Course Meets

Tues/Thur – 5:30-6:45 p.m., Island Hall 156

Required Texts and Materials

*Crafting Novels & Short Stories: Everything You Need to Know to Write Great Fiction (Creative Writing Essentials) Kindle Edition*
by Editors of Writer's Digest (Author, Editor), James Scott Bell (Foreword)

*Creative Writing: An Introduction to Poetry and Fiction*
(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. The course also advances students’ publishing experience within a community of creative writers: To this end, students will choose one genre on which to focus their craft and subject matter. Students will also choose one editorial project, such as developing a blog for their group or assisting with the publication of *The Windward Review*. Students with hybrid creative on-going projects, such as graphic narratives, memoir-verse, photojournalism, etc, are encouraged to attend this class 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.
- participate in a publication process using digital media to promote their own work and that of their peers and writing community

Course Requirements and Grade Distribution

Grades will be determined according to the following percentages for each course requirement:

- Professionalism: 10%
- Reflections: 20%
- Workshop Peer Responses: 20%
- Midterm Reflections
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 group 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 several drafts of your work to your group, and 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 three shorter poems, or more if they’re super short.
• In the advanced piece, 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 three days before your work is to be considered. Your team scheduler will have sign-ups for each round.

Workshop Peer Responses (20%):

• You must respond in writing to all works submitted to your group 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.
*Primary Responses: 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 in your group, early in each round, 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. Or, you may post in your forum before the respective workshop.

Reflections: (20%): Every week you will read from the assigned text for your genre, or an assigned online article that is imminently relevant to your group’s work. You will need to take notes on ideas and techniques you are learning for your own work. Every other week, you will write a 500-word reflection summarizing the reading and how you are integrating the techniques into your own writing—what is your new focus and emphasis, what are you learning and trying to improve upon? How are the reviews and small group workshops helping? Half-way through the semester, I will ask you for a reassessment of your project and revision plans. Your reflections will be reviewed throughout the course, and used as a place for your growth as a writer, possible development into prose or poetry, and dialogue with me, if you choose. 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.

Midterm Reflections and Revised Goals—a Reassessment (10%):
• 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.
• a reassessment of your goals and a revised personal writing schedule
• An advanced-draft of a chapter or story, or three poems (you’ll need to scan the draft with my comments, and at least two of the most helpful peer reviews for each piece.
• Your peer reviews on your peers’ work.

Final Portfolio (30%):

The Chapbook OR Submissions to Journals

• a minimum of three substantial polished prose pieces or chapters, or an agreed-upon length for your novel, memoir, short fiction, personal essays, or book project, with a query letter.
• 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 per story).
• Poetry chapbook must be a minimum of 28 pages: includes the table of contents, a dedication page, introduction page, etc.
• Must submit 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.
• As evidence of your progress and growth as critical writer and reader, you must submit peer comments on your work for each round, and your own primary responses.
• Must submit a cover letter with evidence of submission to 10 journals (if submitting to journals).

Multimedia Presentation: A Reading (10%): Final Exam

8-minute presentation from any original work or combination of work done in the course, focused on a theme(s). Must include Artist's Statement:

1. synopsis--what do you explore, illustrate, meditate on, challenge, resist, delight in, invite the reader to explore?
2. the background influences--the writing exercise, musing, observation, event, person, thought, feeling that inspired the poem (I encourage you to include photos or images, excerpts from the work or figure of inspiration)
3. the techniques--specific poetic or prose devices and elements you focused on.

Medium: A visual, artistic, digital presence: Powerpoint, Blog, YouTube, Tumblr, PDF, Website

My Course Policies

Attendance/Professionalism: (10%)  
Your professional conduct is an urgent part of what will help you and our community of writers in this course successful. The nature of this course is very different from traditional courses. The work in here requires a high degree of self-initiative and independence as well as collaboration and flexibility. I will be assigning writing exercises at the beginning of most classes, and I will assign writing prompts as they
emerge from the creative writing network (i.e. contemporary blogs and online stories/interviews/craft articles hot off the press). I will always give you enough time to read ahead of class or we will read together in class. My goal is to bring you fresh, contemporary reading that is most relevant to the techniques you are working on in any given week. 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. Download BB app, it’s free! Then turn on notifications; you’ll be notified whenever I update an assignment or announce an event, reading, bad weather day, etc.

**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, Dr. Carstensen, and offer your signature.
- Know that an email to your professor is not a text message to your buddy. Address your concern or question after you’ve thoroughly read an announcement on BB and the instructions. Be respectful, specific, and brief. Your professors receive hundreds of emails weekly. Respect everyone’s time. If there’s a problem, offer a solution:
  - (i.e. Dear Dr. Carstensen, “I cannot meet in class on Thursday, and unfortunately will miss discussion. However, I have read the chapter and typed out a page of notes—here is the attachment. I plan to use the author’s technique of dialogue in my travel narrative piece by integrating a conversation at the restaurant along the Thames.” (Problem, solution). If it’s a complex situation, make an appointment to see your professor. Need help or extra feedback on a draft of your work? Make an appointment to meet during my office hours, and email me to confirm the date and time.
- 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 or six 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.
**Extra Credit:** I encourage you to attend literary events, performances, and guest-speaking engagements within and around the campus community. These opportunities are often integral to what you are learning in the classrooms, through course curricula, and through your life experiences. Your peers, professors, and campus community work very hard to coordinate these events and bring these opportunities to you.

Because I appreciate how integral these events are to your college learning experience, I award extra credit for attending literary, creative, and/or performance-based events, in full, and typing at least a one-page reflection for each one. 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. Attending two events and writing reflections for each one may replace one class absence. Discuss with me in advance to make this arrangement. You may make up to two class absences with extra credits (a total of four extra credits).

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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.

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**Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Policies**

**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.
**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.

**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 your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. 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. Friday, Nov. 8 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

**Grade Appeals**
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals, 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.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals. These documents are accessible online at: http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html.

**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.

**Statement of Civility (can be in place of classroom/professional behavior)**
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. 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.
**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 ( ).

**Academic Honesty/Plagiarism**

**Definition:** In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. Plagiarism is a violation academic expectations, but it is sometimes difficult to understand what plagiarism actually is. Often, students 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.
- Turning in a researched project without citing sources in an appropriate documentation style.

When you are confused about citation of quotes or ideas, please visit the Writing Center or me to get help. Information on MLA documentation rules and APA documentation rules is available at Purdue University’s OWL: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/), and from our local Writing Center at CASA.

**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.

**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.

**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 27 Course introductions. In-Class Writing. Bring your journal!
Assigning Introductory Readings and Exercises from Michael Noll’s readtowritestories.com.
August 29: Continue Introductions and In-Class Sharing.

Week 2 & 3
Sep 3- Sep 5: Discuss Readings, Responses, Exercises, Workshop Etiquette.
Sep 10/Sep 12: Project Proposals Due | Groups Forming |

Weeks 4-8: Workshop Sessions Round I
Assigning readings from various texts, applicable to each genre/group.
25 minutes: In-class exercises from online sources; group/class share and review.
50 minutes: Group Peer Reviews: Two Students Each

Sep. 17: Extra Credit: Windward Review Reception: Featured Readings and Open Mic, from 6-8:30 p.m. in University Center Anchor Ballroom

September 26: Revision Work Online (Dr. Carstensen out of town, presenting at TACWT, Houston)

October 1-3: Major Group Peer Review with Primary Responses
October 10-11: Midterm Reflections and Revised Goals Due

Weeks 9-13: Workshop Sessions Round II
Assigning readings from various texts, applicable to each genre/group.
25 minutes: In-class exercises from online sources; group/class share and review.
50 minutes: Group Peer Reviews: Two Students Each
November 14: Wild Card Writing and Review Workshop

Weeks 13-16: Reflections and Revisions
Assigning readings from various texts, applicable to each genre/group.
First 25 minutes: In-class exercises from online sources; group/class share and review. Alternate with editorial projects.
50 minutes: Group Peer Reviews: Two Students Each

Nov 27, Weds: Reading Day
November 28-29: Thanksgiving Holidays
Dec 4, Tuesday: Last Class Day! Begin Final Exam: Multimedia Presentations. (10% of Course Grade)
Dec 5: Reading Day, No Classes.

Week 16
Dec. 10th/ Tuesday: Our Final Exam Period, 4:30-7:00. Writer’s Presentation: A Reading | Final Projects Due