**Course Meets**

**Day:** Thursdays | 7:00-9:30 p.m. | Islander Hall 268

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**Required Texts**


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**Recommended Text**


(We will read the fourth novella, “Dirty Love,” in this collection of loosely tied novellas.)

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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, creative nonfiction, 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.

Course Requirements and Grade Distribution

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

Professionalism: 10% | Reading Responses and Exercises: 20% | Facilitation: Primary Responses: 15% | General Peer Responses: 15% | Final Portfolio and Presentation: 40%

For the Reading 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 from Serious Daring, from Winterson’s memoir, Dubus’s novella, and online texts. 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 three pieces to the whole class face to face workshop 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 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 two class periods 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 **thrice** 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 or your group 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 two polished short stories (a long one and a shorter one), 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.
• I must be able to see the “track changes.”

**The Poetry Section (20%)**

• a minimum of five poems
• any other poems you have written during this time.
• I must be able to see the “track changes” on your drafts.
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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 eight 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, 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 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.
- 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 one class absence, and very unlikely to earn a B after two absences. Understand that one class meeting per week equates to two regular one and quarter hour class meetings in a full semester.

**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

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). 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.

Academic Advising
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.

**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.

**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.

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**Student Resources**

**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, updated weekly, with more specifics.

Week 1: January 19th
Course introductions.
Assigning Introductory Fiction Readings and Pathways from Lisa Roney’s Serious Daring, and pathways in flash and micro-fiction.

Week 2: January 26th
Discuss Readings, Responses, Pathway Exercises.

Weeks 3-7: Reading and Workshop Sessions in Fiction
Assigning Fiction Readings from Lisa Roney’s text, Serious Daring, and pathways.
Also, readings from Roxanne Gay’s “Glass” and Andre Dubus III, Dirty Love.
February 23rd and March 2nd : Group Fiction Peer Reviews

Weeks 8-11: Reading and Workshop Sessions in Poetry
Assigning Poetry Readings from Lisa Roney’s text, Serious Daring, and pathways.
Supplementary readings from Tony Hoagland, Brenda Hillman, and more.
March 13-17: Spring Break, no classes. (Week Nine)
March 23rd and 27th: Group Poetry Peer Reviews

Weeks 12-15: Reading and Workshop Sessions in Creative Non-fiction
Assigning Creative Nonfiction from Serious Daring, and pathways.
Also, Jeanette Winterson’s Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?
April 20th and 27th (Last Regular Class): Group Peer Reviews for Nonfiction

Week 16
May 9th/ Tuesday: Our Final Exam Period, 7:15-9:45. Writer’s Presentation: A Reading | Portfolios Due.