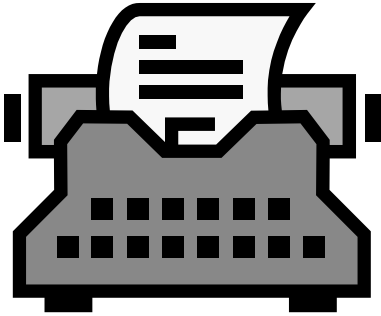


English 212
Introduction to Creative Writing
Syllabus
Fall 2015
Online



Moravian College Comenius Center
Instructor: Dr. Ethan Joella, PhD
Phone: (610) 653-0342
Office Location/Hours: Virtual; by appt
E-mail: joellae@moravian.edu

Texts

Gwynn, R.S., ed. *Fiction: A Pocket Anthology*. New York: Pearson-Longman, 2012.

Goldberg, Natalie. *Writing Down the Bones*.

Kitchen, Judith and Mary Paumier Jones, eds. *In Short: A Collection of Brief Creative Nonfiction*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1996.

Sellers, Heather. *The Practice of Creative Writing: A Guide for Students, 2nd edition*. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012.

Course Description

Guided practice in poetry and fiction. Prerequisites: Writing 100 or equivalent, and permission of instructor.

This is a course designed to offer practical skills in various kinds of imaginative writing. This course will function as a survey course that addresses the prose genres--fiction (short stories and a children's book) and creative nonfiction (memoir, essays)--as well as a brief overview of writing poetry.

Objectives

- The student will submit original work in personal essay (creative nonfiction), fiction, and poetry.
- The student will adopt a seriousness about writing from the imagination.
- The student will make common cause with fellow writers, both in class discussions/workshops and by seeking out professional literary resources.
- The student will adopt a serious approach to cultural studies through diverse readings in both texts.
- The student will achieve an awareness of how the arts and humanities address the basic question of life, particularly through the exploration of theme in written commentaries and in discussion forums.
- The student will develop an understanding of the role of artists and thinkers in expressing human potential and cultural values and images.

Techniques and Use of Blackboard

This class is entirely online, and the class is accessed at blackboard.moravian.edu. The entire class is set up in Blackboard. Content comes from reading, online lectures, and discussions on the Discussion Board. Each week, you will have a discussion question and at least one assignment.

Attendance

You are required to log into this class at least three times per week to make sure you are seeing new announcements and keeping up with the weekly discussions.

Requirements

- You are required to log in to the class at least three times a week. You must complete all discussions each week (as well as respond to **TWO** posts from your classmates or instructor) as well as all assignments and readings.
- You will write one essay (a work of creative nonfiction), a children's book, several short pieces, a short story, and two poems (memory poem and a fragment poem). You will write several commentaries, several short assignments, and an additional creative work. At the end of the course, you will be required to turn in a final portfolio with revised/polished versions of some of the creative pieces you did in this course as well as one new piece.

- You are required to participate (10% participation grade).
- You are required to turn in all papers and assignments on time. This is not a self-paced course, so it is imperative that you hold yourself to deadlines.
- When applicable, you must use MLA citation to document your source(s).

Late Semester Remorse

The time to come to class is now. The time to do all your assignments thoughtfully and carefully is now. Ask questions now. Start out doing well early in the semester. Start out caring about your grade from day one. If you do not listen to my advice, please do not come to me halfway through the semester or when there are three classes left and ask what you can do to pass. You will already know the answer. There is no way to undo weeks of poor effort and thoughtlessness, so accept the results of whatever actions you choose. You are the author of your own life story. Read this weekly.

Grading

To pass this course, you must satisfactorily meet all requirements. Here is the breakdown of points:

Participation (in class discussions)	10
Small projects/short pieces, common short story, Twitter piece	5
Essay	10
Children’s Book (drafts and final project)	10
Short Story	10
Workshop Involvement	5
Poem #1	5
Poem #2	5
Workshop Short Story Commentary:	5
“MRI” Short Commentary/ “The Lottery” Short Commentary”	5
Marketing Ideas on the Web Assignment (2 parts)	10
Final Portfolio (includes revisions and at least one new piece):	20
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Total Points:	100

Grading Judgment

It is within the purview of the instructor to apply qualitative judgment in determining grades for an assignment or for a course.

Evaluation Criteria for Creative Writing Pieces

Borrowed from Roanoke-Chowan Community College
English Department Creative Writing Syllabus

5 (A) Excellent

Content/writing demonstrates literary merit; publishable; shows evidence of careful revision; no grammar, spelling, or typographical errors. Reader is fully engaged. The piece is creative.

4 (B) Good

Content/writing demonstrates literary merit; close to being at a publishable level, but still needs some minor revisions; contains no grammar or spelling errors, or typographical errors.

3 (C) Average

Content/writing fulfills the requirements of the assignment, but needs major revision to be publishable; contains a few grammar, spelling, or typographical errors.

2 (D) Poor

Content/writing does not meet the requirements of the assignment; contains several grammar, spelling, or typographical errors.

1 (F) Inadequate

Content/writing shows lack of understanding of the assignment; may contain many grammar, spelling, or grammatical errors.

Format for Papers

The length of the stories and essays you write will be dictated by each piece.

Your short fiction and essays (draft and final copy) should be double spaced. Use one-inch margins and 12 pt. Times New Roman font. You must number all pages except the first page.

In the upper right hand corner place your name with the notation Copyright 2015. This is all you need to do to protect your work from unlicensed use. Center your title on line 13, and begin on line 15.

Written commentaries should begin with a single spaced quotation from the story or essay. Double space the rest, and follow the guidelines I have provided for you. These should be at least 500 words.

Reminder from the English Department: *In preparation for creating an English Major Portfolio in your senior capstone seminar, please save both digital and hard copies of your work for this class, including drafts with peer and instructor comments.*

Copyrights

Only the copyright holder has the right to make copies of books, articles, cases, software, and other copyrighted material. Anyone else (you, the reader) must have the copyright holder's permission to make copies unless the item being copied falls under the fair use proviso or is a work in the public domain. You must get permission from the copyright holder to make any copies legally of any copyrighted material.

Workshop

Workshop is an invaluable forum for getting constructive feedback, and we will be having a workshop online after you write your short story. Each student will be assigned another student for whom he/she will write a detailed commentary based on that student's short story. In this way, you will all lead the workshop for one story, and then the rest of the class will respond with their thoughts. Your full participation in this process is crucial.

Technical Concerns

I cannot assume responsibility for computer or network technical problems. If you are experiencing problems in this area, please make alternate arrangements for completing the course work while your computer issues are being resolved. Deadlines still must be adhered to. No exceptions. Additionally, be sure to save an electronic copy and a printed copy of all work you submit in case I do not receive it. For your own protection, do not delete your file until you have received a grade for it.

Academic Honesty

This course abides by the policy on academic honesty set forth in the College's Student Handbook for academic year 2012-13. All work submitted must be your own. All outside sources must be documented. Refer to the college's handbook for a full explanation regarding academic dishonesty and read the Hodges' book for a full explanation of plagiarism.

Office Conferences

I am happy to help you with any questions you may have or to review early drafts of an assignment if time permits. Please contact me via email at

joellae@moravian.edu or via phone at 610.653.0342 to schedule a live chat, a phone call, or an in-person meeting at Moravian.

e2Campus

In the event of an emergency the system called e2Campus allows Moravian College to send text messages to the cell phones of registered members of the campus community with information about what is happening and/or what precautions should be taken. Up to two cell phone numbers and two e-mail addresses per user may be registered. This service is an integral part of the College's emergency response system. If you are not already registered on the system, please do so as soon as possible. To register for e2Campus visit <http://intranet.moravian.edu/e2campus/index.asp> from a computer on Moravian's campus.

Class Cancellations

This class will not be cancelled due to its online nature. Should a rare occasion arise where I am unable to check into Blackboard for more than one day, I will let you know via email and via an announcement in Blackboard.

Syllabus Status

This syllabus and the course contents are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Generally changes will be finalized only after discussion of the change with students in the class.

Workload

Students can expect to work at least four hours on average outside of class in reading, preparation, and project activities for each hour of class time.

Disabilities

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Ms. Elaine Mara, Assistant Director of Academic & Disability Support, located on the first floor of Monocacy Hall (extension 1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic & Disability Support office.

Schedule (All readings and assignments are due by the date listed in the chart below; schedule is subject to change)

	Assignments	Must be completed
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		by... <i>Completion dates are normally on a Sunday, and the deadline is always 11:00 pm</i>
Week 1	Introduction to course and syllabus; introduction of selves on discussion board; Read Sellers p. 1-47 ; Read Goldberg: Introduction and Beginner’s Mind, Pen, and Paper Complete Assignment #1 (The Past is a Foreign Country prompt) and submit via dropbox under <i>Assignments</i> . <i>All assignment descriptions are listed at the end of the syllabus and in the Assignments link in Blackboard.</i>	September 6
Week 2	Introduction to Creative Nonfiction; Read Sellers: “The Things I’ve Lost”; “Swerve”; Read Kitchen and Jones: “Around the Corner,” “MRI,” “Hands,” “Locker Room Talk,” “Falling Stars,” and “Ice Cream” Complete DF 1 and Assignment #2 “MRI” Commentary	September 13
Week 3	Creative Nonfiction; Read “Rain” in Kitchen and Jones and “Fly Fishing for Doctors” at http://parkrose.orvsd.org/mod/resource/view.php?id=18223 ; Sellers: ENERGY p. 172-195 Read Goldberg: “First Thoughts,” “Writing as Practice” and “Writing is not a McDonald’s Hamburger” Read Kitchen and Jones: “Borrowed Time” and “Loose Ends” Complete DF 2(Essay Commentary)	September 20
Week 4	Style and CNF Read Goldberg “The Power of Detail,” “Original Detail,” and “Baking a Cake” Read Sellers IMAGES p. 117-140; Complete DF 3 (tokens of loss) and Work on Assignment #3 (Creative Essay due October 4)	September 27
Week 5	Complete DF 4 Assignment #3 Creative Essay	October 4
Week 6	Introduction to Fiction: Online notes on Elements of a Short Story; Read Goldberg “Don’t Tell But Show,” “Be Specific,” and	October 14 (extra days due to fall

	<p>“Living Twice” Read Gwynn: Introduction to the short story p. 1-20; “Girl,” and “Wants”; Read Sellers: “Bird-watching at Night”</p> <p>Complete DF 5 (children’s book discussion) and Assignment #4: Twitter piece</p>	break)
Week 7	<p>Fiction: Read Sellers: INSIGHT p. 304-322, “Cathedral”; Read Gwynn: “Araby,” “The Red Convertible,” “The Lottery” Complete DF 6 (Lottery commentary) Work on Children’s book (Remember that the children’s book must be able to be submitted electronically)</p>	October 18
Week 8	<p>Fiction: Read Goldberg: “Trust Yourself,” “The Samurai,” and “Rereading and Rewriting” Complete DF 7 (Common Short Story) And Assignment #5 Children’s Book, presented in separate online forum and submitted to dropbox</p>	October 25
Week 9	<p>Fiction: Read Gwynn: “Everyday Use,” “Reunion,” “Paul’s Case,” Complete DF 8 and work on Assignment #7 Short Story</p>	November 1
Week 10	<p>Fiction: Read Sellers “How to Become a Writer” and “White Angel” Read Goldberg: “Obsessions,” “Don’t Marry the Fly” and “Syntax” Complete DF 9 And Assignment #6 Marketing Ideas on the Web</p>	November 8
Week 11	<p>Fiction: Short Story Workshop Assignment #7 (final draft of short story) is due, workshop online. Keep an eye on announcements. You will have a set date by when you need to post your story to the discussion board so your classmates can read it in time for the workshop that takes place.</p>	November 15
Week 12	<p>Introduction to Poetry: Read Sellers p. 405-452 Sellers: “We Real Cool,” “The River,” “Repairing the House,” “First Poem for You,” “Marriage,” “Personal” Complete DF 10 (comparison of Whitman-Kirschner poems)</p>	November 22
Week 13	<p>Poetry: Read and discuss poetry packet (emailed to you) Complete DF 11 (iPoem)</p>	November 29

Week 14	Poetry: Poetry packet finish; Read Goldberg; “We Are Not the Poem,” “Use Loneliness,” “I Don’t Want to Die,” “Epilogue,” Complete DF 12 (prose poem exercise)	December 6
Week 15	Poetry and Wrapping Up: Complete Assignment #8 (two poems—memory poem and fragments poem) Complete DF 13 (writing an artist’s statement)	December 11*
Final Exam	Final Portfolio due	Tuesday, December 15, 2015*

*note: not a Sunday due date

Assignment Guidelines

Assignment #1: The Past is a Foreign Country Initial Writing Exercise

Spend some time thinking and writing a short essay or story that begins with this first line:

The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there.

Incidentally, this is the first line of *The Go-Between* by L.P. Hartley. This piece should be at least 250 words. Be sure to go over it carefully before submitting so that it is polished, well-organized, and absolutely original. Steer away from anything that feels clichéd or expected. Good luck!

Assignment #2: “MRI” Commentary (Short Essay Commentary)

Read “MRI” by Jim DeCamp. How does DeCamp use dialogue and humor in this essay? Is it effective? Be specific and complete. This assignment should be 250-500 words.

Assignment #3: The Essay

Submit one essay. It should be about 2-3 pages, and you have a choice of topics: about a personal experience, or about some aspect of the natural world...or anything else that's nonfiction. As in the examples you've read, this essay should be as engaging and original as a story. Remember to be free and creative with this; avoid clichés and disjointed paragraphs, and do not let it sound like something you did in an English 101 class. Be sure to focus on a specific moment or a piece of the puzzle rather than a too-big picture that's too overwhelming to describe. Instead of trying to write down the whole forest, focus on one leaf. I will read and mark them for clarity, grammar and technique, and then return them to you. You will revise and edit, and submit a final copy in your portfolio at the end of the semester.

Assignment #4: Twitter Piece

In Twitter, you are only permitted to use 140 characters or fewer. For the purposes of this assignment, you are to create a short-short story (also known as a piece of micro fiction) in 140 characters or less. You should redo this several times so that the final draft you submit is well-edited and highly charged. It should feel complete and not unfinished. Take your time with this one and make it original and engaging.

Assignment #5: Illustrated Children's Book

You are to prepare a 7-8 page illustrated children's book. These illustrations may be hand drawn or actual selections from magazines, the internet, or photographs. The book should have at least 500 words spread out over the 7-8 pages. You are not being graded on artistic ability but rather on your ability to utilize a tight, simple, effective plot. The book's presentation must also be engaging. You will submit these and present them online.

Short Story Commentary—for use with workshop critiques

Choose one story you have read on which to write a commentary using the following guidelines.

Open by typing, single spaced, a passage from the story which you think best exemplifies the author's theme. The rest of the commentary should be double-spaced, 500 words. Don't forget your thesis statement!

1. Explore how the passage you chose reveals the author's intentions. Examine the substance or play of ideas within the piece. What truths is the author attempting to illuminate? Are these ideas cliché? Are they fresh and original?

2. Is this a character-driven piece? If so, are the characters round or flat (E.M. Forster's categorization--"The test of a round character is whether it is capable of surprising in a convincing way. If it never surprises, it is flat")?
 3. Are the people in this story placed within and in conflict with a fully developed setting? If characters are rendered in the abstract, without a setting, with what has the author chosen to replace this important fictional element?
 4. Comment on the language. Is there an interesting use of figurative language (metaphor, simile, imagery)?
 5. Is this a plot-driven piece? Does the story have a story? If not, with what has the author replaced plot?
 6. Comment on the point of view (first person, third person, etc.).
 7. Comment on the dialogue. Is it realistic, forced, effective? How does it contribute to the story (pacing, characterization, establish setting, etc.)?
 8. How satisfying is the ending?
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Assignment #6: Marketing Ideas on the Web, Parts I and II

Part I: Go to [Writer's Digest](#), [Writer's Resource](#), [Fiction Addiction.NET](#), or another website of your own choosing and find a contest to which it would be appropriate to submit your story. On a typed page, provide the URL of the contest and explain why you think this contest would be appropriate. What are the contest's policies? Whom have they published? Why would this be a good match for your story, and what opportunities/rewards would it present to you?

Part II(more involved): Short Story Market Bibliography

Almost as important as writing the story is finding a place to publish it. There are countless places to publish short stories—ranging from cream of the crop markets like *The New Yorker* to literary journals such as *The Iowa Review* to online journals such as *The Absinthe Literary Review*.

For this assignment, you are to research short story markets and put together a list of EIGHT markets where one could submit a short story. Each of your eight entries should follow this format:

Name of Journal:
Publishes this type of story:
Payment (if any):
Submission guidelines:
Address:
Contact Person (if known):
Special Instructions:

EXAMPLE ENTRY:

Name of Journal: *Been There Literary Journal*
Publishes this type of story: They publish experimental fiction and flash fiction. They do not want to see “typical” stories that fail to surprise and impact the reader.
Payment (if any): \$0.25 a page
Submission guidelines: Send complete story to the address below.
Address: 13 Liberty Avenue New York, NY 10020
Contact Person: Marta Jazz, Submissions Editor
Special Instructions: They only accept submissions from January-May.

We will compile all of these entries so each one of you will have an extensive bibliography of journals where you can submit your short story.

Assignment #7: Short Story

Write your own short story and then submit it to the discussion board. Your classmates will read and critique this for our workshop at online. Remember to consider all the elements of a short story before submitting. You are very free with this assignment, and I encourage originality. Length should be between 3-5 pages (750-1250 words--more is fine; less is not).

A good starting point for a short story is to create a character you really care about and make him or her want something. In essence, that is what the majority of stories or movies are about: wanting something. But include lots of conflict so the characters’ obtaining that something is never easy. Conflict makes a story move...and makes it extremely interesting. (How boring would it be if a character, Frank, wanted a hamburger and he walked to the burger joint and bought one--the end! Not too lively, eh?) Then your story should always confront the conflict and have conflict resolution. Your character may not get what he or she wants, but the issue at least needs to be confronted and the story needs to feel whole.

Final Portfolio

This is your final exam in this course.

The final portfolio must include REVISED copies of your essay, short story, and poetry...**plus** one more substantial creative work--either another short story or another creative non-fiction essay. You do not need to include commentaries in your final portfolio. Your portfolio should amount to 15-20 polished, well-edited pages of creative work.