

English 212 – Introduction to Creative Writing fall 2013

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Introduction to Creative Writing

During this course you will be able to detect and tune to your inner voice, the one you had before you could even talk. You will listen and recognize the words, the phrasing, the "inner-grammar", your personal way of expression, and your singular style and rhythm.

This is a round-table course, based on intensive class discussion and group work, therefore you are an active part and will be required to actively participate and contribute. "Passive" participation – being present, but not engaging in the discussions – will result in a lower class contributions/participation grade.

The process of identifying your inner voice will be by cultivating your senses, learning to observe, listening to yourself and to others, searching other voices in libraries and on-line, preparing varied exercises, reading and analyzing texts, and providing constant feed-back for your fellow students' writings.

You will experience different techniques of narration, and diverse forms of writing: you will distinguish between biography, autobiography, short story, novel, poetry, fiction and non-fiction. You will write about personal and impersonal happenings, about thoughts and feelings, and you will be required to relate imaginary and real experiences in a clear way.

The purpose of the course is to help you express yourself with no inhibitions and prejudices, without fear of criticism, self-consciousness, lack of confidence, or of training.

The message is: every one of us has a story to tell and the tools to relate it. Some of the writing assignments are: automatic writing, keeping journals, adopting different styles, observing, describing and retelling real and imaginary stories.

You will be required to work on a short story or a work of non-fiction that you will eventually develop as a final essay. There will be other assignments relating to reading, researching on line and in the library and mainly writing and re-writing. Assignments will be

submitted to the course instructor and receive feedback. Late assignments are not accepted or, will not receive full credit – but don't expect late assignments without a penalty. Missing, incomplete, or late un-graded assignments will result in a lowering of the “written assignments” part of your grade.

The preliminary plan for assignments is as follows:

- A. A topic you will choose at the beginning of the semester. It will be an issue you are involved with and are willing to pursue in depth. There will be space for different subjects that interest you.
- B. You will be required to write essays about articles, novels, short stories, poems and films we will tackle in class.
- C. There will be a constant exchange of tasks amongst you and your fellow students: constructive criticism on each paper read in class.
- D. You will be asked to keep a journal of your reading as well as about different interactions that will take place in class, e.g. the way we judge people by unimportant details like dress or way of speech. We will observe the way we let our ISJ (Interior Supreme Judge) intervene with our writings, as well as with our different interactions and relationships.
- E. There will be one assignment at least about the way you view your future, as well as the world's future.
- F. Some of the assignments will be presented in front of the class; hence presentation. You will talk in your turn about one or several chosen subjects. The emphasis is on talking and debating, not reading notes. You are more than welcome to use visuals and devise writing exercises for your fellow-students.
- G. A good deal of the assignments will be determined by your choice and inclinations. We could have as many as 5 different assignments simultaneously determined by you and your fellow students' choices. The main one will be a paper you will work on during the entire semester, with the help of others in class, and this will be your final creative writing assignment.

Purposes

1. Get you in touch with your creativity.

2. Enhance your proficiency in writing, reading and discussing topics in class.
3. Increase your self-confidence in writing and in making speeches in class.
4. Enrich your vocabulary and fluency in writing and in talking.
5. Expose you to different forms of literature as well as to varied styles.
6. Expand your tolerance to different ideas and cultures.
7. Understand that each one of us has an original and unique voice that should be cultivated so that we can express our own ideas, thoughts and feelings as clearly as possible.
8. Learn to differentiate between an individual way of thinking and fashions, or group's way of thinking.

Expectations

You are expected to show up to every class, and on time. Missing lessons and lateness will interfere with learning and hence affect your grade. Since there is a large emphasis on teamwork you will be required not to disrupt your fellow student's creativity and to be considerate. No ringing phones, no text messaging and no eating during class. All assignments will be presented in print.

Your own ideas and individual input will be valued more than borrowing and quoting.

Grading

1. Contribution in class	20%
2. Attendance.....	15%
3. Journals.....	10%
3. Presentations in class.....	15%
4. Written assignments	20%
5. Final story\poems or compilation	20%

Recommended Text

What If? Anne Bernays and Pamela Painter

Additional readings to be assigned.

Schedule *with possible modifications according to student topics researches*

Week I

Tuesday August 27

Introduction

Thursday August 29

Writing and compassion

Week II

Tuesday September 3

Taming your ISJ

Thursday September 5

Journals and privacy

Week III

Tuesday September 10

using your senses

Thursday September 12

The Art of being Original

Week IV

Tuesday September 17

Genre and gender

Thursday September 19

Eavesdropping and observing

Week V

Tuesday September 24

Poetic license

Thursday September 26

on being curious

Week VI

Tuesday October 1

Freedom and writing

Thursday October 3

midterm due

Week VII

Tuesday October 8

stranger than fiction

Thursday October 10

divorcing your comfort zone

Week VII

Tuesday October 15

fall recess

Thursday October 17

voicing pain

Week VIII

Tuesday October 22

nurturing creativity

Thursday October 24

group writing

Week IX

Tuesday October 29

screenplays

Thursday October 30

controlling your characters

Week X

Tuesday November 5	reinventing your story
Thursday November 7	letting go of judgment
Week XI	
Tuesday November 12	meditations on writing
Thursday November 14	writing and morals
Week XII	
Tuesday November 19	imitation as form of learning
Thursday November 21	the future of books
Week XIII	
Tuesday November 26	Thanksgiving recess
Thursday November 28	Thanksgivings recess
Week XIV	
Tuesday December 3	affirmations
Thursday December 5	affirmations and conclusions

Notes

- 1) You can expect to dedicate 5-7 hours per week outside of class, reading and preparing assignments.
- 2) Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Elaine Mara, assistant director of Learning Services for academic and disability support at 1507 Main Street, or by calling 610-861-1510. Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.
- 3) The Writing Center is located in a building that is not accessible to persons with mobility impairments. If you need the services of the Writing Center, please call 610-861-1392.
- 4) Do not hesitate to address me with any kind of problem you have during class or after.
- 5) This syllabus is subject to change.