfolio (30%)**

- a minimum of eight poems. Must show track changes from intermediate to final draft, or
  at least two drafts-in-progress of each.
- 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.

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

- You will read an excerpt from your prose or read a poem or two.
- Discuss the impulses for the subject matter, and the influence, tradition, and
  innovation of technique.
- Discuss your writing process of this piece from rough draft to 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, online and face-to-face
discussions, peer-draft reviewing, drafting, revising, and critical thinking. Make sure to do text
messaging, phone calling, and restroom breaks before you come to class, so that you are fully present in class and avoid disruptions.

**Cell Phone/Electronic Device Policy**: Do not text message during class. Keep cell phone quiet and out of sight unless needed for accessing information pertinent to course activity. Texting and reading notifications and messages during class is rude and disruptive to the learning environment and to your ability to focus.

**Blackboard Policy**
You are responsible for checking our course on Blackboard every day. Check Announcements, for daily assignments and messages from me.

**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.
- 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?”

**Absence Policy**: It is impossible to earn an A after three 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 to your group 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. It is very difficult on the professor’s schedule to receive and comment adequately on late work, and difficult for peers as well who must make extra time to review their own peers’ late work. 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.

**Additional 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.

**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**

**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism.**

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in (be clear about consequences here).

**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 or wise. 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. Nov. 11th is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

**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. Our goal is to provide
you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated. 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.

**Grade Appeals**

Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. 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. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

**Disabilities Accommodations**

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 at (361) 825-5816.

**Statement of Academic Continuity**

In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.
**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)

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.

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**Recommended for ENGL major undergraduates**

**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.

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**Student Resources**

**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.

For the Schedule, see Blackboard Announcements for weekly updates.

Week 1
August 24th: Course introductions.
Assigning Introductory Readings and Exercises from David Starkey or, Michael Noll’s readtowritestories.com. | In-class writing exercise.

Week 2
August 30th: Discuss Readings, Responses, Exercises, Workshop Etiquette.
Sep 1st: In-class exercise. Discuss readings, do in-class exercise.

Weeks 3-7: Workshop Sessions Round I
Sep 6th: Project Proposals Due.
Assigning readings from various texts, applicable to each genre/group.
First 25 minutes: In-class exercises from online sources; group/class share and review.
50 minutes: Group Peer Reviews: Two Students Each

October 6: Wild Card Writing and Review Workshop

Weeks 8-11: Workshop Sessions Round II
Assigning readings from various texts, applicable to each genre/group.
First 25 minutes: In-class exercises from online sources; group/class share and review.
50 minutes: Group Peer Reviews: Two Students Each

November 10: Wild Card Writing and Review Workshop

Weeks 12-15: Workshop Sessions Round III
Assigning readings from various texts, applicable to each genre/group.
First 25 minutes: In-class exercises from online sources; group/class share and review.
50 minutes: Group Peer Reviews: Two Students Each

Dec 1: Wild Card Writing and Review

No Workshops: Nov 22- Nov. 23: Reading Days
Thanksgiving Holidays: November 24-25th.

Week 16
Dec 6th/ Tuesday: Last Class. Portfolio Workshop.
Dec. 13th/ Tuesday: Our Final Exam Period, 1:45-4:15. Writer’s Presentation: A Reading | Portfolios Due.