

Intro to Creative Writing

CRW 3362 | Spring
2020

The University of Texas at El Paso
MW 10:30 – 11:50 am | CRBL C204

Instructor: Aldo Amparán
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Office Hours: By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

To write, a writer must first be a reader and learn to read like a writer. Focusing on poetry and fiction, this course will help you learn the basic elements and essential techniques that inform your chosen genre in Creative Writing. This will be achieved through close examination of different examples for each genre, including poetry, flash fiction, and short stories. You will also be prompted short creative activities both in class and as homework assignments.

By the end of this course, you will recognize literary devices and techniques in poetry and fiction and be able to apply them to your own work. You will complete four works (two poems, one piece of flash fiction, and one short story) and be able to provide professional criticism for the work of fellow writers.

REQUIRED TEXTS

All the readings required for this course will be available through blackboard. Portable devices to read the material are allowed.

GRADING SCALE

A	100-90pt
B	89-80pt
C	79-70pt
D	69-60pt
F	59pt and below.
W	It's your responsibility to officially drop from this course if you feel you won't be successful in it, though you can ask me at any time about your current progress. If you do not officially drop but you stop attending, you will receive an F for the course, as I will not drop the course for you.

GRADING POLICIES AND REQUIREMENTS

10pt	Class Participation
10pt	Writing Activities
10pt	Reading Attendance
20pt	Poetry Workshop
20pt	Fiction Workshop
30pt	Final Portfolio

ASSIGNMENTS

Writing Activities

Creative Responses: I will be assigning prompted creative writing activities designed to get you thinking about form and craft. These activities are meant to be generative, as beginnings and ways to process your poetic or fictional learning. They can be used to inspire your more formal poem or short story drafts. These are to be submitted by 11:00am of the due date (refer to this syllabus).

In Class Assignments: In addition—or as extension—to your homework activities, I will be giving you short creative exercises during class to help familiarize yourself with writing techniques and find inspiration toward your main workshop pieces.

Reading Attendance

It is required that you attend at least one literary event by the end of the semester. I will announce possible readings you may attend to complete this requirement.

Poem and Fiction Workshops

In this course, we examine craft through reading and writing work that aspires to be art. Genre work (horror, fantasy, science fiction, etc.) is discouraged, unless the work seeks to transcend confines and tropes created by genre. Always aspire towards freshness in language and originality of images.

You will submit **two poem** for workshop the **week before** your poetry workshop is due (see Syllabus) through the appropriate Discussion Board on Blackboard. Poems should be **single-spaced** (unless the poem requires otherwise), in a **standard** font like Garamond or Palatino (12pt). Your poems

should have a title and include your name, course name, date and assignment name in the upper left corner of the page. For example:

Jane Doe
CRW 3362
08/20/19
Poem 1

You will also submit **one short story** (3-8 pages) via Blackboard the week before your fiction workshop is due. Stories should be **double-spaced** & follow the above formatting instructions.

During workshop, it is important to take your role as a literary critic with seriousness and sensitivity. Read your classmates' work carefully beforehand in order to make constructive comments to help them express their words and ideas into a compelling aesthetic. Make careful notes on the poem or short story and be vocal during workshop. There is always something to critique. It is unacceptable to tell a fellow writer that you like everything about his/her poem, as this will be unhelpful to your peers at the time of revision. Coming to class not having read your peers' work will significantly affect your grade.

Final Portfolio

Great writing is about revision. We workshop your creative work so you can learn to recognize the elements of fiction and poetry that work best fulfilling your

intention as a writer, and the ones that need improvement to achieve that.

As your final, you will submit a final portfolio made up of revised drafts of your three workshop submissions and a short essay contrasting your own work with one or more of the readings from class.

ATTENDANCE

You are allowed two absences for any reason. Each absence above that allotment will lower your final grade by a letter for *each* absence unless you contact me beforehand. Tardies above the allowance will lower your final grade by half a letter grade. More than six absences will automatically fail you the course.

If, during your absence, you miss your scheduled workshop, you will not be allowed to reschedule (unless you inform me beforehand and find someone willing to trade their spot with yours). When you are absent, it is *your* responsibility to find out the work that you've missed, including any activities, homework assignments or workshop schedules.

LATE WORK

I do not accept late work. In the case of a serious and compelling emergency, if you give me advance notice, I can make some accommodations for make-up work.

BLACKBOARD AND E-MAIL POLICY

I may send homework updates and important announcements through email and Blackboard.

Blackboard will be a constant tool for the class, as you will be submitting most of the assignments by this means.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

By enrolling in this course, you join a community requiring intellectual integrity. Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty demonstrate a disrespect of your community and will not be tolerated. Penalties for cheating and plagiarism range from a 0 or F on a particular assignment, through an F for the course and the risk of expulsion. Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) copying someone else's creative or academic work, claiming credit for someone else's creative or academic work, using unapproved notes during exams, and not properly citing others' work. Please see the university catalog for details.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

I will make reasonable accommodations for students who need them. If you have a verified need for an academic accommodation or materials in alternate media (i.e.: Braille, large print, electronic text, etc.) per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, please contact the Center for Accommodations & Support within the first two weeks of class:

<http://sa.utep.edu/cass/>

Phone:(915)747-5148

Union Building East Room

106/cass@utep.edu

This syllabus is subject to the instructor's discretion according to the needs of this class, including the schedule below. You

will be notified, however, of any changes prior to their taking effect.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Wednesday, January 22: Introduction

Icebreaker, Syllabus, Course Introduction.

Due Monday by 8:00am on Blackboard: Creative Response 1 prompted in class.

Monday, January 27: Imagery

Discuss: *Sasha Pimentel's "Kastanyas"*, *Dorianne Laux's "The Last Days of Pompeii"*, *Ocean Vuong's "Notebook Fragments"*, *Tracy K. Smith's "I Don't Miss It"*.

Wednesday, January 29: Mechanic Form

Discuss: *William Shakespeare's "Sonnet 130"*, *Terrence Hayes' "American Sonnet for My Past and Future Assassin"*, *Elizabeth Bishop's "One Art"*, *Nicole Sealey's "Candelabra with Heads"*.

Due Monday by 8:00am: Creative Response 2 prompted in class.

Monday, February 3: Language & Rhythm

Discuss: *Gwendolyn Brooks' "We Real Cool"*, *Sylvia Plath's "Lady Lazarus"*, *sam sax's "LISP"*, *Danez Smith's "broke n rice"*.

Wednesday February 5: Organic Form

Franny Choi's "Chi", *Jericho Brown's "Host" & "Tin Man"*.

Due Monday by 8:00am: Creative Response 3 prompted in class.

Monday February 10: Simile & Metaphor

Discuss: *Sharon Olds' "Feared Drowned"*, *Anne Sexton's "For My Lover Returning to His Wife"*, *Susan Woods' "If Grief Were a Bird"*.

Wednesday February 12: Masks

Discuss: *Eduardo C. Corral's "Border Patrol Agent"*, *Patricia Smith's "Skinhead" & excerpts from "Sagas of the Accidental Saint" (to be read in class).*

Due Monday by 8:00am: Creative Response 4 prompted in class.

Monday February 17: Punctum & Duende

Discuss: *Ocean Vuong's "Ode to Masturbation"*, *Ada Limon's "The Millionth Dream of Your Return"*, *Natalie Scenters-Zapico's "At a Party I Tell a Story & Ask:"*

Wednesday February 19: Workshop

1. _____ 2. _____
3. _____ 4. _____
5. _____ 6. _____

Due Monday by 8:00am: Creative Response 5 prompted in class.

Monday February 24: Workshop

7. _____ 8. _____
9. _____ 10. _____
11. _____ 12. _____

Wednesday February 26: Workshop

13. _____ 14. _____
15. _____ 16. _____
17. _____ 18. _____

Monday March 2: Workshop

19. _____ 20. _____
21. _____ 22. _____

Wednesday March 4: ONLINE WORKSHOP FOR POEM 2 (AWP)

Monday March 9: ONLINE WORKSHOP FOR POEM 2 (AWP)

Wednesday March 11: Character

Discuss: *Margaret Atwood's "Happy Endings"*, *Joe Hill's "Pop Art" (Blackboard)*.

Due Monday 23 by 8:00am: Creative Response 6 prompted in class.

Monday March 16 & Wednesday March 13: SPRING BREAK

Monday March 23: Desire & Conflict

Discuss: *John Cheever's "The Swimmer"*; *Mary Gaitskill's "The Other Place"*.

Wednesday March 25: Point of View

Discuss: *Amelia Grey's "A Contest"*; *Julio Cortázar's "Axolotl"*; *Donald Barthelme's "The School"*.

Due Monday by 8:00am: Creative Response 7 prompted in class.

Monday March 30: Structure

Discuss: *Peter Carey's "The Last Days of a Famous Mime"*, *Casey Hannan's "Piano Hands"*, *Augusto Monterroso's "The Dinosaur"*, *Ernest Hemingway's "For sale: baby shoes, never worn."*

Wednesday April 1: Setting and Dialogue

Italo Calvino's "All at One Point"; Ernest Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants"; Maxine Chernoff's "The Sound".

Due Monday by 8:00am: Creative Response 8 prompted in class.

Monday April 6: Chronology

Discuss: *Dino Buzzati's "The Falling Girl", Julio Cortázar's "The Night Face Up".*

Wednesday April 8: Writing "Literary" Genre Fiction

Discuss: *Carmen Maria Machado's "Horror Story", Ari Aster's Hereditary.*

Due Monday by 8:00am: Creative Response 9 prompted in class.

Monday April 13: Workshop

- 1. _____ 2. _____
- 3. _____ 4. _____

Wednesday April 15: Workshop

- 5. _____ 6. _____
- 7. _____ 8. _____

Monday April 20: Workshop

- 7. _____ 8. _____
- 9. _____ 10. _____

Wednesday April 22: Workshop

- 11. _____ 12. _____
- 13. _____ 14. _____

Monday April 27: Workshop

- 15. _____ 16. _____
- 17. _____ 18. _____

Due Friday by 8:00am: Revisions (Counts as Creative Response 10)

Wednesday April 29: Workshop

- 19. _____ 20. _____
- 21. _____ 22. _____

Monday May 4: Group 1 Revision Conference

Wednesday May 6: Group 2 Revision Conference