

Introduction to Creative Writing (CRW 3362)

FALL SEMESTER 2019

INSTRUCTOR: Jonathan Ayala
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Classroom: EDU 110 T/R: 10:30am-11:50am
Office: EDU 907 Office Hours: T/R, 9-10am, & Fridays by appt.

Course Description/Objectives

First, we'll study fundamental techniques of creative writing and examine how fiction and poetry utilize elements such as image, voice, character, and setting, and how writers might use these tools in their own work. Second, introduce creative writing as an academic discipline. We'll discuss craft, analyze literature from a writer's perspective, and understand how to effectively participate in a creative writing workshop.

Required Texts

- Burroway, Janet. *Imaginative Writing: The Elements of Craft*. 4th Edition
- Supplemental readings (distributed in class or via email/Blackboard)

Blackboard and Email

All assignments, announcements, and workshop posts will be sent via Blackboard or email. You must check your UTEP-assigned email and Blackboard messages frequently. I may send homework updates and clarifications through email or Blackboard. In addition, some classes might be held through a Discussion Forum on Blackboard. You will be notified in advance when this is the case.

Grading Policy

10% Participation and Attendance
15% Writing Exercises
10% Quizzes
5% Attendance at Cultural Event
30% Writings and Workshop Participation
5% Conference
25% Final Portfolio

Grading Scale

A: 100-90%
B: 89-80%
C: 79-70%
D: 69-60%
F: 59% and below
W: This grade will only be given if you drop this course **before** UTEP's drop deadline (**Nov. 2nd, 2018**). If you fail to do so, and have stopped coming to class, you'll earn an F.

REQUIREMENTS

Participation and Attendance: 5%

- Active participation (asking questions, commenting on readings, etc.) demonstrates you are reading the material and are fully engaged in the class. It is very important that you read all the assignments carefully and come to class prepared to discuss them.
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- Please bring Burroway's book, handouts, writing exercises, and notes to every class. If you appear unprepared for the class, you will not be given credit for attendance.
 - More than 3 absences will affect your overall grade, as will tardiness. More than 5 absences will result in failure of the course.

Writing Exercises: 20%

- Each week in which you are not scheduled to workshop, you'll submit a writing exercise (250-350 words) via Blackboard in response to a question/prompt from me or from Burroway's text.
- Unless I ask you to do otherwise, choose any "Try This" prompt from the Burroway chapters we are reading that week. Please indicate the exercise number and on what page it can be found.
- You should submit these exercises via Blackboard by Monday at 9am.
- **By the end of the semester, you should have a collection of 8 exercises you've tried.**

Quizzes: 10%

There will be 3 quizzes throughout the semester. Quizzes may cover readings, vocabulary, concepts in form/craft. You may attend an additional literary reading (see below) held at UTEP in lieu of one quizz.

Attend Cultural Event: 5%

Students are required to attend a cultural event, preferably a literary reading, and write a small 250-300 words response no later than 1 week after attending. Please submit this to me via Blackboard. I will announce readings throughout the semester, but you are welcome to find your own reading/cultural event. Examples might be dance performances, concerts, plays, festivals, etc., anywhere in the Paso del Norte region. Please see me well in advance if you have questions or concerns about this requirement. You may attend an additional *literary reading at UTEP* in lieu of one quizz grade.

Writings and Workshops Participation: 30%

- Beginning the sixth week of class, we will workshop the writing you produce for this class. Each student will have two pieces workshopped (one poem, one story) and will lead workshop discussions twice.
- On the first day of class, I will pass around a sign-up sheet for students to sign up to workshop and to sign up to lead workshop discussions.
- If it is your turn to workshop, you must post your short story or poem on Blackboard by Friday at 11:59 pm if you are scheduled for Tuesday, and by Sunday by 11:59pm if you are scheduled for Thursday, unless otherwise noted in the course calendar. ***If you post your work late, you forfeit your opportunity to workshop and your final grade will suffer.***
- The ***entire*** class should comment by Monday at 11:59 pm if the workshop is scheduled for Tuesday, and by Wednesday at 11:59 pm if the workshop is scheduled for Thursday.
- Discussion leaders will review peer comments and solicit elaboration during workshop. Please come to class with at least 3 thoughtful questions to prompt a rich discourse.
- Short stories should be ~1000 words (approximately 3-4 pages,) double-spaced in a single standard font (Times, etc.), 11-12 pt. size.

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- Poems should be single-spaced in a single-column (unless you are purposefully writing a multiple-column poem). Use a standard font, 11-12 pt. size. Please use a full page for your poems, as the whitespace of a poem is just as important as the written text.
 - I ask that you turn in **new** poems and short stories only, or work you've written during the timeframe of this course. I will not accept work that you've workshopped before in another class or other workshop form, nor work that you've written before this course—each piece must be something that you've newly written, considering the points you've learned through course readings and activities.
 - Your pieces may be derived from writing prompts and each piece should be a **well-executed draft**, drafts upon which you've spent at least 10-20 hours of solid writing and revision per poem or story, drafts which you believe to be as close to publishable-quality as you can accomplish. Please respect your peers' time and talent by making sure you submit work that you stand behind.
 - *Etiquette*: During workshop I ask you to take your role as a poetry/prose critic seriously and with sensitivity. You have a responsibility to your classmates to not only read their work carefully, but to make constructive and useful comments to help them express their feelings, thoughts, and emotions into a compelling aesthetic. In the beginning I may lead discussion more, but as the course progresses I will expect you to take more of a lead in shaping the conversation. I expect that you will have read the work beforehand, have made careful notes on the poem or short story, and that you will be vocal during workshop. Participating in these workshops will help you to read and revise your own work with more fluency and expertise. There is always something to critique. It's your job as a writer to find it. It is unacceptable to tell a fellow writer that you love or like or hate everything about his/her poem/prose, as this is quite unhelpful to your peers and is non-intuitive to the writing process, which demands revision. If your work is under discussion, you are expected to remain quiet and attentive to the comments; you are also expected to take notes, since that will be your participation for the day.
 - Make sure you save all versions of your work, as well as your classmate's workshop comments; you will need these for your final portfolio.
 - Turning work in late, not showing up for your workshop turn, not actively participating in workshop, not commenting on peers' work posted on Blackboard, not having discussion questions prepared when you lead workshop, or turning in sloppy work will affect your grade.

Conference: 5%

- You will be required to turn in one poem and one short story as part of a final portfolio. Before this is due, however, I will ask you to turn in a portfolio draft of your workshop drafts and current revisions (see course schedule) so we can conference over your progress and strategize possible revisions to get your creative work closer to publishable-quality work.
- The more advanced the revisions in your conference portfolio are, the more I can be helpful to you during your conference. We'll also discuss any concerns you may have with your writing, your writing process, or your progress in the class during this one-on-one conference.
- If you do not turn in a complete conference portfolio draft on time, you will not be able to schedule a conference, as there will be nothing to conference over. No exceptions.
- If you do not attend your conference or are tardy for your conference, you will receive a 0 for this portion of your grade.

Final Portfolio: 25%

It consists of 3 elements:

- 500 word reflection in which you state your revision strategy, (i.e. what you were trying to accomplish while rewriting your creative work)
- 1 poem (your first draft and your revised draft)
- 1 revised short story (your first draft and your revised draft)

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism in this class means submitting someone's work in your assignments without the proper citations or handing in work you've written for another class. Collusion means unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing assignments. Neither is acceptable, and this type of behavior is subject to disciplinary action. To avoid plagiarism, do not submit work under your name that you did not write yourself, do not turn in work you've written for another class, and always cite ideas or language taken from another source. Please refer to UTEP's policy for further information:

<http://sa.utep.edu/osccr/academic-integrity/>

Cell Phones/Laptop computers

To avoid receiving calls and text messages during class, please turn off your phone before entering the classroom. If you are in the midst of a personal emergency, please talk to me during office hours to arrange a work-around. ***Computers are not permitted in class.***

Student Accommodations

If you require academic/special accommodations, as outlined by the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services, please speak to me in the first two weeks of class so we can discuss the accommodations you require. I encourage any student who thinks they might require academic accommodations to contact UTEP CASS to learn about your rights. <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/>

University Writing Center

I implore ***every*** student to visit the University Writing Center (Library Building, Room 227). The best writers are the ones who ask for feedback constantly. This invaluable resource is free of charge and can be used throughout your time at UTEP.

Technical Support

The University of Texas at El Paso offers complete technical information and help desk support at:

<http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=74092>

***This syllabus is subject to change at the instructor's discretion, as is the course schedule below. You will be notified, however, of any changes prior to their taking effect. ***

Calendar

WEEK	DAY	TOPIC
1	T-28	Syllabus + Introduction to Creative Writing
	Th-30	<p>Introduction to Poetry For Discussion: <i>Imaginative Writer (IW)</i>, pp. 297-316</p> <p>Due for Week 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Exercise • Quizz #1: Bring one printed-out example of figurative speech (<i>IW</i>, 24-27) to class on Thursday, 9/6. It can be found (social media meme, newspaper, book, etc.) or it can be original.
2 - SEPT	T-4	<p>IMAGE: <i>IW</i>, pp. 15-27</p> <p>For discussion: "The Taxi," Lowell (Bb), "Les Luths," O'Hara (Bb), "Tonight I can write..." Neruda (Bb)</p>
	Th-6	<p>IMAGE: <i>IW</i>, pp. 15-27</p> <p>For discussion: "After Dinner," Pimentel (Bb), "Paramour," Alcalá (Bb) "Suddenly, In a Public Place," Vanderpoorten (Bb), "Facing It," Komunyakaa (<i>IW</i>, p. 42)</p> <p>Due for Week 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Exercise
3	T-11	<p>METER + RHYME: <i>IW</i>, pp. 373-382; Sonnet, Haiku, Villanelle handouts (Bb)</p> <p>For discussion: "Border triptych," Corral (Bb), "Blind Boone's Apparitions," Jess (Bb), Selections by Basho (Bb), "Do not go gentle...", Thomas (Bb),</p>
	Th-13	<p>METER + RHYME: <i>IW</i>, pp. 373-382; Ghazal, Pantoum, Sestina handouts (Bb)</p> <p>For discussion: "Hip-Hop Ghazal," Smith (Bb), "Tonight," Ali (Bb), "My Brother at 3am," Diaz (Bb), "Sestina," Bishop (Bb)</p> <p>Due for Week 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Exercise

4	T-18	<p>RHYTHM: “How Poetry Came to Matter Again,” Lichtenstein (Bb)</p> <p>For discussion: Spoken word sample, "Heartbeats," Dixon (Bb), from <i>Whereas</i>, Long Soldier (Bb)</p>
	Th-20	<p>STORY</p> <p>For discussion: "A Story About the Body," Haas (<i>IW</i>, p.187), "Goat Song," Kelly (Bb), "We Real Cool," Brooks (Bb), “sometimes I wish I felt...” Smith (Bb)</p> <p>Due for Week 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post poems on Blackboard thread • Review peers’ work • Discussion leaders: ready questions for workshop
5	T-25	<p>REVISION + VOICE: <i>IW</i>, pp. 195-210; pp. 47-52</p>
	Th-27	<p>Workshop 1 (Poetry)</p> <p>Due for Week 6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post poems on Blackboard Thread • Review peers’ work • Discussion leaders: ready questions for workshop
6 - OCT	T-2	<p>Workshop 2 (Poetry)</p>
	Th-4	<p>Workshop 3 (Poetry)</p> <p>Due for Week 7:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post poems on Blackboard Thread • Review peers’ work • Discussion leaders: ready questions for workshop • Writing Exercise
7	T-9	<p>Workshop 4 (Poetry)</p>
	Th-11	<p>Introduction to Fiction: <i>IW</i>, pp. 259-270</p> <p>Due for Week 8:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Exercise • Quizz #2: Come to class on Tues., 10/16, with a written (75-100 word) introduction of anyone

8	T-16	<p>CHARACTER: <i>IW</i> pp. 94-108</p> <p><i>For discussion:</i> “Water Child,” Danticat (Bb)</p>
	Th-18	<p>CHARACTER: <i>IW</i>, pp. 47-55</p> <p><i>For discussion:</i> “Fits,” Munro (Bb)</p> <p>Due for Week 9:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Exercise
9	T-23	<p>POV: <i>IW</i>, pp. 55-61</p> <p><i>For discussion:</i> “The Lesson,” Bambara (Bb), “Girl,” Kincaid (<i>IW</i>, p. 38)</p>
	Th-25	<p>SETTING: <i>IW</i>, pp. 135-147</p> <p><i>For discussion:</i> “Lost in the City,” Jones (Bb), “Speech Sounds,” Butler (Bb), “Araby,” Joyce (Bb)</p> <p>Due for Week 10:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Exercise
10- NOV.	T-30	<p>STORY/PLOT: <i>IW</i>, pp. 167-175; <i>IW</i>, pp. 339-340</p> <p><i>For discussion:</i> “Bullet in the Brain,” Wolff (<i>IW</i>, p. 34), “Never Marry a Mexican,” Cisneros (Bb),</p>
	Th-1	<p>STORY/STRUCTURE: <i>IW</i>, pp. 167-175 (review)</p> <p><i>For discussion:</i> “The Way We Live Now,” Sontag (Bb), “The Night Face-Up,” Cortazar (Bb)</p> <p>Due for Week 11:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post stories on Blackboard Thread • Review peers’ work • Discussion leaders: ready questions for workshop <p>Drop deadline is November 2nd</p>
11	T-6 (Election Day)	<p>Workshop 1 (Fiction)</p>

	Th-8	Workshop 2 (Fiction) <i>Due for Week 12:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post stories on Blackboard Thread • Review peers' work • Discussion leaders: ready questions for workshop • Come to class on Thurs., 11/15, ready to sign up for Conf.
12	T-13	Workshop 3 (Fiction)
	Th-15	Workshop 4 (Fiction) <i>Due for Week 13:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Exercise • Work on Portfolio drafts
13	T-20	Independent Writing (NO CLASS MEETING) Portfolio Draft is due via email by 11:59 PM
	Th-22	Thanksgiving – UNIVERSITY CLOSED
14	T-27	Conferences (NO CLASS MEETING)
	Th-29	Conferences (NO CLASS MEETING)
15 - DEC	T-4	Conferences (NO CLASS MEETING)
	Th-6	Final Class: Comments, Concerns, Dreams for the Future Quizz #3 (for applicable students)
16	M-10, by 5:00pm	Final Portfolio. Email me <i>one single PDF document</i> named "LAST NAME_ Final Portfolio" that includes your revision reflection, and the final revisions of your 1 poem and 1 short story