Introduction to Creative Writing
CRW 3362–12880 EDUC 108 TR 10:30 AM – 11:50 AM

“If you don't have time to read, you don't have the time (or the tools) to write. Simple as that.”
-Stephen King

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Hours: W 10-12pm
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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 this course, students will be introduced to the study and practice of creative writing in two genres—poetry and fiction. This means we will have fun exploring our creativity and voices, but we will also work hard. Through selected readings and discussions, students will become familiar with the fundamental forms and techniques of poetry and fiction. Students will then practice and develop their craft by engaging in exercises and participating in writing workshops.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
At the end of this course, students will be able to:
• Identify literary devices and employ them in their writing.
• Draw on knowledge of techniques to create works of poetry and fiction.
• Explore the creative process through writing.
• Engage in effective workshop practices with their community of peers.
• Create and submit a final portfolio of their edited work.

REQUIRED TEXTS & MATERIALS
All required reading will be available on Blackboard (Bb), so there is no book to purchase. Assigned texts should be read before class. In order to participate in discussions, students will be required to bring a printed, annotated copy of the assigned text to class, their ideas, and their voices. Failure to read and engage in class discussions will result in loss of points. Additionally, quizzes may be administered without notice to evaluate students’ preparation. For workshop participation, students will be required to bring printed copies of their drafts to distribute to everyone in class. A journal/notebook is required for notes and
drafting of poetry and fiction exercises. **This syllabus must be brought to every class meeting.**

**COURSE DELIVERY**
This course makes extensive use of the online learning platform, Bb. All of the reading and supplementary material for the class will be delivered via Bb. Furthermore, all assignments are to be submitted through Bb. It is strongly recommended that you have access to the Internet from home and are comfortable using a computer. If home access is not possible, arrangements can be made to use a computer regularly on campus in order to complete the work. Student computer labs are often available until midnight, but schedules do vary. A great deal of work will be done online, and not having access to a computer will affect your ability to turn in assignments on time. 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. I advise submitting your assignments well ahead of the deadline to account for any issues you may experience.

**READINGS & RESPONSES**
Readings and responses will be assigned weekly, except during workshop days, when the reading will be another student’s draft and the response will be a review of the work. **Students are required to read** assigned texts **BEFORE** class. To be clear, if the course schedule lists the text over imagery on Sept 3\(^{rd}\), it should be read before that day, as it will be the focus of discussion on the 3\(^{rd}\). The responses will be 150 words in length and will address an assigned element of craft, according to the program. Please consult the program schedule for due dates and topics. You should expect for me to engage you in discussion.

**FICTION & POETRY PIECES**
Writing projects will be assigned throughout the semester and are designed to strengthen the student’s understanding of the craft. I will assign four poetry and four fiction pieces which will be started during class. These are exercises that are meant to spark your creativity but also to guide your writing process. Students who meet the guidelines for each assignment and demonstrate engagement with the prompt can expect to earn full credit for each piece.

**WORKSHOPS**
Beginning about the 4\(^{th}\) week of the course, we will engage in our first workshop and will do so again as the semester progresses. What is a workshop, you might ask? A workshop is a structured group activity in which the whole class carefully reads, analyzes, and gives feedback over each other’s work. It is an opportunity for a writer to learn about their work from various perspectives. Students enjoy this activity and look forward with anticipation and curiosity to their work’s reception from their community of fellow writers. Therefore, it is not only courteous that you come to class and actively participate, but it is also expected of you, in your role as a serious writer.
The role of a literary critic, which is what each student will become during the workshop, 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. In order to participate in the workshop, each student must do the following:

1. Print and distribute copies of their poetry or fiction pieces to all participants during the designed distribution day.
2. Carefully read the assigned student’s work before the designated workshop day, annotate the draft with observations about the poem or story’s strengths/weaknesses, and provide constructive feedback on how the work can be improved.
3. On the day of the workshop, be prepared to comment over each poem or story, cite specific examples within the work, and defend your assertions. When reacting (whether verbal or written) to someone’s writing, address the text, not the student.

Although all students are required to read and comment over all distributed workshop drafts, each student will be assigned only one piece for the workshop review. (I will explain this more in-depth during class.) The workshop schedule will be made during class, and each student’s session will be timed. If you are absent during a scheduled workshop day and/or fail to submit your piece, you will not earn credit.

**READING EVENT**

Each student will be required to attend at least one reading event hosted by the Creative Writing Department. The event can be held either on or off campus. A written response of 150-200 words should be submitted in Bb a week after attending the event. Any student who participates in more than one reading event will be given extra credit.

**PORTFOLIO**

Each student is required to produce a final portfolio which will be due on or before December 11th. The portfolio will contain a critical preface, all revised fiction and poetry submitted, including the four workshop drafts (2 fiction, 2 poetry) and their corresponding revised versions. **Revising your work in a meaningful way is obligatory**, so simplistic corrections (i.e. deleting/inserting a word, changing title etc.) will affect your point allotment. Please attend class for detailed instructions.
SUBMITTING WORK
Late work is not accepted. All work, including the workshop drafts you will distribute to your classmates, will be submitted to me through our Bb course shell. Since the Bb comment and grade function works best with Microsoft Word, you are required to submit all assignments as Microsoft Word or pdf documents, using a 12-pt. font, with one-inch margins and double-spaced, unless directed otherwise. I will not accept assignments any other way. Microsoft Word is available to students at all campus computers and through the Cloud. Be sure to format each assignment heading in the upper, left hand corner of the document as follows:

Sandra Cisneros
CRW 3362
Aug 27, 2019
Poetry Exercise 1

A suggestion: Always save your work by naming each assignment with your first initial, last name, and an abbreviation of the assignment. For example, if your name is Sandra Cisneros, this is how you would name your file:

scisneros—exercise1
scisneros—poem1—draft

GRADE DISTRIBUTION BY POINTS
Students can earn a total of 1,000 points in the course:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1000-900</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>899-800</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>799-700</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>699-600</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>599 &amp; below</td>
<td>F</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

W- A student will receive this grade if they drop the course before the university’s drop deadline of 2019.

Please note: All grades will be posted to Blackboard. It is your responsibility to officially drop from the 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 and F for the course, as I will not drop the course for you.

Grading Policy
- 10 Reading & Responses 250 pts
- 4 Workshop Responses 100
- 4 Workshops 200 pts
- 4 Fiction Pieces 100 pts
- 4 Poetry Pieces 100 pts
- 1 Reading Event & Reflection 50 pts
- 1 Portfolio 200 pts
CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE/NETIQUETTE

• Electronic devices can be very helpful in the classroom whether a smartphone, tablet, or computer. However, if their use does not contribute to the conversation or tasks in the classroom, then I have the right to ask you to put it away or turn it off, even if it is a personal device.

• You are expected to demonstrate the utmost respect and courtesy for your peers with differing writing styles, viewpoints, and/or experiences. Sexist, racist, homophobic, or other hateful speech will not be tolerated.

• As a general rule, always consider audience, in class and online. Remember that members of the class and the instructor will be reading your work. When reacting to someone (verbal or written), address the manuscript/draft, not the person. All communication, including emails, should be professionally written, using a greeting, body with a clear purpose, and a closing. In short, be courteous and take pride in your work.

• Blackboard is not a public internet venue. If any discussions are conducted via Bb, all postings to it should be considered private and confidential. Whatever is posted in these online spaces is intended for classmates and professor only. Please do not copy documents and paste them to a publicly accessible website, blog, or other space. If students wish to do so, they have the ethical obligation to first request the permission of the writer(s).

ATTENDANCE

According to The University of Texas at El Paso’s catalog: The student is expected to attend all classes and laboratory sessions and attendance is mandatory for all freshman-level courses. It is the responsibility of the student to inform each instructor of extended absences. (For further information regarding excused absences refer to UTEP’s Catalog.) Since this class meets twice a week, if you are absent for more than four classes, you may be dropped from the course. In the event of an absence, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed by asking your peers. Persistent tardiness and early exits will count as absences.

CURRICULUM AND CLASSROOM POLICIES

During our 22 class meetings, you are expected to actively participate in discussions and workshops. The class discussions will help you learn to improve your writing, often through the analysis of an assigned chapter, essay, poem, or short story. If you do not read an assigned text, you will not be prepared for class and will be considered absent. If you miss a workshop, it cannot be made up. Missing a scheduled conference with the instructor also constitutes an absence. Reminder: LATE WORK IS NOT ACCEPTED.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University of Texas at El Paso prides itself on its standards of academic excellence. In the classroom and in all other academic activities, students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity (http://www.catalog.utep.edu/undergrad/academicregulations/curriculum-and-classroom-policies/). Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to,
cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. 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. Visit the Office of Dean of Students (https://www.utep.edu/studentaffairs/). Instructors are required to report the suspected academic dishonesty to the Office of Student Affairs.

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 grammar and sentence structure. The UWC is located on the main floor of the library, to the right of the circulation desk.

ACCOMMODATIONS
Your success in this class is important to me. We all learn differently, and if there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together, we’ll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. I also encourage you to visit the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) in room 106, Union East Building, or contact them at 747-5148 or cass@utep.edu. If you need official accommodations, you have a right to have these met. There are also a range of resources on campus, including the Writing Center, Counseling Center, Military Student Success Center and Academic Advising Center.

MILITARY STUDENTS
Thank you for your service! If you are a military student (veteran, dependent, active) please visit the Military Student Success Center. I also recognize the complexities of being a student veteran. If you are a student veteran, please inform me if you need special accommodations. Drill schedules, calls to active duty, complications with GI Bill disbursement, and other unforeseen military and veteran-related developments can complicate your academic life. If you make me aware of a complication, I will do everything I can to assist you or put you in contact with university staff who are trained to assist you.

IMPORTANT FALL DATES
Aug 26  Fall classes begin
Aug 26-30 Late registration period
Sep 2  Labor Day Holiday—University closed
Sep 11  Fall Census Day
Note: This is the last day to register for classes. If payment is not received by this day, students will be dropped.
Nov 1  Fall drop/withdrawal deadline
Nov 28-29 Thanksgiving Holiday—University Closed
Dec 5        Last day of classes  
Dec 6        Dead Day  
Dec 9-13     Final Exams  
Dec 18       Grades are due  

Please make note of office hours and email, and reach out to me if you need to. I look forward to helping you become better writers and readers this semester!
COURSE PROGRAM

Subject to change. Each student is expected to attend class and log into Bb in order to stay updated with the latest.

Wk 1—Aug 26-30: Introduction
Tuesday
• Class introduction, syllabus overview
Thursday
• Recap & “Close Reading” from Francine Prose’s Reading Like a Writer
• Reading Event and Response reminder

Poetry

Wk 2—Sep 2-6: Hybrid week—Imagery
Tuesday
• “Imagery” from John Sutherland’s 50 Literature Ideas You Really Need to Know
• “Images” from Addonizio & Laux’s The Poet’s Companion
• Percy Bysshe Shelley’s “Ode to the West Wind”
• “The Gift” from Naomi Shihab Nye’s Voices in the Air
• Reading Response 1
• Poetry Piece 1: The Mountains or the Beach? Pick your favorite, describe using at least three of the senses.
Thursday
• Discussion
• Poetry Piece 1 Continued

Wk 3—Sep 9-13: Voice & Style
Tuesday
• Ch. 3 “Voice” from Janet Burroway’s Imaginative Writing
• “Voice and Style” from Addonizio & Laux’s The Poet’s Companion
• Edgar Allan Poe’s The Raven
• “The Last Meditation on Living in the Desert” by Benjamin Alire Sáenz
• Reading Response 2
• Poetry Piece 2: Pick a favorite rapper/singer. Write about a memory using his/her voice.
Thursday
• Discussion
• Poetry Piece 2 Continued
• Distribution of drafts for Poetry Workshop 1
**Wk 4—Sep 16-20: Poetry Workshop 1**

Tuesday
- Poetry Workshop 1, part 1

Thursday
- Poetry Workshop 1, part 2
- Workshop Response 1

**Wk 5—Sep 23-27: Rhythm**

Tuesday
- “Lyric/Prosody” from Sutherland’s *50 Literature Ideas*
- “The Music of the Line” from Addonizio & Laux’s *The Poet’s Companion*
- “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” by Robert Frost
- “50-50” by Langston Hughes
- Reading Response 3
- Poetry Piece 3: Rewrite the lyrics of your favorite song. Use your own words, but keep the rhythm and rhyme scheme the same.

Thursday
- Discussion
- Poetry Piece 3 Continued

**Wk 6—Sep 30-Oct 4: Simile & Metaphor**

Tuesday
- “Imagery, Connotation, and Metaphor” from Burroway’s *Imaginative Writing*
- “Metaphor: A Poet is a Nightingale” article by Edward Hirsch
- Sonnet XVIII “Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer’s Day?” by William Shakespeare
- “The Alchemy of Mothering” by Laurie Ann Guerrero
- Reading Response 4
- Poetry Piece 4: Use an object in your bedroom to write a 15-line poem about a person in your life.

Thursday
- Discussion
- Poetry Piece 4 Continued
- Distribution of drafts for Poetry Workshop 2

**Wk 7—Oct 7-11: Poetry Workshop 2**

Tuesday
- Poetry Workshop 2, part 1

Thursday
- Poetry Workshop 2, part 2
• Workshop Response 2

Fiction

Wk 8—Oct 14-18: Point of View
Tuesday
• Ch. 7 Call Me Ishmael: “Point of View” excerpts from Burroway’s Writing Fiction
• “Point of View” from John Gardner’s The Art of Fiction
• “A Very Short Story” by Ernest Hemingway
• “Story” by Lydia Davis
• Reading Response 5
• Fiction Piece 1: Begin a story by writing a patently false statement about yourself, and continue developing it from there. (taken from Burroway’s Writing Fiction)

Thursday
• Discussion
• Fiction Piece 1 Continued

Wk 9—Oct 21-25: Setting
Tuesday
• Ch. 5 “Setting” excerpts from Burroway’s Imaginative Writing
• “Long and Far Away: Fictional Setting” excerpts from Burroway’s Writing Fiction
• “Yolanda” from Oscar Cásares’s Brownsville Stories
• “Interpreter of Maladies” from Jhumpa Lahiri’s Interpreter of Maladies
• Reading Response 6
• Fiction Piece 2: Write a scene from the perspective of an older person looking back at a place in the past as a youth.

Thursday
• Discussion
• Fiction Piece 2 Continued
• Distribution of drafts for Fiction Workshop 1

Wk 10—Oct 28-Nov 1: Fiction Workshop 1
Tuesday
• Fiction Workshop 1, part 1

Thursday
• Fiction Workshop 1, part 2
• Workshop Response 3

Wk 11—Nov 4-8: Character
Tuesday
- “Character” from Anne Lamott’s *Bird by Bird*
- “Manipulate Characters with Setting” from Michael Noll’s *The Writer’s Field Guide to the Craft of Fiction*
- “Lawns” by Mona Simpson
- “The Sun, the Moon, the Stars” from Junot Diaz’s *This is How You Lose Her*
- Reading Response 7
- Fiction Piece 3: Write an exchange between two characters that begins with one of them saying, “I’m sorry, but...” (take from Burroway’s *Writing Fiction*)

Thursday
- Discussion
- Fiction Piece 3 Continued

**Wk 12—Nov 11-15: Plot**

Tuesday
- “Plot” from Lamott’s *Bird by Bird*
- “Plotting” from Gardner’s *The Art of Fiction*
- “Little Red Riding Hood”
- “Corzo” by Brenna Gomez
- Reading Response 8
- Fiction Piece 4: Write a modern-day Red Riding Hood story.

Thursday
- Discussion
- Fiction Piece 4 Continued
- Distribution of drafts for Fiction Workshop 2

**Wk 13—Nov 18-22: Fiction Workshop 2**

Tuesday
- Fiction Workshop 2, part 1

Thursday
- Fiction Workshop 2, part 2
- Workshop Response 4

**Wk 14—Nov 25-29: Editing & Revision**

Tuesday
- “Revision & Editing” excerpts from Burroway’s *Imaginative Writing*
- “The Art of Revision: Most of What you Write Should be Cut” by Charles Johnson
- Reading Response 9
- In-class revision activity
Thursday
- Happy Thanksgiving! No Classes from Nov 28-29th

**Wk 15—Dec 2-6: Recap & Portfolio**

Tuesday
- “Only Daughter” by Sandra Cisneros
- Recap of revising your work
- Reading Response 10

Thursday
- Recap Portfolio Requirements
- Portfolio due before Wed, Dec. 11th
- Last class day!

**Wk 16—Dec 9-13: Finals Week**
- Good luck on your finals!
- Enjoy your winter break!