

# Introduction to Creative Writing

CRW 3362:11980 • BUSN 330 • MW 9:00-10:20 AM

Alessandra Narváez Varela

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OFFICE HOURS M 10:30 AM-12:00 PM OR BY APPOINTMENT

## CATALOG ENTRY

Introduction to Creative Writing (3-0) Study and practice of essential techniques of creative writing in at least two genres. This course satisfies your liberal arts block elective or functions as a gateway course along with CRW 3364 for majors and minors.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

In order to respond to the call to write with responsibility, emerging writers must learn the basic elements that inform his/her chosen medium—poetry or fiction—and read the work of authors that have mastered their craft. This course spearheads the knowledge that will be gradually acquired by creative writing majors, assist non-majors in their development of creative writing techniques, and provide every student with a more comprehensive appreciation of creative work as readers of poetry and/or fiction throughout their lifetime.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this course, the student will be able to

- Recognize literary devices used in poetry and fiction, and apply them to their own work.
- Provide professional criticism of peers' poetry or short story submissions.
- Produce a final portfolio with a critical preface and revised versions of a poem and short story.

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Act maturely and respectfully towards instructor and classmates at all times.
- Contact instructor about concerns and/or questions regarding the syllabus, course calendar, assignments, absences and family/health emergencies.
- Read syllabus, course calendar, assigned materials, and @miners email.
- Become familiar with Blackboard; contact HelpDesk (747-4357) for technological issues or go to the Technology Support Center (TSC), located in the third floor of the UTEP Library.
- Procure laptop; equipment checkout is available at the TSC.
- Budget printing credits.

## NETIQUETTE

I want you to keep in mind that you are speaking to a professional audience. Additionally, this is a professional creative writing course and you should take this into account in **all** writing you do for this course (postings, responses, assignments, and even emails). Emails must be professionally composed; here is a template:

*Dear Ms. Narváez Varela [or Alessandra],*

*Write the content of your email here. Make sure you proofread for proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Try to use formal, professional language.*

Sincerely,  
Your name

## LATE WORK/MISSED ASSIGNMENTS

Late work is not accepted. Additionally, **I will not grade any assignments submitted via e-mail**. You must submit all assignments via Blackboard. Emailing an assignment is never an option.

## ATTENDANCE

Attendance is mandatory. University policy requires that you attend every class. If you miss a class, for whatever reason, you are responsible for finding out about missed information and activities from classmates or the instructor on your own time, not during scheduled class time. Persistent tardiness and early exits may count as absences; two (2) late arrivals equal one (1) absence. You are allowed three (3) "unexcused" absences for the semester; starting with the fourth missed class, every absence will lower your final grade by 10%, or one letter grade. After a student has accrued five (5) absences, the instructor may drop the student from the course. All absences count equally, unless due to university-sponsored event or a documented family or health emergencies.

## REQUIRED READING MATERIALS

All reading materials and handouts will be available through Blackboard; no textbook is required.

## ASSIGNMENTS & PROJECTS

Assignments will be posted and submitted to Blackboard (see course calendar for information on each assignments specific due date). Keep in mind that, as with any technology, you may experience issues with Blackboard. It is your responsibility to plan for this and submit your assignments in a timely manner. Waiting until minutes before the deadline is a risky and I advise submitting your assignments well ahead of the deadline to account for any issues you may experience.

This course works on a 1,000 point scale and final grades will be determined using the scale below. Grades will be posted to Blackboard. Please see me during my office hours if you wish to discuss your grades.

A=900-1,000 points  
B=800-899 points  
C=700-799 points  
D=600-699 points  
F=599 or below

This courses assignments and their associated point value is as follows:

- Final Portfolio: 300 pts.
- Poem, Short Story, Small Group and Class Workshop: 300 pts.
- Reading Journals (6): 150 pts.
- In-Class Assignments (ICAs, 10): 150 pts.
- Individual Conference: 50 pts.
- Literary Event Report: 50 pts.

## FINAL PORTFOLIO

You will produce a final portfolio due **Wednesday, Dec 12<sup>th</sup> by midnight through Blackboard** that contains a critical preface, and revised versions of the poem and short story submitted during workshop. Please check the grading rubric on BB and course calendar for due dates.

## POEM, SHORT STORY, SMALL GROUP AND CLASS WORKSHOP

You will write a **1-2 page poem** and a **7-10 page short story** for class workshop, and upload to Blackboard (see course calendar for Class Workshop dates), and participate in a small group workshop beforehand to prepare for this activity. The role of a literary critic should be taken seriously, as your classmates' poems and short stories are highly personal pieces that deserve your **careful reading, time, and respect**. If these are observed, then the critique of your work should never be taken personally. While credit will be given for turning work on time, poor grammar, evident lack of effort, and/or failure to follow guidelines will affect your point allotment. Please refer to BB to learn about the requirements that will allow you to participate in workshop, and the course calendar for due dates. *Small Group Workshops*: You will work in small groups twice during the semester to workshop your poem and short story, and prepare for class workshop.

## READING JOURNALS

You will reflect on readings available through Blackboard by writing journal responses **due Sundays by noon**. Reading journals are **250-word entries** that ensure you are prepared for class, reflect on the craft of established writers and how their work relates to your writing. All reading material will be available through Blackboard. There are 6 reading journals; thus, each one is worth 25 points. Please check the grading rubric on BB and course calendar for due dates.

## IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS (ICAs)

These involve addressing specific prompts provided by the instructor to be worked in during class. In-Class Assignments (ICAs) will be started in class, and they will be available as Word files so you can download, modify and upload them to BB. There are 10 ICAs; thus, each one is worth 15 points. Please check the grading rubric on BB and course calendar for due dates; however, most will be due by midnight of the same day they're started during class.

## INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES

These one-on-one, fifteen-minute sessions will consist of a discussion regarding the revisions of your poem and short story, your writing process, and any concerns you might have regarding the course and/or its requirements prior to submitting your final portfolio. **Revising your work in a meaningful way is obligatory**, so simplistic corrections (i.e. deleting/inserting a word, changing title etc.) will affect your conference because I won't be able to provide you with adequate feedback. Failure to upload revised drafts to Blackboard in a timely manner, attend and/or be on time for your conference will result in a zero.

## LITERARY EVENT REPORT

I ask you to attend one literary event this semester. I'll inform you of possible events throughout the semester to become familiarized with UTEP, El Paso, and surrounding area's community of writers. This can be a book release, a poetry reading, or a literature lecture. No more than a week after attending the event, upload a **1-2 page double-spaced, typed, 12-point Times New Roman or a font of similar size** summary of the events.

## COMPOSITIONS

Your written work is a reflection of your capabilities and efforts and has a significant impact on your final grade. Note that even though this is a creative writing class, you are still expected to produce neat, mechanical and grammatically correct compositions. Your written documents should have follow the instructor's specification for spacing, margins and number of pages. In short: **take pride in your writing**.

## COURSE POLICIES

Please refer to the following policies for this course. If you have any questions, please see me during my office hours or send me an email and I'll be happy to help.

- UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER (UWC): I encourage you to make use of the UWC during the planning, drafting, and/or revising phases of writing any assignment in this class. The trained writing consultants can help give you a fresh perspective on ideas and help you with things like correctness, formatting, etc. The UWC is located on the main floor of the library, to the right of the elevators and computer lab.
- RESOLVING ISSUES: It is your responsibility to manage your workload, complete all assignments and stay on top of your grades. It is also your responsibility to arrange an office meeting with me to discuss questions/concerns. The earlier you contact me with questions/concerns, the better we can deal with them.
- PLAGIARISM is an issue I take very seriously. An act of plagiarism (or other form of academic dishonesty) will result in an 'F' for the course, and may include other University disciplinary action, such as suspension or expulsion. You should become familiar with the ethical guidelines for conduct spelled out in the [Student Affairs](#) section of the [Handbook for Operating Procedures](#). Additionally, please be aware that you may not submit work for this class that was produced for another class. You must produce your own original work in this class and appropriately identify and portion of your work which is collaborative with others, borrowed from others, or which is your own work from other contexts. Always cite your information. If you have doubts as to whether or not you are using your own or others' work legally and ethically, ask me or stop by the UTEP Writing Center. Follow this primary principle: Be upfront and honest.
- ADA: The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. If you suspect that you have a disability and need accommodation, please contact The Center for Accommodations & Support Services (CASS) at (915)747-5148 or at [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu). The CASS office is located in Room 106, Union East. Students are responsible for presenting the instructor with any CASS accommodation letters and instructions.

## COURSE CALENDAR

READINGS HOLIDAYS-NO CLASS READING JOURNAL ICA WORKSHOP DUE DATES

NOTE: THIS COURSE CALENDAR IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE; PLEASE ATTEND CLASS AND CHECK BLACKBOARD.  
 DOWNLOAD/PRINT ONE POEM/CLASS; DOWNLOAD ALL SHORT STORIES

### WEEK 1: MONDAY, AUGUST 27 & WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29

M: INTRODUCTIONS TO THE COURSE, SYLLABUS, AND BLACKBOARD

W: AWFUL POEMS (STEVE KOWIT)\*all download/print; BLUE BOOK (NATASHA TRETHERWAY);  
 BENEATH ME (JERICHO BROWN); ICA 1 INSTRUCTIONS (BB)

1: START A POEM USING THE MESOSTIC OR EKPHRASIS-FRIDAY 8/31, MIDNIGHT (BB)

### WEEK 2: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 3 & WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

TOPIC: IMAGES IN POETRY

M: READING JOURNAL 1-SUNDAY, NOON (BB)

W: GATE C-22 (ELLEN BASS); GIN (PHILLIP LEVINE); DIM LADY (HARRYETTE MULLEN)

2: TRANSLATE IDEAS TO IMAGES- WEDNESDAY 9/5; MIDNIGHT (BB)

### WEEK 3: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 10 & WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

TOPIC: MUSIC IN POETRY → LINE BREAK, RHYME, AND THE WHITE SPACE.

M: READING JOURNAL 2-SUNDAY, NOON (BB); PROSODY HANDOUT; PARAMOUR (ROSA ALCALÁ);  
 THE SAWGRASS WOMEN MAKE ME NERVOUS (LAUREN BERRY); RHUMBA (RITA DOVE)

W: 3: "CUTTING" PUBLISHED POEMS- WEDNESDAY 9/12; MIDNIGHT (BB)

### WEEK 4: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 17 & WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

TOPIC: POETIC FORMS & POLITICAL POETRY

M: READING JOURNAL 3-SUNDAY, NOON (BB); SONNET 130 (WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE);  
 ONE ART (ELIZABETH BISHOP); NEVER AFTER (EVIE SHOCKELY)

W: THE BODY POLITIC (STEVE KOWIT); INTERVIEW WITH A BIRONGA 1, 6 (TARFIA FAIZULLAH);  
 AFTER DINNER (SASHA PIMENTEL); MARCH 12, 2012 & SEPTEMBER 14, 2013 (PATRICIA SMITH)

FIRST DRAFT OF POEM FOR SMALL GROUP WORKSHOP; FRIDAY 9/21, MIDNIGHT (BB)

**WEEK 5: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24 & WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26**

TOPIC: ANNOTATION, REVISION AND SMALL GROUP WORKSHOP.

M: 2 POEMS FROM SMALL GROUP MEMBERS; WORKSHOP GUIDELINES FOR POETRY; POETRY CHECKLIST; POEM ANNOTATION; POETRY IN ACTION, NY TIMES; 4: "KILLING" DARLINGS-TUESDAY 9/25, MIDNIGHT.

W: 2 POEMS FROM SMALL GROUP MEMBERS; SMALL GROUP WORKSHOP

SECOND DRAFT OF POEM FOR CLASS WORKSHOP- FRIDAY 9/28, MIDNIGHT (BB)

**WEEK 6: MONDAY, OCTOBER 1 & WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 3**

TOPIC: CLASS WORKSHOP (POETRY)

M: 4 POEMS FROM CLASSMATES; FEEDBACK FOR 4 POEMS-SUNDAY 9/30, NOON (BB).

W: 5 POEMS FROM CLASSMATES; FEEDBACK FOR 5 POEMS-TUESDAY 10/2, NOON (BB).

**WEEK 7: MONDAY, OCTOBER 8 & WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 10**

TOPIC: CLASS WORKSHOP (POETRY)

M: 4 POEMS FROM CLASSMATES; FEEDBACK FOR 4 POEMS-SUNDAY 10/7, NOON (BB).

W: 5 POEMS FROM CLASSMATES; FEEDBACK FOR 5 POEMS-TUESDAY 10/9, NOON (BB).

5: FILLED POETRY REVISION CHECKLIST-FRIDAY 10/12, MIDNIGHT (BB).

**WEEK 8: MONDAY, OCTOBER 15 & WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 17**

TOPIC: ELEMENTS OF FICTION→CHARACTER AND DIALOGUE.

M: READING JOURNAL 4-SUNDAY, NOON (BB); FAT (RAYMOND CARVER); GOD (BENJAMIN NUGENT);

6A: CHARACTER, MEDIAS RES & DIALOGUE WEDNESDAY 10/18; MIDNIGHT (BB).

W: DIALOGUE RULES HANDOUT, RAPE FANTASIES (MARGARET ATWOOD);

WHERE ARE YOU GOING, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? (JOYCE CAROL OATES).

6B: CHARACTER, MEDIAS RES & DIALOGUE - WEDNESDAY 10/18; MIDNIGHT (BB)

**WEEK 9: MONDAY, OCTOBER 22 & WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24**

TOPIC: POINT OF VIEW AND SETTING.

M: READING JOURNAL 5-SUNDAY, NOON (BB); BLACKBERRIES (LESLIE NORRIS); GIRL (JAMAICA KINCAID); AXOLOTL (JULIO CORTÁZAR); HILLS LIKE WHITE ELEPHANTS (ERNEST HEMINGWAY).

W: ALL AT ONE POINT (ITALO CALVINO); A GOOD MAN IS HARD TO FIND (FLANNERY O'CONNOR).

7: EXPERIMENTING WITH POV- WEDNESDAY 10/24; MIDNIGHT (BB)

**WEEK 10: MONDAY, OCTOBER 29 & WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 31**

TOPIC: UNRELIABLE NARRATORS

M: READING JOURNAL 6-SUNDAY, NOON (BB); BIGFOOT STOLE MY WIFE (RON CARLSON); NEVER MARRY A MEXICAN (SANDRA CISNEROS);

W: THE SCHOOL (DONALD BARTHELME); DOUGBERT SHACKELTON'S RULES FOR ANTARCTIC TAILGATING (KAREN RUSSELL).

FIRST DRAFT OF SHORT STORY FOR SMALL GROUP WORKSHOP- FRIDAY 11/2; MIDNIGHT (BB)

**WEEK 11: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 5 & WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 7**

TOPIC: REVISION AND SMALL GROUP WORKSHOP

M: 2 SHORT STORIES FROM SMALL GROUP MEMBERS; WORKSHOP GUIDELINES FOR SHORT STORIES; SHORT STORY CHECKLIST; STEPHEN KING'S REVISION SAMPLE;

8: "KILLING" DARLINGS-TUESDAY 11/6, MIDNIGHT.

W: 2 SHORT STORIES FROM SMALL GROUP MEMBERS; SMALL GROUP WORKSHOP

SECOND DRAFT OF SHORT STORY FOR CLASS WORKSHOP- FRIDAY 11/9, MIDNIGHT (BB)

**WEEK 12: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12 & WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14**

TOPIC: CLASS WORKSHOP (SHORT STORY)

M: 4 SHORT STORIES FROM CLASSMATES; FEEDBACK FOR 4 SHORT STORIES-SUNDAY 11/11, NOON (BB).

W: 5 SHORT STORIES FROM CLASSMATES; FEEDBACK FOR 5 SHORT STORIES-TUESDAY 11/13, NOON (BB).

**WEEK 13: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 19 & WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 21**

TOPIC: CLASS WORKSHOP (SHORT STORY)

M: 4 SHORT STORIES FROM CLASSMATES; FEEDBACK FOR 4 SHORT STORIES-SUNDAY 11/18, NOON (BB).

W: 5 SHORT STORIES FROM CLASSMATES; FEEDBACK FOR 5 SHORT STORIES-TUESDAY 11/20, NOON (BB).  
CONFERENCE PACKET → IN THIS ORDER: 1) POEM TURNED TO CLASS WORKSHOP 2) REVISED VERSION OF POEM 3) FILLED SHORT STORY REVISION CHECKLIST-SUNDAY 11/25, NOON.

**WEEK 14: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27 & WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29**

TOPIC: SOMETHING LIKE A FINAL EXAM AND INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES

M: COURSE NOTES; 9: WRITE OR EMAIL CONSTRUCTIVE CLASS REVIEW\*-ALL WEEK 14.

W: 6 STUDENTS MEET WITH INSTRUCTOR FOR CONFERENCE.

**WEEK 15: MONDAY, DECEMBER 3 & WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5**

TOPIC: INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES

M: 6 STUDENTS MEET WITH INSTRUCTOR FOR CONFERENCES; 10: ☺

W: 6 STUDENTS MEET WITH INSTRUCTOR FOR CONFERENCES.

**WEEK 16: MONDAY, DECEMBER 10 & WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12**

TOPIC: FINALS WEEK

FINAL PORTFOLIO → IN THIS ORDER: 1) CRITICAL PREFACE 2) REVISED POEM 3) REVISED SHORT STORY-  
WEDNESDAY, 12/12 (BB).