

CRW 3362
SPRING 2024 | HUDS 300
9-10:20 AM
CRN 23843

instructor. **Alessandra Narváez Varela**
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office. **University Towers 510F**
office hours. **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 creatively, writers must learn the basic elements that inform their 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 and developed by creative writing majors, assist non-majors in their understanding of creative writing techniques, and provide every student, regardless of academic path, with a more comprehensive appreciation of creative work as lifetime readers of poetry and fiction.

Learning Outcomes

Throughout this course, students will:

- Recognize literary devices used in poetry and fiction, and apply them to their own work.
- Provide and receive 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.

This course is also designed to promote your overall success, inside and outside the classroom. The coursework will help you improve in key areas such as communication, confidence, and critical thinking.



RJ BB (Blackboard) due on Tuesdays by start of class, to be posted on Blackboard; RJ BBs also include responding to one of your classmates' posts.

RJ TK (Talk) due orally during class on Tuesday or Thursday; to account for your participation on these weeks, you should sign the RJ TK Participation Tracker sheet by the end of class.

Participating during class regardless of RJ TKs also ensures the class is dynamic. *Ongoing, poor class participation when RJ TKs are due will result in requiring all RJs be posted to Blackboard. 140 points/ 7 RJs= 20 points each*

Creative Exercises (CEs): You will address specific prompts provided by the instructor. The purpose of these exercises is to apply/test concepts related to the writing of poetry or short stories, and to generate material that will be workshopped and included in your final portfolio. Due dates vary. *225 points/ 9 CEs=25 points each*

Small Group Workshop: You will participate in two small group workshops on Week 7 and Week 14 where you'll share a poem (1-2 pages) and a short story (5-8 pages), and follow a workshop prompt provided by the instructor. *200 points/ 100 each*

Individual Conferences: You will participate in a one-on-one conversation on Week 6 and Week 13 with the instructor or teaching assistant during which you will discuss your poem and short story. *200 points/ 100 each*

Poetry Factory: You will participate in a class reading of the poems produced during the semester (date TBA). Alternatively, you can submit an individual video/audio file that features you reading your poem out loud, due Tuesday, May 7 by 11:59 pm. *40 points*

Final Portfolio: You will produce a final portfolio that contains a critical preface, and the poem and short story submitted during workshop. Due date is Tuesday, May 7 by 11:59 pm. *165 points*

Classroom Policies



Attendance: Attending class is mandatory, and it will be recorded through a sign-in sheet distributed in class, starting Week 2. Students are allowed to miss four classes without penalty; every additional absence will lower the final grade by one letter grade. If more than 4 classes are missed without communicating with the instructor, the student might be dropped from the course. Students are responsible for signing in and keeping track of their absences. *Please notify me as soon as possible* if you encounter extraordinary circumstances that affect your ability to attend class.

Preferred Mode of Address: The Department of Creative Writing at UTEP supports students' right to define their identity in terms of name, pronoun, and mode of address. This class will provide each student the opportunity to let their preference be known and will support and respect that preference. Should you need to discuss this issue with your instructor in private, you are encouraged to make an appointment early in the semester.

“W.” Acceptable reasons for a “W” include: personal or family emergencies, death of a family member, military leave, or an exceptional work schedule that prevents you from completing the course. Before you decide to withdraw from the course, please contact your academic advisor to discuss this option, and don’t hesitate to contact me as well for input.

*The responsibility to withdraw from the course is yours; I will not automatically withdraw you if your performance is unsatisfactory. Please notify me as soon as possible if you encounter extraordinary circumstances that affect your ability to attend class. **Course drop deadline is Thursday, March 28, 2024.***

Format: All assignments will be turned in through Blackboard in 12-point Times New Roman or a font of similar size with your name on the upper left margin. For the poem, you may use single or double space; for the short story, it must be double spaced with page numbers. When naming files, I suggest you follow the following to keep track of your assignments: First name_CRW 3362_Assignment Name. For example: Alessandra_CRW3362_RJ 1.

Please note that while assignments will be submitted electronically to Blackboard, I will also request a print copy of some CEs to ease physical discomforts associated with the use of the computer screen and keyboard. I ask for your understanding. In turn, I know printing credits are limited (more importantly, our tree population is being decimated), so I will limit this request as much as possible. There will be a combination of icons—  —at the bottom of CEs to notify you of this requirement.

Quality: While this is a writing class where creative pieces are produced, and credit is given for turning assignments on time, (unjustified) poor grammar, evident lack of effort, and/or failure to follow guidelines will affect your grade.

Netiquette: Your conduct during class should always be respectful and professional towards your instructor and classmates alike. For that reason, a professional tone should extend to *all* the writing you do for this class (posts and emails included). Therefore, please consider the template below when addressing me or your classmates through email or Blackboard, and don’t forget to include a subject when writing an email.

Hello or Dear [name of recipient; address me as Alessandra, Professor/Ms. Narváz Varela],

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

Sincerely or Best [the sign off is up to you as long as you signal it is the end of your message],

Your name

For more suggestions to communicate successfully and professionally in an online setting, please go to Blackboard>Weeks>Week 1>Netiquette

idea of how to use it to further their creative goals. For an introductory course, however, it's vital that students rely on their original ideas, process and creativity to generate creative work. The same policy applies to reading journals.

ADA: The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. Students who become pregnant or have parenting responsibilities may also request reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. The UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) will process requests for accommodations based on a disability, pregnancy, or parenting. Contact the Center for Accommodations & Support Services (CASS) at (915)747-5148, email them at cass@utep.edu or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal. The CASS office is located in Room 106, Union East. Students are responsible for presenting the instructor with any CASS accommodation letters and instructions.

Military Student Success Center: If you are a military student (veteran, dependent, active), consider visiting the Military Success Center at Library Room 205 or online at <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/mssc/>. Please inform me if you need special accommodations. If you make me aware of a complication, I will work to assist you or put you in contact with university staff who are trained to assist you.

Creative Writing Undergraduate Advising and Resources Webpage: Click [here](#) to find information about registration, advising, Wellness and Support Services, as well as Health and Covid-Related Services.

Calendar

This calendar is subject to change. I will notify you about changes with enough notice, except for family or health emergencies that affect my ability to communicate with you promptly. Please check Blackboard and your email often.

Week 1	
Introductions, Syllabus and Reading Poetry	
Tue 1/16	Introductions & Course Highlights Read Syllabus Explore Blackboard
Thurs 1/18	Read “How to Read a Poem” (Edward Hirsch) “Introduction to Poetry” (Billy Collins) Due by end of day on Bb

	<p>CE 1 Go to Blackboard>Weeks> Week 1> CE 1. (For the following CEs go to the corresponding week).</p>
<p>Week 2</p>	
<p>"Awful" poems and Imagery</p>	
<p>Due by Tue 1/23 @ 9 am on Bb</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o RJ1 BB (Blackboard): Go to Blackboard> Weeks>Week 2> RJ1 BB + Response (For the following RJ BBs go to the corresponding week). o Syllabus Scavenger Quiz: Go to Blackboard> Weeks> Week 2>Syllabus Scavenger Quiz o Extra Credit Discussion Board: Go to Blackboard> Weeks> Week 2>Extra Credit: Tips from You!
<p>Tue 1/23</p>	<p>Read "Awful Poems" (Steve Kowitz)</p>
<p>Thurs 1/25</p>	<p>Read "Images" (Kim Addonizio and Dorianne Laux) "Dim Lady" (Haryette Mullen)</p>
<p>Week 3</p>	
<p>Imagery cont'd</p>	
<p>Due by Tue 1/30 @ 9 am on Bb</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o CE 2 o RJ 2 BB
<p>Tue 1/30</p>	<p>Read "Gate C-22" (Ellen Bass) "Negative" (Kevin Young) "Elliptical" (Haryette Mullen)</p>
<p>Thurs 2/1</p>	<p>Read "Beneath Me" (Jericho Brown) "Family Stories" (Dorianne Laux) "Salvador" (Tim Z. Hernandez) "Move" (Lucille Clifton) "The Terrorist Shaved His Beard" (Christopher Soto) "We Die" (Carmen Tafolla)</p>
<p>Week 4</p>	
<p>Prosody (Musicality) in Free Verse Poetry</p>	
<p>Due by Tues 2/6 @ 9 am on Bb</p>	<p>CE 3</p>
<p>Due on Tues or Thurs</p>	<p>RJ3 TK (Talk): Participate in class, no BB post due. Sign RJ TK sheet by the end of class to account for your participation.</p>
<p>Tues 2/6</p>	<p>Read Prosody handout "Line Breaks" (Steve Kowitz) "Paramour" (Rosa Alcalá)</p>
<p>Thurs 2/8</p>	<p>Read "Rhumba" (Rita Dove) "The Sawgrass Women Make Me Nervous" (Lauren Berry)</p>

	"The Moths" (Helena Maria Viramontes)
Thurs 3/21	<p>Read</p> <p>"The Flowers" (Alice Walker)</p> <p>"My Tocaya" (Sandra Cisneros)</p> <p>"Disappearing" (Monica Wood)</p> <p>"El Gordo" (Jaime Cortez)</p> <p>"Corzo" (Brenna Gomez)</p>

Week 10

Point of View

Due by Tues 3/26 @ 9 am on Bb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o CE 6 o RJ6 BB o Extra Credit CE
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Tues 3/26	<p>Read</p> <p>"All at One Point" (Italo Calvino)</p> <p>"Hills Like White Elephants" (Ernest Hemingway)</p> <p>"Blackberries" (Leslie Norris)</p>
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Thurs 3/28	<p>Read</p> <p>"Girl" (Jamaica Kincaid)</p> <p>"Powder Puff" (Estella Gonzalez)</p>
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Course Drop Deadline: Thursday, March 28

Week 11

Dialogue

Due by Tues 4/2 @ 9 am on Bb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o CE 7 o Dialogue Rules Quiz o Extra Credit RJ
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Due on Tues or Thurs	RJ7 TK
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Tues 4/2	<p>Read</p> <p>"Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been" (Joyce Carol Oates)</p> <p>"A Perfect Day for Bananafish" (J.D. Salinger)</p>
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Thurs 4/4	<p>Read</p> <p>Dialogue Rules Handout</p> <p>Dialogue Clinic</p>
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Week 12

Verisimilitude & Deus Ex Machina

Tues 4/9	<p>Read</p> <p>"Orange World" (Karen Russell)</p>
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Thurs 4/11	<p>CE 8: Bring to class or to mailbox by 5 pm</p> <p>! Attendance important: You will be meeting with your 2 small groups.</p>
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Week 13

