**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 and have the option to submit polished pieces to literary journals.

**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% | Exercises/Pathways: 20% | Primary Responses in Formal Group Review Sessions: 10% | Responses: 20% | Final Portfolio: 30% | Final Exam: 10%

**Reading Responses and Exercises (40%)**: 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 our course print 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, I offer guiding questions and for some 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 relatively “longer” revised pieces to a formal peer reviewed 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, early drafts, and shorter versions to your group and on the Discussion Forum for less formal review.
- When you “come up” for the formal review in 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 (10%)**

- 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 in the Content Folder—Workshop Review Guidelines.

**Final Portfolio (30%) will contain:**

-- Critical Reflective Letters | Fiction and Creative Non-Fiction Section | The Poetry Section

-- Literary Journal Submissions: I will teach you how and where to research the literary markets for a suitable fit for your work, and we will work on cover letters. As a part of your final, you will be asked to show evidence of submitting your polished poems or prose pieces to at least three different places.

-- 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. See Course Content on BB for more guidelines.

**Final Exam Presentation (10%):** Digital Storytelling (i.e. a set of your poems, your short fiction or nonfiction or excerpt from one of your pieces), with a critical introduction/artist statement and graphic/visual component.

**My Course Policies**

**Professionalism: (10%)**

Your professional contribution to our community of learners requires your attendance, daily preparation, participation, and interaction.

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.

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.

**Absence Policy:** It is most likely 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.

**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 M-F, sometimes on weekends.

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.

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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.
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.

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 the F.

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. Should dropping 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. Friday, **April 5th** is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

**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](http://counseling.tamucc.edu) for more information.

For the Schedule, see Blackboard Announcements, updated weekly, with more specifics.

**Week 1: Thursday, January 17:** Course introductions and in-class writing: individual and collaborative. Discuss Jeanette Winterson’s reading from Sydney Opera House. Assigning Introductory Poetry Readings and Pathways from Lisa Roney’s *Serious Daring*, Cyrus Cassells, and Tony Hoagland.

**Weeks 2-5: Reading and Workshop Sessions in Poetry**

**Week 2: January 24:** Readings Responses, Pathway Exercises: from Roney, Cassells, and Hoagland.


**Week 4: Feb. 7:** Readings Responses, Pathway Exercises: from Roney, Cassells, and Hoagland.

**Week 5: Feb. 14:** Visual and Multimedia Poetry: Octavio Quintanilla’s *Frontextos*.

**Week 6: Feb. 21:** Group Poetry Peer Review Session
Week 7: Feb. 28: People’s Poetry Festival, Opening Reception Night with Panel of Local Poets reading, music by Shayna Ashley, poetry awards and readings from local highschool poets in the Robb and Vanessa Jackson Poetry Scholarship Award. 6:30-9:00 p.m. Del Mar Economic Development Center on Staples and Kostoryz. Find us on FB.

Friday, Feb. 29th: People’s Poetry Festival. Extra Credit! Open Mic at Graffitti’s, 8:30 p.m. Also, poetry panel schedule on Friday-Saturday at TAMUCC. Extra Credit.

Weeks 8-11: Reading and Workshop Sessions in Fiction Assigning Fiction Readings from Lisa Roney’s text, Serious Daring, and pathways.

Week 8: March 7: Responses, Pathways, Discussions: Micro and flash fiction. Minimalism. Assigning readings from Roxanne Gay’s “Glass” and Silva, Iréna Lara’s flesh to bone.

Week 9: March 11-15: Spring Break, no classes. (Week Nine)

Week 10: March 21: Discuss “Glass” and flesh to bone. Pathways and Responses.

Week 11: March 28: flesh to bone and Pathways.

Week 12: April 4: Group Fiction Peer Review Session


April 11: Discuss responses and pathways: Memoir: Winterson

April 18: Discuss literary journalism, personal essays, and op-eds: “A Ticket to the Fair,” “Women in the Fracklands,” “Girls, Monsters”; “Everything is For Sale Now.”

April 25: (Last Regular Class): Discussions and Group Peer Reviews for Nonfiction—Memoir and Personal Essay

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