TENTATIVE SYLLABUS
Fall 2016

"Writing [a book] is like driving at night in the fog.
You can only see as far as your headlights, but you can make the whole trip that way."
—E. L. Doctorow

PROFESSOR:	Lex Williford
CRN:	CRW 5366—001 CRN 16780 Advanced Fiction Workshop
DATES:	Fall 2016
TIME:	6:00-8:50 p. m. T, August 22, 2016-December 01, 2016
CLASSROOM:	Health Science/School of NURS 213
OFFICE:	Education 901A
OFFICE HOURS:	2-4 M-F (Chair's office hours)
E-MAIL:	lex@utep.edu
OFFICE PHONE:	747-5721 (CW chair's office); 433-1931 (mobile).

Note:

- I'm usually in my UTEP office weekdays all day, but I write and illustrate most weekdays till one or two; my writing time is a sacred space for me so please respect my need to write or draw without interruption. Feel free to call me any weekday *after two p. m.*—preferably on my office phone.
- Though I'm not formally planning to schedule conferences with students about their books-in-progress, I'm certainly willing to, especially if you need to brainstorm at the beginning of the semester—or if you find yourself hopelessly stuck or blocked. (It happens.)
- This semester, I'm scheduled to do readings in Salt Lake City (10/26-28), Phoenix (11/2) and Albuquerque (11/12), and it may be difficult to contact me during the days I'm gone, but I'll do my best to check my e-mail if you need any help.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Catalogue:
Intensive study and practice in the various forms and approaches of fiction, including workshop discussion and individual student manuscripts.
Prerequisite: Department approval.

This course will have to main goals:
- To begin generating and organizing an entire narrative book project, either in preparation for your thesis proposal and thesis or as an independent book project you want to work on.
- To write a *minimum* of two *new* chapters or stories as part of this narrative book project, focusing on

craft, editing and possible publication, and, if you wish, using the twenty-page writing sample for your thesis proposal. I recommend that you use the class to write *much more than the minimum amount*, to use this time as an opportunity to have your peers read everything you write and to have the class workshop at least two chapters or stories.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**   *The Art of Subtext: Beyond Plot*
Charles Baxter
Graywolf Press (July 24, 2007)
ISBN-10: 1555974732
ISBN-13: 978-1555974732

This collection of craft essays focuses on one of the main differences between plotted fiction and literary fiction, whose principal effects derive not from the artifice of plot but from the subtle, organic deepening of fiction through the discovery of meaningful subtext. The readings are short, but they run deep and I hope to use our discussions of this text as a way of getting you to think about how to deepen and enrich your stories. It's not enough simply to outline a book mostly because some of the most important subtext is unconscious*, something a writer discovers in the journey of writing a book*.
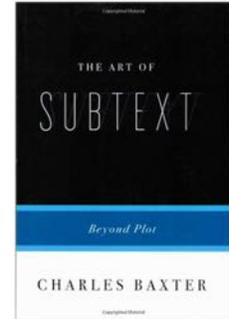
This book will cover practical nuts and bolts issues of craft, the conventions of writing narrative fiction and creative nonfiction. It's also a fairly good review of grammar—which is important mostly to make your writing more readable and clear. While my knowledge of Spanish grammar is limited, we'll also discuss similar issue for those of you writing in Spanish.
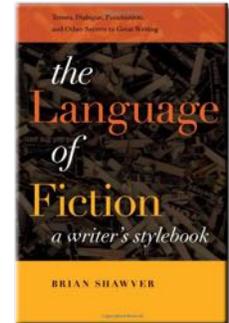
The Language of Fiction: A Writer's Stylebook
Brian Shawver

UPNE (January 8, 2013)
ISBN-10: 1611683300
ISBN-13: 978-1611683301

RECOMMENDED SOFTWARE:

1. Scrivener 2 for Mac or Windows:
1. https://www.literatureandlatte.com/scrivener.php ($45 Mac/Windows, also available now for the iPad/iPhone ($15)
2. A mind-mapping program:
1. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mind_map (Definition)
2. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_concept-_and_mind-mapping_software (Freeware and Proprietary Software):
3. These are programs I'd recommend:
    - iThoughts: (my favorite: $50, Mac/$20 iPad/iPhone: http://toketaware.com).
    - Scapple (works with Scrivener: : $15, https://www.literatureandlatte.com/scapple.php)
    - ConceptDraw Mindmap 8 (a nice program but increasingly expensive: usually $75, education price—but $25 by special arrangement till September 1 (Order by phone only: 800-431-8713 and say that you're in Lex Williford's class): http://creationengine.com/html/m.lasso?m=CN)
3. A Dropbox account to share documents among your classmates, *especially to streamline the process of getting your workshop documents to me a few days before your scheduled workshops*.

2.

Dropbox accounts are free and include 2 GB of space for you to keep backups of your documents. I currently pay $138 for 1 TB of space, and because the account keeps automatic backups of my files for an entire year, I've managed to save a few days of writing I would have otherwise lost when my computers crashed. (I also keep redundant backups, not a bad idea if you don't want to lose an entire novel's worth of work.) This statement isn't a commercial for Dropbox; I just think it's the most dependable cloud service out there for the price, and it saves us a lot of trouble when sharing documents. You can make comments on documents in the Dropbox for workshops, I'd prefer you use the free Adobe Acrobat reader instead.

PLAGIARISM:

DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT.

According to UTEP online:

Plagiarism is defined as the use of another person's ideas or words without giving proper credit. Plagiarism occurs whenever a student quotes, paraphrases or summarizes another person's work without providing correct citation. Plagiarism occurs whether the work quoted is a book, article, website, reader's guide like Cliffs Notes or SparkNotes, another student's paper, or any other source. An entire essay is considered fraudulent even if only a single sentence is plagiarized.[1]

ATTENDANCE:

Creative writing doesn't mean creative attendance.

I won't play workshop cop. I may not say anything to you about your excessive absences or tardies, or if you happen to disappear during a mid-class break. I'll simply take roll at five minutes after and leave it at that. If you come into class ten minutes late, you'll be tardy; if you come into class an hour late, you'll be counted absent; two tardies count the same as an unexcused absence; if you duck out of class halfway without a good reason, you'll be counted as tardy, even if you showed up on time. If you miss a lot of class, please note the drop date in the schedule and drop the class right away. Otherwise, excessive absences could earn you a *D* or an *F*. Your attendance is your responsibility. The point of all this isn't to be punitive but to recognize that students who show up on time are good citizens, who respect other students and want to participate, especially in the workshop process, the primary purpose of the class.

Of course, if you have a genuine excuse for missing class, just call ahead and tell me and I'll count your absence as excused.

GRADES:

NOTE: ABSENCES, EXERCISES NOT COMPLETED, ETC. CAN AFFECT THESE TENTATIVE PERCENTAGES.

The semester's work will occur in three parts, and your grades will be determined by your completing:	%
BEGINNING OF THE SEMESTER	

• **A two-page written thesis proposal, Draft 1** (not including the cover page):
  • The "Thesis Proposal Cover Page," filled in, including the faculty member (proposed thesis director) who you wish to present the proposal to.
  • A dramatic summary and/or "brief statement (approximately two pages) that outlines your project. For example, you may describe your plot; the themes you have explored and would like to continue exploring; the scope (or length of the project); and issues or arguments you'd like to present in your fiction [or nonfiction]. You may also discuss the work you've already written, and in what direction you'd like to take it."[2]
  • "The proposal should be accompanied by a bibliography that provides a
	5%

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[1] http://academics.utep.edu/Portals/1559/docs/resources/Avoiding%20Plagiarism%20-%20Syllabus%20Statements.doc

[2] All quotations taken from the UTEP Department of Creative Writing "Thesis & and Defense Guidelines," José de Piérola, Graduate Director.

theoretical and/or literary frame for your proposed project." This bibliography is the beginning of your research into the thesis preface you'll write as part of your thesis and thesis defense. • A two-semester work plan, beginning with CRW 5398 (Thesis I) and ending with CRW 5399 (Thesis II), outlining a tentative proposed schedule, including proposed dates, deadlines for drafts and the written preface, with sufficient time for discussion with your thesis director and at least a two-week period for your thesis committee to read the final draft and preface before your thesis defense. • **An oral presentation of your book proposal (no more than about ten minutes).**	

• **A two-page analysis of two group members' thesis proposals and their entire Scrivener book projects as written so far, with specific suggestions for revision** (2.5% each x 2 = 5%)**:**
Group 1 (Español), Critique 1:
    • Daniela Armijo and Criseida (group partners)
    • Cesar and Daniela Ruelas (group partners)
    • Mario and Oscar Zapata (group partners)
    • Daniela Armijo and Oscar Zapata (assigned partners)
    • Cesar and Mario (assigned partners)
    • Criseida and Daniela Ruelas (assigned partners)
Group 2 (English), Critique 1:
    • Carla and Rebekah (group partners)
    • Oscar Moreno and Aldo (group partners)
    • Saul and Will (group partners)
    • Carla and Will (assigned partners)
    • Oscar Moreno and Saul
    • Rebekah and Aldo (assigned partners)
• **Oral Report of the Group Critiques (no more than about five minutes).**
	5%

SEMESTER-LONG WORKSHOPS (UNGRADED)

• *New* Work, Chapters from a Novel, Stories from a Novel in Stories or Book of Stories, Part of the Final Portfolio Grade
    o **One Chapter or Story before Mid-semester**
    o **One Chapter or Story after Mid-semester**

END OF THE SEMESTER

• **Oral Presentation of Book Proposal, Revised**	5%

4.

A two-page analysis of two group members' thesis proposals and their entire book projects as written so far, with specific suggestions for revision (2.5% each x 2 = 5%) **Group 1 (Español), Critique 2:** • Daniela Armijo and Criseida (group partners) • Cesar and Daniela Ruelas (group partners) • Mario and Oscar Zapata (group partners) • Daniela Armijo and Daniela Ruelas (assigned partners) • Criseida and Mario (assigned partners) • Cesar and Oscar Zapata (assigned partners) **Group 2 (English), Critique 2:** • Carla and Rebekah (group partners) • Oscar Moreno and Aldo (group partners) • Saul and Will (group partners) • Carla and Oscar Moreno (assigned partners) • Rebekah and Saul (assigned partners) • Aldo and Will (assigned partners)		5%
• **Oral Presentation of Group Critiques**		
• **Final Portfolio**		
a. **A two-page written thesis proposal, Final Draft** (including elements listed under Week 15, page 8).		10%
b. **Writing Portfolio/Thesis Writing Sample 20 pages (in PDF format)**		60%
• **Class Participation** (Graded)		
	a. In-Class Discussion	5%
	b. Adobe Acrobat Comments (Online and On-campus: Please keep a running count of these so I can check them against my numbers when I calculate final grades.) (On-campus and Online)	5%

CRW 5366 WRITING ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS AND DEADLINES
INSTRUCTIONS

- *All assignments are due midnight Sunday* **the weekend before each designated week number**.
    - o Please upload individually graded assignment to Blackboard *Assignments* for a grade.
    - o Please upload group assignments to your *Group Discussion Boards* to share with others in your groups and me. These assignments will be ungraded. Note: You'll not be able to save Scrivener files (which are actually packages like folders) to Group Discussion Boards, but you can share your Scrivener files in Dropbox. You can also compile your Scrivener documents into a standard format (.doc/.docx/.rtf/pdf) all your group members can review from your group discussion boards.

Where to Copy or Upload Writing Assignments:
- **Blackboard**
    - o **Graded Assignments** *Only*
    - o **Ungraded Group Assignments**
        - ▪ Please upload all your shared group documents to your Group Discussion Boards so that you can all download and read them. If it's more convenient, you may use your Dropbox Group Folder instead. Use one or the other, not both.
- **Dropbox**
    - o **For Workshop Documents** *Only* **(except for sharing documents among your group; if it's easier you can use BB instead but will not be able to upload any Scrivener files in BB; you'll have to compile them into another format before you can share them.)**
        - ▪ Please upload your original workshop documents to the appropriate weekly folders

so I can assemble, convert and enable them for workshop comments and e-mail them to everyone in a single document each week. You may save documents in almost any format (Word (.doc or .docx), Apple Pages (.pages) or Rich Text Format files (.rtf), Scrivener (.scriv) and Adobe Acrobat Reader (.pdf)—I can open most—but if it's not too much trouble, please save them as PDF files to keep me from having to convert them myself.

- MindMap Workshops
- Book-in-Progress Summary Workshops
- All Chapter/Story Workshops
- CAUTION:
  - Please be careful when copying your documents to and from shared Dropbox folders.
  - Your Dropbox folder is an individual synced copy of every other student's shared folders. *If you delete or move files from your Dropbox folder, those files won't be available to others. If you change files from your Dropbox folders, others' computers will sync those changes.*
  - Please make sure that you see a green checkmark (rather than the rotating arrows that show a syncing document) next to files you've copied to or plan to copy from the Dropbox. If these files haven't finished syncing and you or others try to open them while they're still unsynced, the files might become corrupted and unusable. This kind of file corruption can be particularly problematic for Scrivener files— actually many files all combined into one package like a folder.
  - NEVER write or edit your or others' documents from within the Dropbox. Keep your documents in a separate folder on your computer and *copy* (*don't move*) your finished documents to the Dropbox.
  - NEVER drag and drop (move) your documents from or to the Dropbox folder; otherwise, you might lose the original documents on your computer or delete others' documents. I've had several students lose stories they've written because they or someone else has dragged and dropped a file rather than copied it.
  - I keep backups of workshop documents for about a year--just in case. Then I delete them to save space on my computer and Dropbox.
  - ALWAYS click on the file you want to copy in your original computer folder, hold down *Control* (or *Command* on Macs) *C*; then go to the shared Dropbox folder you want to copy to and hold down *Control* (or *Command* on Macs) *V* to paste the copied files to the Dropbox.
  - *ALWAYS keep at least one back up of your files.* Back up at least two or three times a day so you don't lose your work as your write. You can set up Scrivener to back up for you.
  - Better yet, keep at least two redundant backups of files--especially Scrivener files--one on your computer and one on an external drive or USB drive.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

- **Week 2**
  - Workshop Tentative Mind maps (Ungraded)
  - Copy your first mind maps (in PDF, if possible) to the *Week 2 Tentative Mind Map Dropbox* Folder so I can assemble them all and send them out for comments and workshop discussion. Also, as the first entry in the mind maps themselves, include a paragraph or two explaining the mind maps' tentative structure and organization. Remember these maps are going to change significantly over time.
    - Please *don't* upload your Mind maps to Blackboard, only to Dropbox. Blackboard is for graded assignments only.

- On Monday I'll assemble all the mind maps and combine and convert them into one document enabled for workshop comments on Thursday.
- Please note that we'll discuss these only in our Adobe Acrobat comments and in class workshop, not on any discussion boards. Please make at least one or two comments on each map and then a paragraph-long note at the end of each mind map discussing what makes the map storyline intriguing. If the story's unclear, discuss why and what confuses you.

- **Week 3**
  - Workshop Book-in-Progress Summaries (One page only, double-spaced/ungraded, except for Adobe Comments)
  - Copy your page-long summaries (in Word, RTF or PDF format) to the *Week 3 Book-in-Progress Summary Dropbox Folder* so I can assemble them all and send them out for comments and workshop discussion.
    - Please do not upload your summaries to Blackboard, only to Dropbox.
  - Please note that we'll discuss these summaries only in our Adobe Acrobat comments, not on any Blackboard discussion boards. Please make at least one or two comments in the margins of each summary in Acrobat and then write a paragraph-long note discussing what makes the story intriguing. If the story's unclear, discuss why and what confuses you.

- **Weeks 4-5**
  - **WRITING ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE:**
    - **Scrivener Book-in-Progress**, for Two Group Members Only.
      - Please upload your Scrivener book-in-progress file to your group's Discussion Board (or Dropbox) so your group members may download and comment on them over the next two weeks. If you wish to see each other's entire Scrivener files, back them up as zip files as outlined in Week 15, page 8 (Scrivener Book-in-Progress File End-of-Semester Draft). *You can't upload or copy Scrivener files directly, unless they're zip files.*
      - Do not upload these to Assignments.
      - Ungraded

- **Week 6**
  - **WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE:**
    - **Book Proposal, Draft 1**, based (with some flexibility) upon "Submitting Your Thesis Proposal" in the UTEP MFA "Thesis & Defense Guidelines" handout, including each of these supplements:
      - A One-Paragraph Summary of Your Book, Draft 2
      - An Analysis of Your Writing Process and Writing Blocks
      - A Mind Map of Your Book, Draft 2 (in PDF format if possible)
      - An Analysis of Your Book's Tentative Structure
      - A Work Plan and Schedule of Your Thesis with Dates and Deadlines
      - Your Writing Goals for the Semester and the rest of your time in the MFA program.
      - An Oral Presentation of the Book Proposal to Class

- **Weeks 7-8**
  - **WRITING ASSIGNMENT 3 DUE:**
    - Written Analyses and Critiques of Two Group Members' Book Projects, Final Drafts (Please post these both to Assignments for a grade and to your Group Discussion Boards so that your peers may read their critiques.)

- **Week 11**
  - **WRITING ASSIGNMENT 4 DUE:**
    - **Scrivener Book-in-Progress Revision**, for Two Group Members Only.
      - Please upload these to your group's discussion board so your group members may download and comment on them over the next two weeks.
      - Do not upload these to Assignments.
      - Ungraded

- **Week 12**
  - **WRITING ASSIGNMENT 5 DUE:**

- o **An Oral Presentation of Your Preliminary Book Proposal to Class**
  - Including a reading of a 1-2 page writing sample that represents your best work of the semester, a short section you can read aloud.
  - If you wish to include a presentation--in PowerPoint, Keynote, Adobe Acrobat, Word, MindMap or Scrivener format--please copy it to the Dropbox folder labeled Oral Reports-->Book Proposal, Draft 1 so you can use them on my computer. Just saves time so we don't have to deal with each student's individual computers and technical issues. Please keep your presentations to about ten minutes.
  - Class Discussion of Each Reading and Presentation.
- o **Week 13**
  - ▪ **WRITING ASSIGNMENT 6 Due:**
    - o **Second Analyses/Critiques of Two Group Members' Overall Book Projects-in-Progress,** Final Draft (Posted to Group Discussion Boards and Assignments)
    - o Oral Reports of Group Critiques
- o **Week 15**
  - ▪ **WRITING ASSIGNMENT 5 DUE:**
    - o **Friday midnight of Week 15**
    - o **Book Proposal, Final Draft** (Graded):
      - Thesis Proposal Cover Page with Proposed Thesis Director
      - One- or Two-Paragraph Summary of Your Book, Final Draft
      - Mind Map of Your Book, Final Draft, as Revised at till End of the Semester (in Adobe Acrobat PDF Format if possible)
      - Analysis of Your Thesis Structure as Revised at till End of the Semester (including Changes since the Beginning of the Semester)
      - An Analysis of How Your Writing Process Has Changed, Improved or Not and Whether or How You've Overcome Your Writing Blocks (including any discoveries you made about your writing process you didn't know before this class).
      - Scrivener Book-in-Progress File End-of-Semester Draft:
        - ▪ Open your entire thesis/book project in Scrivener.
        - ▪ In the top menu, click on *File*, then *Backup*, then *Back Up To . . .*
        - ▪ In the *Back Up To* dialogue check off the box toward the bottom labelled, *Back Up as Zip File*.
        - ▪ Navigate to the directory on your computer you want to save to, and then *Save*.
        - ▪ You can now upload the entire zip file to Blackboard as part of your final portfolio.
        - ▪ **Note**: the purpose of saving the entire Scrivener file is for me to review the structure and elements of your book project at the end of the semester to make comments and suggestions.
      - A Query Letter to an Agent of Your Choice
    - o **Writing Portfolio/Thesis Writing Sample Final Draft** (20-30 pages, graded): Two Revised Chapters/Stories from Your Novel, Novel in Stories or Book of Stories

- If you haven't gotten the latest version of the free Adobe Acrobat Reader, please download and install it from http://get.adobe.com/reader. We'll base all our workshops upon everyone's Adobe Acrobat comments.
- Shared Reviews in Adobe Acrobat Reader allow students to share (or "publish") their comments through an online server, making it possible for them to make comments, to publish them online and to read other writers' comments, constantly syncing everyone's comments with the document you've saved and made comments about on your computer. If you wish to view a presentation about my Adobe Acrobat workshops, go the presentation link in Blackboard, click here or go to http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v675pflAAkk.

Here are the steps we'll follow for Adobe Acrobat Workshops each week:

1. A student up for workshop will write her story/chapter in Scrivener, then save (or compile) it to Adobe Acrobat format and put it in the appropriate week's workshop Dropbox Folder *by the deadline(s) listed in the Weekly Schedule and Deadlines listed below.* In *Compile*, just check the individual document you want to compile and uncheck all the others—not the entire manuscript please.

2. Please be sure to turn in your stories on time. Look at the syllabus and plan ahead. If you have a calendar program that will remind you about your due dates, take the time to put these in your calendars and/or smart phones.

3. The deadline for *all* stories is *midnight Sunday the weekend before we workshop them.* Getting stories in on time makes it much easier for me to assemble all the next week's workshop stories and e-mail them to everyone with plenty of time for students to make comments. If you don't get your workshop pieces in on time, the schedule gets all out of whack, and all our class work gets bunched up as we try to catch up.

4. Turning your documents in late makes my job more difficult. Putting all these documents together for workshop is already time consuming, so if you don't identify them by who you are, if you turn them in after the deadline, or if you get the wrong workshop week, it takes me a lot of time to sort out who's up with who's submitted workshop documents.
   - **IMPORTANT: Please identify your stories so I can match who's up for workshop with who's submitted stories:**
     - **Year_Semester_CRWXXX_YourLastName_FirstInitial_Workshop_Week3.pdf.**

5. Less cumbersome than Blackboard, Dropbox has helped me streamline my handling of workshop documents, so I prefer that you *use the Dropbox instead of e-mailing me your work for workshop discussion or uploading your documents to Blackboard.* You'll receive a link to the course Dropbox the first week of class. Keep track of that link. You'll need to create a free account if you don't already have one to be able to open the shared folders. You also get a few gigabytes of space for other stuff you might want to sync as a backup to your own individual Dropbox (not the shared folder please). *Please submit all your graded final writing assignments to Blackboard only* and not to Dropbox, and copy your workshop documents into the appropriate weekly Dropbox folders we're all sharing for this class. If that doesn't work, let me know if you're having trouble with Dropbox and if we can't resolve the problem, e-mail me your documents directly. Juggling documents through e-mail can be a serious pain in my kazonkle so please troubleshoot Dropbox first. I grade all your assignments directly from Blackboard.

6. Unless you wish to remain anonymous, please type your name onto the first page of your stories along with our course number.

7. If you're turning in a chapter or story that occurs late in your book and needs some context, include a paragraph summary of the book before this chapter/story so we don't spend too much time asking questions that you've already answered in earlier chapters/stories. In fact, imagine the questions we might have and aswer as many of them as you can.

8. Be sure to include your name in the headers of each subsequent page and put page numbers into footers at the bottom of each page. If you're having trouble using *Compile* (much like print in PDF) in Scrivener, you can copy your chapter or story and paste it into Word, then paginate it there; then post the document to Dropbox and I'll convert the file to PDF for you. Compile in Scrivener is fairly straightforward. All you have to do is to check off the story we need to read and nothing else, create headers for the entire document, then compile the document using the formatting you prefer.

9. Using Adobe Acrobat Professional, I'll enable the document for shared workshop comments, listing the UTEP Miner e-mails of all the students in the class so they'll have access to the online document's comments repository, then upload the document to my own UTEP server for comments. **I prefer that you *use your utep.miners.edu e-mail account only*, if possible; Hotmail, Gmail, AOL and many other accounts often refuse to accept files the size of our Acrobat workshop documents.** If you don't have the POP server or Microsoft Exchange settings for your UTEP mail account to download your UTEP e-mails to programs like Apple Mail or Microsoft Outlook, call the Help Desk: 747-7257. Checking your mail online is fine, of course, but these e-mail programs can "POP" all your e-mail accounts and bring all your e-mails from different accounts altogether in one place.

10. Open the e-mail I send with the Adobe Acrobat workshop document I've enabled for comments. Open the document. You should receive a dialogue that reads "Welcome [Back] to Shared Review." You should also see a list of all the students in the class and the number of comments they've made. (**IMPORTANT: Please keep a running count of all your comments each week and save them so I can check your numbers against mine at the end of the semester. If you don't see your comments in workshop stories/chapters, let me know**. **Sometimes Acrobat doesn't publish everyone's comments, and this is the only way I can receive an accurate count. You can send your document with your comments to me separately via email if you'd like and I can import your comments from there. I'd like everyone to be able to see everyone else's comments, of course.**) Click *Okay*, then save the document to your desktop (or to a folder you've created for workshops). Click on *Check for New Comments*. Then, using the *Comment and Markup* tools in Adobe Acrobat Reader make as many comments as you'd like, especially a 1-2 paragraph comment at the end of the story/chapter, responding to the questions the author has and, following the workshop cover sheet (Blackboard Course Supplements), make either descriptive or prescriptive comments about the entire piece—whatever the author chooses. (Please use the *Sticky Note* tool for most comments, and *avoid using the Call Out tool*, which tends to cover up the document so it's difficult to read.)

11. When you're finished making comments, make sure the Internet is connected, then click *Publish Comments* to make your comments available to the rest of the class.

12. If you want to see what others' comments are beforehand, click on *Check for New Comments* again. You may if you wish reply to other writers' comments; in fact, I've had some interesting arguments arise from just such comments. Rarely do students agree about stories, and that's one reason a student must go with the comments that are most useful and forget the rest.

13. In my on-campus workshops I'll project everyone's comments on-screen in class for workshop discussion. *Students don't have to print up stories and then collate other writers' comments*—a waste of time and trees. All students post their comments to a single document, helping the writer save time in the process of winnowing comments.

- **Important:**

  - I'd rather have unfinished work than late work.

  - Don't wait until the last minute to meet your workshop deadlines. If you're unable to complete your story or chapter, copy do Dropbox what you've written so far with an end note about where you think you're heading. Sometimes the pressure to finish something for workshop can cause blocks and I don't think that kind of pressure ultimately serves a good purpose.

- All comments on the week's workshop documents are due on the deadline(s) listed in the Weekly Schedule and Deadlines list below.

- I make special efforts every semester to keep a tally of the quantity and quality of the comments received in Adobe Acrobat documents. To determine your citizenship grade at the end of the semester, I tally the quantity and consider the quality of these comments, along with your participation in class discussions. If you're a good class citizen, it'll reflect in your grade, sometimes making the difference between one letter grade and the next up when it's time to determine your final grade.

- If you write, "Cool, dude," or "I like/don't like this character/scene/story," you're not really helping other students. Please give concrete feedback; if you find a problem with a story, please offer a helpful suggestion or two to get the writer back on track. You'd want the same for your work. Upload the workshop cover sheet if you wish to describe in detail the kind of workshop comments you want. The more specific you are about what you want, the more specific we can be. The best way to discuss workshop stories is to focus on specific techniques, not on subjective opinions, which many students will probably disagree with anyway. See my notes on my workshop philosophy below.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE AND DEADLINES	
Unless noted in the Daily Schedule below, please keep the following weekly deadlines throughout the semester. Also, please note your deadlines in your personal calendar and keep them. Please don't send your work in a day or two before workshop expecting us to comment on it; we will not have time. If you must, turn in *unfinished* work rather than *late* work	
MONDAY	I'll upload and e-mail this coming week's workshop documents for everyone's comments. If you haven't made the Sunday midnight deadline, we won't workshop your story or chapter, and I won't reschedule the workshop unless you have a legitimate excuse for missing the deadline: You've broken your femur contracted malaria, for example. ; -) This class is tightly scheduled from the beginning, mostly because I want every student to have the chance to workshop at least two stories or chapters. Seems only fair.
TUESDAY	Comment on other writers' manuscripts.
WEDNESDAY	Comment on other writers' manuscripts.
THURSDAY	Comment on other writers' manuscripts. (Note, on-campus students: Please don't make comments at the last minute. We should all have our comments published to the Acrobat server by, say, 3-4 p.m. when we workshop—whatever night we're scheduled for. *It's all right to make comments in class but only additional comments triggered by our workshop discussions.* Please don't surf the web on your computer during workshops, pretending you're reading workshop documents. On more than one occasion, students have told me they were annoyed by the distraction and by writers' not taking their manuscripts seriously.)
FRIDAY	Comment on other writers' manuscripts.
SATURDAY	Comment on other writers' manuscripts.
SUNDAY	If you're up for workshop in the coming week, please copy your workshop documents into the appropriate weekly folder no later than midnight tonight so that I may enable them for comments by Monday afternoon.

DAILY SCHEDULE	
Note: The assignments below are shown for the *days they're due*, not for the days they're assigned. **Abbreviations**: *Writing Fiction (WF).*	
WEEK # DATE	**AGENDA, SHORT-SHORT CRITICAL ANALYSES, ASSIGNMENTS AND DEADLINES, WORKSHOPS**
WEEK 1: TUESDAY,	ON-CAMPUS: AT THE BEGINNING OF THE FIRST CLASS DAY, I'LL PASS AROUND A HARD COPY OF THIS SYLLABUS FOR STUDENTS TO FILL IN. WHEN THE SYLLABUS COMES TO YOU, PLEASE FILL IN ALL THE SLOTS DESCRIBED BELOW. *NO MORE THAN ONE NAME TO EACH SLOT, PLEASE.*

AUGUST 23	• **PLEASE SIGN UP FOR TWO WORKSHOP SLOTS, ONE BEFORE MIDSEMESTER (IDENTIFIED BY THIS COLOR ON PAGE 16) AND ONE AFTER. TWO WORKSHOPS FOR EACH STUDENT: NOVEL CHAPTERS OR STORIES FOR NOVELS IN STORIES OR BOOKS OF STORIES.**
	• **PLEASE CHECK THE STUDENT CONTACTS LIST (PAGE 19) TO CONFIRM THAT YOUR PHONE AND YOUR MINERS.UTEP.EDU E-MAIL ADDRESS ARE ALL CORRECT. WE'LL CONDUCT ALL CLASS WORK THROUGH THE UTEP E-MAIL ADDRESS ONLY.** • • **WHEN WE'RE DONE WITH SIGN UPS, WE'LL SPEND SOME TIME DETERMINING WHO WISHES TO WORK WITH WHOM IN GROUPS, WHO'S WRITING SIMILAR MATERIAL AND WHO'S WRITING PRIMARILY IN ENGLISH OR SPANISH**
	Before We Begin: These are the main goals of this semester's class: • **To help you write and revise a narrative book proposal.** • **To help you write and revise a minimum of two chapters or stories (20 pages minimum, 30 maximum revised material for the portfolio).** • **To give you a great deal of writing time to focus on your thesis project (and others' in your group) and get as much written as possible. That is, we'll focus on workshopping and revising only two parts of the whole project, but you should write *much more* new material—at least 50-100 pages—so you can get extensive feedback from others in your group. You can, in other words, write shitty first drafts (as Anne Lamott says we must) and focus toward the end of class on choosing which 20-30 pages you wish to revise for your portfolio.** • **To help you decide which project you've been working on (or which new project you'd like to begin in this class) you can develop into your MFA thesis. A book of stories? A novel-in-stories? A novel? A memoir? Consider these questions**: • How much have you already written and presented to workshops for discussion? If you have strong stories or a strong beginning of a novel or memoir, should you begin a new project late in your MFA coursework, or should you take the work you've already written and revised, then add to it, develop and deepen it? • Are you attempting to write a book-length narrative which you've not yet begun? If so, how do you plan to write the entire book in two semesters? Have you put together a work plan and a schedule? Is this schedule realistic or overly optimistic? • Have you thought about how you might discuss your project in your thesis preface? Too many students forget that a preface is part of the thesis and find themselves rushing at the end to write their prefaces. • Do you already know some of the underlying themes, motifs, obsessions, extended metaphors, theoretical underpinnings of your thesis? If so, what are you thinking about writing for your preface as you write your thesis proposal and thesis? • Have you begun assembling a bibliography for your preface? Now's the time to start. • **To help you get the thesis director you'd prefer to work with (whenever you're finished with your other coursework).** • **To help you see your thesis projects as both *parts* (chapters or stories/essays) in workshops and as *wholes* (books-in-progress) in groups—that is, to see the evolving shape of your entire project and the component parts of it you know you have to write, the macro issues of structure at the book level and the micro issues of craft from the sentence level to the level of individual stories and/or chapters.** • *Most important*: **To help you have a *strong head start on your thesis* when it's time to sign up for thesis hours, preferably with *at least* an entire first draft of your project already written.** **Agenda**: • **Due Week 2 (Dropbox): Tentative Mind Maps for Workshop** • **Discuss syllabus, books, sign-ups and send around.** • **Determine whether we should make changes in the groups**, classifying students who are working in the same language and/or who have similar projects.

- **Meet and Greet:**
  - First, second or third year MFA?
  - Where are you from?
  - Which is your primary language? English or Spanish? Which do you prefer to write in? Are you completely bilingual?
  - Do you write about your place of origin?
  - What's your principal genre?
  - Poetry
  - Fiction
  - Novels
  - Stories
  - Creative Nonfiction
  - Playscripts
  - Screenplays
  - What book project do you want to write this semester? For your thesis?
  - How would you describe your writing process?
- **Show presentation: Part I: Introduction**
  - Presentation Q & A.
  - What we'll be discussing the next three weeks.
- **Writing Process**
  - Generating Mind
  - Sequencing Mind
- **Writing Product**
  - The Narrative Book
  - Narrative Book Structures
- **Fifteen-minute Exercise**
  - Write a paragraph-long description of your writing process
- **Linear and Nonlinear Writing**
  - Are you a linear writer who writes linear stories?
  - Are you a nonlinear writer who writes linear stories?
  - Are you a nonlinear writer of nonlinear stories?
- **Writing and Revising**
  - Do you write straight through without revision?
  - Do you revise as you go?
  - Are you an obsessive rewriter?
  - Describe your writing blocks.
  - What gets you stuck the most?
  - What are your recurring writing obsessions?
  - If you think they're still mostly unconscious, speculate about what they might be.
  - Do they help or hinder your writing process? Both?
  - Students read exercises to class.
- **Meet with group members.**
  - Group meetings will vary from 15-30 minutes each day. I'll go around to join in the discussions for all groups in class. Even if the class is on-campus, students should also meet on discussion boards.
  - Introduce yourselves and (optional) if you want, elect a group leader, to help organize and direct this semester's group work. You're free to elect other group leaders or even split the work three ways.
  - Describe your book project to one group member. Then have that group member describe it to the third group member. Keep it simple.
  - Is the book a novel? A novel in stories? A book of linked or unlinked stories?
  - Is it linear? Nonlinear?
  - What POV is the book written in?
  - Who is (are) the point of view character(s)/narrator(s)
  - Who is changed by the action? Is that change a complete reversal?

- Write only what happens, no interpretation, no theme, just the story itself.
- What conflict begins the novel?
- What are the three most important dramatic scenes in the story?
- How does the story end? (Yes, it helps to know even if the book ends differently. I almost always write to an ending I have to change significantly.)
- If the third group member misses the story, try the same process again until each group member is satisfied that the other group member has summarized the story well.
- Discuss Tentative Book Projects
- Group members describe each other's book projects.
- Writers describe their projects themselves, clarifying what their group members might have missed.
- Book Project Q & A
- Software Q & A
- Scrivener Q & A.
- If you wish to begin working in Scrivener as soon as possible, refer to Week 3 for a few suggestions and ideas for setting Scrivener up for the book projects you want to write. We'll describe mind maps and book summaries for the next two weeks, but you don't have to wait till then to get started. You may have already done a lot on your own.
- Help each other by asking and answering questions about Scrivener--throughout the semester.
- Preliminary Problems with Blackboard, Dropbox or Mind maps.

- **15-Minute Exercise**: On a piece of paper, write key words or phrases that describe the project you want to write and then draw bubbles around them, adding other words and phrases that you think of intuitively. Don't worry about sequencing or outlining these ideas. Simply spill out all the ideas you can in fifteen minutes.

WEEK 2 TUESDAY AUGUST 30	**Agenda**

Agenda
- **Due (Dropbox): Tentative Mind Maps for Workshop**
  - See the CRW 5366 Writing Assignment Instructions and Deadlines
- **Due Week 3 (Dropbox): Tentative Book-in-Progress Summaries for Workshop**
- **Show Presentation: Part II**
  - Process
  - Mind maps and Scrivener
  - Presentation Q. & A.
- **Craft Discussions**
- Baxter's *The Art of Subtext: Beyond Plot*
  - Introduction, 3. (3 pp)
  - The Art of Staging, 7 (25 pp)
- *LOF*, PART ONE
  - Stylistic Decisions
  - ONE
    - Which Verb Tense Should You Write In? 3
  - TWO
    - How Should You Format and Punctuate Dialogue? 14
- **Meet with Groups**
  - Meet with Group Members to map out this semester's work together, to discuss your progress or problems you're having with the class. Group and assigned partners can become friends, mentors, morale boosters and helpful critics. Create an atmosphere of mutual cooperation and creation--a culture of giving, kindness and generosity--and those things will come back to you and your work.
  - I've asked for two group members (your group partner and another assigned partner, one at the beginning and another at the end of the semester) to read your entire book projects and to write a critique of them. *I'd also like others in the group to read as much as they can of each other's book projects so that each writer can get as much constructive feedback and suggestions as possible.*

	○ If someone is being hyper-critical or unkind, please send me a personal e-mail me and I'll take care of it. I won't tolerate any cruelty or bullying of any kind. Period. • **Scrivener Q & A.** • **Workshop Tentative Mind maps (Ungraded)** • **Fifteen-minute Fictions or Exercises, if time.**

WEEK 3
TUESDAY
SEPTEMBER 6
	Agenda
	• **Due (Dropbox): Tentative Book-in-Progress Summaries for Workshop**
	    ○ See the CRW 5366 Writing Assignment Instructions and Deadlines
	• **Show Presentation: Part III**
	    ○ Product
	    ○ Sequencing Mind
	    ○ Structure
	• **Craft Discussions**
	    ○ Baxter's *The Art of Subtext: Beyond Plot*
	        • Digging the Subterranean, 33 (29 pp)
	    ○ *LOF*, PART ONE
	        ▪ Stylistic Decisions
	        ▪ THREE
	           • What Words Should You Use to Present Dialogue? 25
	        ▪ FOUR
	           • Should You Phonetically Represent Characters' Speech? 37
	• **Scrivener Q. & A.**
	    ○ If you haven't already done so, please prepare your documents for writing in Scrivener.
	        ▪ Export your completed (for now) mind maps to OPML format.
	        ▪ Import the OPML files into Scrivener you've exported from Mind Map.
	        ▪ Import all the documents you have so far to use for your books: Word files, research documents, descriptions of setting, characters, etc.
	        ▪ Drag all the documents to their current position in the mind map headings or wherever they seem to fit for now.
	        ▪ Begin gathering other data for research, story ideas, etc., including books you wish to include in your thesis proposal bibliography.
	• **Begin writing.**
	    ○ Write where the story begins or where it begins *for you*.
	    ○ Nonlinear Writers:
	        ▪ What chapter/story burns most brightly in your belly? Begin there and keep going. Use instinct as a means of deciding what to write and then what to writer rather than feeling you gave to begin at "the beginning."
	        ▪ Map out any story or chapter you'd like, something that's been cooking in the unconscious for a while. Begin there or anywhere.
	        ▪ What do you *have* to write right now? That is, what obsesses you most? What questions do you want to answer or pose? Begin.
	        ▪ Begin wherever the hell you want and see what happens. You don't have to know why you have to begin there. Follow your obsessions, some injustice, some scene that makes you angry. The point is to begin and to keep going.
	        ▪ Write the beginning and the ending if you'd like. You can always change both. Begin.
	        ▪ Consider how stories/chapters might link together intuitively. Triggering images that move from present action to past action memory? Image clusters that suggest meaningful connections? Similar scenes that occur at the beginning and the end which show a dramatic reversal in character or character choice? Write a dramatic scene, then set it up earlier in the book? Begin.
	        ▪ Surprise yourself. If you're not surprising yourself, you're not surprising your reader.

	- o Linear Writers. ▪ Begin at the beginning and keep going. Use your map as a guide but let the detours take you, too. They may seem insignificant but may also be the most important discovery you have yet to make. ▪ Consider cause and effect: How does one dramatic action lead to another? ▪ How do characters change from one scene to the next? How do characters' difficult choices and decisions--sometimes contradictory but ethical, too--lead them ahead toward disaster or redemption? ▪ Get someone in trouble and make it worser and worser. ▪ Surprise yourself. If you're not surprising yourself, you're not surprising your reader. - o Everyone: Reread projects you started outside this class and ask yourself, what next? Begin something new. (Don't just revise something you've already written. You can do that later. Stay with the *new* work.) **Scrivener Q. & A.** **Meet with Your Group.** - o Discuss problems with and revisions of your summaries, problems you're having with organization or writing, etc. - o Ask for help with putting your manuscripts together for Scrivener. Bring your computers to class and look over each one's file, and if someone's better at the tech side of things than you are, ask her how to solve a technical problem—or ask me. I'm a geek. **Workshop Book-in-Progress Summaries** **Fifteen-minute Fictions or Exercises, if time.**
WEEK 4 TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 13	**Agenda** **Scrivener Book-in-Progress, for Two Group Members Only** **Craft Discussions** - o Baxter's *The Art of Subtext: Beyond Plot* ▪ Unheard Melodies, 63 (25 pp) - o Stylistic Decisions ▪ *LOF*, PART ONE ▪ FIVE • What Are Your Options for Portraying Characters' Thoughts? 47 ▪ LOF, PART TWO ▪ Fundamentals of Language • SIX - o The Past Perfect, 63 **Meet with Group Members** **Scrivener:** - o Prepare you book-in-progress for your group members to read and critique. - o Backup your file as a zip file or compile and print it as a PDF file—everything you've assembled so far for your book project. Others can open zip files and save them to their computers and see the entire shape of the book in one glance. - o If you're having trouble bring your computers to class and we'll help each other out. **Individual Chapter/Story Workshops Begin** - Please note: - o All workshop chapters/stories are due Sunday midnight in the appropriate weekly Workshop Dropbox folder. - o If you don't turn them in by this deadline, we won't workshop them. - o *Don't post your workshop stories to Blackboard please.* - o I'll assemble these manuscripts, enable them for comments and send them out via e-mail - o Please have all your comments posted no later than the class we discuss them in. **Fifteen-minute Fictions or Exercises, if time.**
	• **Workshop**

	Daniela Ruelas
	• **Workshop**
	• **Workshop**

WEEK 5
TUESDAY
SEPTEMBER 20
	Agenda
	• **WRITING ASSIGNMENT 1 (Group Discussion Boards): Scrivener Book-in-Progress, for Two Group Members Only.**
	    ▪ See the CRW 5366 Writing Assignment Instructions and Deadlines
	• **DUE Week 6: Writing Assignment 2 (Blackboard Assignments: Book Proposal, Draft 1)**
	• **Craft Discussions**
	    ○ Baxter's *The Art of Subtext:* Beyond *Plot*
	        ▪ Unheard Melodies, 63 (25 pp)
	    ○ *LOF*, PART TWO
	        ▪ Fundamentals of Language
	        ▪ SEVEN
	            • Pronouns, 72
	        ▪ EIGHT
	            • Adverbs, 85
	• Meet with Group Members
	    ○ Discuss progress and problems.
	    ○ Make sure you can access everyone's Scrivener-Books-in Progress
	    ○ Begin reading the group's entire projects for verbal and written comments.
	• **Individual Chapter/Story Workshops Begin**
	    ○ Please note:
	        ▪ All workshop chapters/stories are due Sunday midnight in the appropriate weekly Workshop Dropbox folder.
	        ▪ If you don't turn them in by this deadline, we won't workshop them.
	        ▪ *Don't post your workshop stories to Blackboard please.*
	        ▪ I'll assemble these manuscripts, enable them for comments and send them out via e-mail.
	        ▪ Please have all your comments posted no later than the following Sunday at midnight.

	• **Workshop**
	Rebekah Jerabek
	• **Workshop**
	Aldo Amparan
	• **Workshop**
	Oscar Zapata

• **Fifteen-minute Fictions or Exercises, if time.**

WEEK 6
TUESDAY
SEPTEMBER 27
	Agenda
	• **WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE: Book Proposal, Draft 1**
	    ○ See the CRW 5366 Writing Assignment Instructions and Deadlines
	• **Craft Discussions**
	    ○ Baxter's *The Art of* Subtext*: Beyond Plot*
	        ▪ Creating a Scene, 115 (29 pp)
	    ○ *LOF*, PART TWO
	        ▪ Fundamentals of Language
	        ▪ NINE
	            • Participial Phrases That Modify, 98
	        ▪ TEN
	            • Diction, 107
	• Meet with Group Members

	• An Oral Presentation of the Book Proposal to Class ○ If you wish to include a Keynote or Powerpoint presentation, please copy it to the Dropbox folder labelled *Week 6 Oral Reports Book Proposal, Draft 1 Copy Your Presentations Here for Your Oral Reports* so you can use them on my computer. Doing so will save considerable time so we don't have to deal with hooking up each student's individual computers and solving any technical issues that might arise. Please keep your presentations to about ten minutes.
	• **Workshop**
	Daniela Armijo
	• **Workshop**
	Oscar Moreno
	• **Workshop**
	Criseida Santos Guevara

WEEK 7
TUESDAY
OCTOBER 4
	Agenda
	• **Due Week 8: Writing Assignment 3: Written Analyses and Critiques of Two Group Members' Book Projects, Final Drafts**
	• **Craft Discussions**
	    ○ Baxter's *The Art of Subtext: Beyond Plot*
	        ▪ Loss of Face, 143 (33 pp)
	    ○ *LOF*, PART THREE
	    ○ Nuances of Punctuation
	        ▪ ELEVEN
	            • Fragments, 123
	        ▪ TWELVE
	            • Comma Splices, Run-ons, and Semicolons, 135
	• **Meet with your groups.**
	• **Workshops**

	• **Workshop**
	Saul Hernadez
	• **Workshop**
	Cesar Ruiz
	• **Workshop**

WEEK 8
TUESDAY
OCTOBER 11
	Agenda
	• **WRITING ASSIGNMENT 3 (Blackboard Assignments and Group Discussion Boards) DUE: Written Analyses and Critiques of Two Group Members' Book Projects, Final Drafts**
	    ○ See the CRW 5366 Writing Assignment Instructions and Deadlines
	• **Craft Discussions**
	    ○ LOF, PART THREE
	        ▪ Nuances of Punctuation
	            • THIRTEEN
	                ○ Dashes, Parentheses, and Nonessential Commas, 146
	            • FOURTEEN
	                ○ Exclamation Points and Italics
	• **Meet with Group Members**

	• **Workshop**
	Carla Arellano
	• **Workshop**
	Will Daugherty
	• **Workshop**

	MID-SEMESTER: **In Week 1, please sign up for one workshop *before* and one *after* this point in the schedule.**

WEEK 9
TUESDAY
OCTOBER 18
	Agenda
	• **Craft Discussions**
	    ○ LOF, PART FOUR
	        ▪ Common Errors
	        ▪ FIFTEEN
	            • Verb Tense Shifting, 171
	        ▪ Common Errors
	        ▪ SIXTEEN
	            • Commas, 184
	• **Meet with Group Members**
	
	• **Workshop**
	Oscar Moreno
	• **Workshop**
	
	• **Workshop**

WEEK 10
TUESDAY
OCTOBER 25
	Agenda
	• **Due Week 11: Writing Assignment 4: Scrivener Book-in-Progress Revision for Group Members Only**
	• **Craft Discussions**
	    ○ LOF, PART FOUR
	        ▪ Common Errors
	        ▪ SEVENTEEN
	            • Betrayals of Language, 196
	        ▪ EIGHTEEN
	            • Cliché, 207
	• **Meet with Group Members**
	
	• **Workshop**
	Rebekah Jerabek
	• **Workshop**
	Oscar Zapata
	• **Workshop**

WEEK 11 TUESDAY NOVEMBER 1	**Agenda** • **WRITING ASSIGNMENT 4: DUE (Blackboard Group Discussion Board): Scrivener Book-in-Progress Revision, for Two Group Members Only.** ○ See the CRW 5366 Writing Assignment Instructions and Deadlines • **Due Week 12: Writing Assignment 5: Oral Presentation of Your Preliminary Book Proposal** • **Meet with Group Members** • **Workshop** **Aldo Amparan** • **Workshop** **Daniela Ruelas** • **Workshop** **Saul Hernandez**
WEEK 12 TUESDAY	**Agenda** • **WRITING ASSIGNMENT 5 DUE: An Oral Presentation of Your Revised Book Proposal to**

NOVEMBER 8	**Class**
	o Including a reading of a 1-2 page writing sample that represents your best work of the semester, a short section you can read aloud.
	o If you wish to include a presentation--in PowerPoint, Keynote, Adobe Acrobat, Word, MindMap or Scrivener format--please copy it to the Dropbox folder labelled Oral Reports-->Book Proposal, Draft 1 so you can use them on my computer. This will save time so we don't have to deal with each other's individual computers and technical issues. Please keep your presentations to about ten minutes.
	o Class Discussion of Each Reading and Presentation.
	• **Meet with Group Members**
	• **Workshop**
	Daniela Armijo
	• **Workshop**
	Cesar Ruiz
	• **Workshop**

WEEK 13 TUESDAY NOVEMBER 15	**Agenda**
	• **WRITING ASSIGNMENT 6 Due (Group Discussion Boards and Assignments): Second Analyses/Critiques of Two Group Members' Overall Book Projects-in-Progress, Final Draft**
	• **Due: Writing Assignment 5: Friday midnight of Week 15**
	o **Final Portfolio**
	▪ Book Proposal, Final Draft (Graded):
	▪ Writing Portfolio/Thesis Writing Sample Final Draft (20-30 pages, graded): Two Revised Chapters/Stories from Your Novel, Novel in Stories or Book of Stories (Graded)
	▪ Refer to Week 15 instructions on page 8.
	• **Oral Reports of Group Critiques**
	• **Workshop**
	Criseida Santos Guevara
	• **Workshop**
	Carla Arellano
	• **Workshop**
	Will Daugherty

WEEK 14 TUESDAY NOVEMBER 22	**Agenda**
	• **WRITING ASSIGNMENT 5 Due Friday midnight of Week 15:**
	o See below.
	• **Meet with Group Members**
	• **Publishing**
	o *The Novel and Short Story Writer's Market*
	o Writing the Query Letter
	o Submitting the Manuscript

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 24-25	**Thanksgiving Holidays**

WEEK 15 TUESDAY NOVEMBER 29	**Agenda** **Group workshop of query letters.** **Publishing, continued**
	o *Online Markets, etc.*
	o Agents
	o Publishers

MIDNIGHT	**Final Portfolios Due no later than midnight.**

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2	1. Please upload the following documents to Assignments: Final Portfolio:
	    i. Book Proposal, Final Draft (in 3 separate files):
	• One Mind map of Your Book, Final Draft (preferably in Adobe Acrobat [.pdf] or MindMap [.cdmz] format)
	• A single Word file (.doc/.docx), Rich Text (.rtf) or Acrobat (.pdf) format, including:
	    1. A Final Portfolio Cover Sheet
	        a. Please paste this document (download it from the Portfolio Assignment in Blackboard) as the first page of your book proposal and fill it in carefully, including your number of absences, your Adobe Acrobat comments count, the grade you've assigned yourself for this semester's work and a clear explanation of how you've arrived at that grade.
	    2. A One-Paragraph Summary of Your Book, Final Draft
	    3. An Analysis of How Your Writing Process Has Changed, Improved or Not
	    4. An Analysis of Whether or How You've Overcome Your Writing Blocks
	    5. Revisions of Your Query Letter to an Agent of Your Choice (optional)
	    6. Writing Portfolio/Thesis Writing Sample Final Draft (20-30 pages): Two Revised Chapters/Stories from Your Novel, Novel in Stories or Book of Stories.
	• Scrivener Book File End-of-Semester Draft
	    7. Please upload your entire Scrivener book file (a backup compressed file in .zip format) so I can look over the book's entire structure and parts as a whole and make final comments about your progress so far.

2013 Fall On-Campus Advanced Fiction Writing CRW 5366-1 13134				
Name	English	Español	**Phone Number**	**E-Mail Address**
Aldo Amparan	✓		915-373-4901	aiamparan@miners.utep.edu
Carla Arellano	✓		915-345-2110	cearellano@utep.edu
Will Daugherty	✓		915740-0233	wrdaugherty@utep.edu
Daniela Gonzalez Armijo		✓	+5212226723953	dgonzalezarmijo@miners.utep.edu
Saul Hernandez	✓			shernandez120@miners.utep.edu
Rebekah Jerabek	✓		816-267-2035	rdjerabek@miners.utep.edu
Mario Martinez		✓		mmartinez83@miners.utep.edu
Oscar Moreno Huizar	✓		+5216566264180	oamoreno2@miners.utep.edu
Daniela Ruelas		✓		druelas3@miners.utep.edu
Cesar Vladimir Ruiz Ledesma		✓	915-245-3392	cruizledesma@miners.utep.edu
Criseida Santos Guevara		✓	+5218117197885	csantosguevara@miners.utep.edu
Oscar Zapata Garcia		✓	915-803-8638	oscarzaga@gmail.com

A Note on My Workshop Philosophy:

Only one rule applies to the critique of manuscripts in this class: Kindness is the only wisdom. The principal task of this workshop is to create a safe place for writers to be honest and authentic in their discussions and their work. Some writers may be struggling to find the courage to write stories of difficult, even traumatic events that have occurred to them personally, or to people they know. The last thing we need to do as a class is to make the discussion of these stories difficult, too; doing so may cause writers to withdraw and stop taking risks for fear of being shamed or making mistakes. Worse, they can feel silenced, denied the right to write about what they must. There are no mistakes in this workshop, only opportunities to see, understand, change and revise.

If a writer has troubles with his or her story, try to find a way to deliver that information in a non-judgmental way, with empathy and compassion and, if possible, without undo sarcasm. (Irony, sarcasm's subtler and more sophisticated sister, is, of course, what we're trying to use in our stories to great effect.) One approach is simply to describe how you read the story, what it meant to you, focusing on one or two fictional techniques (irony or sarcasm, for example) the author has used that have contributed to that effect. Focus on what poet John Ciardi says is most important: not just *what* a story means but *how* it means, specific techniques we've discussed in class which help us as writers make readers fall into a fictional dream.

The more I teach fiction writing, the less faith I have in giving advice, especially the whole notion that a story is something to find problems with and "fix." If the author discovers that she has been misinterpreted in a descriptive or prescriptive analysis, then it follows that she'll probably have to revise. Avoid using such subjective judgments as *good* or *bad* or *I really like/dislike this story*. If a story moved you or didn't work *for you*, don't hesitate to say so, but more important say why; without concrete feedback, such advice is mostly unhelpful. (These kinds of subjective judgments, by the way, are a kind of telling, not showing.) Each of us reads a story differently, and that's what makes workshops such effective places to discuss our work. Take what you can use and forget the rest. We all have a right to tell our own stories in our own ways, and we all have a right to our own interpretations of others' stories so long as there's evidence from the text to support our views. We may interpret the image of a child's flying saucer toy lying upended in a bathtub as a hint that a story is about alien abduction, but if there's nothing else in the story to support that point, then perhaps the story may be about something else, the death of a child, say, or the grief of a father.

We show our work to others to help us when we're too close to it to trust our instincts completely about whether what we've written does what we'd intended, whether what's in our heads has gotten onto the page. Workshops should be both honest and supportive, writers telling other writers not necessarily what they want to hear but what they might need to hear to make their stories work as they'd intended, meanwhile helping them through the sometimes painful task of revision: re-seeing their own stories clearly with a little distance, finding their stories in the process of rewriting them, making the unconscious more conscious as they discover their own obsessions. In a sense, a workshop is a stand in for the writer himself when he returns to something he wrote many months or years before, so in another sense workshops are all about saving ourselves the time it takes to become clear about our own work. Workshops should also be open, generous, productive and tremendously fun, everyone feeling free to laugh a great deal—and not at others' expense—meanwhile recognizing that criticism must never be equated with cruelty or preoccupations with who's up or down—writing is not a competitive sport—but always with the shared difficulty of the work itself, always balancing a commitment to honesty about the work's effectiveness with mutual respect for those who create it and their individual creative processes and aesthetics.

Many students have asked me to describe how I come up with grades for creative work. If I had my choice, I would not assign grades to fiction, nonfiction or screenwriting at all, but because we don't operate on a pass/fail basis, I have to assign grades and try to be as fair-minded and objective as I can be; I've been teaching creative writing over thirty years and rather than hardening into my opinions, I've tried to become more open to all the diverse voices and stories I have yet to read. While it's extremely difficult to quantify how I decide grades for creative writing, but I know that a *C* tends to cover averages (as much as we hate being called *average*) and anything above that shows a writer who's beginning to take her work seriously, writing as much as possible and spending as much time on craft as she can.

If you want a brief description of what I'm expecting for the critiques you're writing for two of your group members (one at the beginning of the semester, the other at the end), here's a rough rubric. Please notde that I'm focusing these papers less on critical evaluation than on critical analysis. If you wish to say that something doesn't work for you, you can clarify these points at the ends of your analyses, and you can also write about a few ideas you might have to generate more material or to make certain scenes or sections of your group members' books-in progress more authentic and credible.

Grading Rubric for Critical Analyses/Critiques of Group Member's Books-in-Progress	
A	- Shows surprising and original insight into a story and/or a writer's technique. - Goes beneath the surface of a story's theme, characterization, structure and so on, pointing out something significant that may not be immediately obvious, showing that you're not just familiar with the

	story but have given it a close reading. • Makes clear, insightful statements of thesis. • Has a clear organizational scheme suggested by the original thesis statement. • Cites specific textual examples from the story and explains how they're relevant to the paper's original thesis statement. • Supplies clear transitions from paragraph to paragraph, sentence to sentence. • Is readable, concisely written, direct and clear, free of gobbledygook (and bullshit), grammatical and punctuation errors and other problems. • Organizes logically, by topic, not chronologically.
B	Includes at least three of the elements listed above.
C or lower	• Doesn't have an original, surprising or clear statement of thesis. • Doesn't cite examples or explain them in a coherent way. • Dwells on the obvious, making broad generalizations that anyone could agree with. • Skims the surface of a story without really considering writing technique at all. • Gives just a personal response about a story 's themes or characters, written at the last minute or in a general or impressionistic way. • Summarizes the plot. This happens; then this happens.

Please use this somewhat tongue-in-cheek rubric as a guideline only, and remember: I *always* grade on improvement, looking for leaps in your writing, and not simple averages.

Grading Rubric for Fiction	
A	• The writer moves beyond character type and stereotype, showing a growing mastery of deep characterization: the character's motivations are clear, subtle yet surprising, showing a strong insight into the mystery of human motive and behavior. • The writer has a growing mastery of showing *and* telling, integrating sharp, surprising details into summarized sections with a strong understanding of how and when to write dramatic scenes, trusting readers to be smart enough to *get it* on their own. • The writer has a gift for dramatic or comic writing, moving the reader deeply, making the reader laugh out loud, or both. • The writer has a growing mastery of significant detail—detail that shows *and* tells—using little or no static description, making quick strokes of surprising detail in as few words as possible, showing a distinctive view of the world and uncanny insight into individual characters and places. • The writer has a strong, distinctive voice, not just an imitation of a favorite writer. • The writer writes from within character, not imitations of plot he's seen on TV or movies, understanding that genuine plot reversals are about changes within characters. • The writer has strong, distinctive narrative authority, not just because she has confidence (many of the best writers have little or no confidence at all) but because she has worked hard to make her work readable and interesting, sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph. • The writer uses few if any grammatical or sentence errors, and when she uses them—fragments for effect, for example—she does so consciously as a part of her craft. • The writer has a strong grasp of narrative conventions, how to write paragraphs, dialogue and so on with correct indentation and punctuation. • The writer has few or no misspelled words, especially commonly misspelled words like *yeah*, *all right*, and so on. • The writer uses no unnecessary adverbs, realizing that they almost always tell rather than show. • The writer uses few if any wordy "is" verbs, especially the passive voice, using instead strong, active verbs that make for vigorous sentences that move. • The writer uses no clichés, in sentence or character situation.

C	• The writer knows how to write a strong balance of simple and complex sentences for effect, avoiding run-on sentences, fused sentences and comma splices. • The writer knows how to use apostrophes for contractions and possessive adjectives and doesn't overcorrect (the contraction *it's* for the possessive *its*; *their* or *there* for *they're*, and so on). • The writer writes with a strong ear for spoken language, recognizing that dialogue is poetry and isn't necessarily the way people speak, using syntax rather than phonetic spellings or misspellings to capture dialect, trusting that even the most uneducated speaker can speak with great elegance and insight, even if that speaker is poor and inarticulate. • The writer uses few if any value judgments, generalizations or abstractions, unless they're so insightful and surprising that we have to stop reading for a few moments, smiling or frowning, to understand their depth and complexity. • The writer uses strong, surprising figurative language (metaphors and similes) appropriate for her voice, her story, her character and the world her character lives in, helping to make her writing vivid and utterly unique. • Rather than simply relying on her innate and unique gifts, the writer has a passion for craft and rewriting, obsessed with making her story as close to right as possible without being a stodgy, self-punishing perfectionist. • Not writing to *impress* but to *express*—overwriting or overstating, using flowery language, Latinate or multisyllabic words from the thesaurus—the writer uses plain English, inventing her own distinctive and subtle lyricism, understating when others might rely on melodrama and florid, purple prose.
B	Includes at least 5-10 of the elements listed above.
C or lower[3]	1. The writer mostly tells rather than shows through value judgments, generalizations, abstractions and clichés, forgetting that writing is not simply about ideas and emotions but about *surprise* and *the experience of* ideas and emotions. 2. When the writer does write scenes, he tends to write about undramatic situations, his characters tend to use exposition through dialogue, or they simply natter on about the weather or the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche or Jacques Derrida. 3. The writer mostly dwells on the superficial or the obvious or writes in prose so convoluted and abstract that no one—including the writer himself—knows what he's talking about. 4. The writer wants to write about a universal character in a universal place, but because he doesn't write about unique individuals in a unique place, he's really just writing stereotypes. 5. The writer may have a strong sense of story and character, but he consistently misspells words and creates numerous grammatical and sentence errors, not realizing that the rules of grammar are an important part of his craft, helping in readability and clarity of expression, and that when he writes without proofreading he's calling more attention to himself than to his story. 6. The writer thinks that grammar should be creative, too, man, and he thinks he should be able to punctuate sentences and spell words as he wishes, feeling that craft and rewriting are for sissies, resenting *the man* for inhibiting his creativity, dude. 7. The writer spends little or no time proofreading, expecting others to do it for him, writing his story the night before workshop while he's drunk or stoned, his iPod blaring Metallica through his earphones, the TV on mute in the background. 8. The writer tends to write from clichéd plots, and when he can't decide on how to end his story he decides to kill off his main character through suicide, a bus accident, a giant explosion or some coincidence having to do with frogs falling from the sky. 9. The writer doesn't read much and never has and shouldn't have to, man, and would rather watch *Survivor: Tasmania* or get to level ten on Grand Theft Auto IV. 10. The writer's idea of conflict is car chases, light sabers, ninjas kicking ass and zombies eating their mamas. 11. The writer's idea of sentiment is written in doggerel on the inside of a Hallmark card. 12. He-Man loses best buddy or girlfriend and his secret crystal talisman and all his automatic weapons; he

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[3] Okay, I'm being a smart-aleck here, but I thought I should least entertain you. Did I make an *A* describing a *C*? If not, give me some feedback and I'll work on it.

> gets his buddy, girlfriend, talisman and Uzis back, then kills the bad guy and saves the girl *and* the world.
> 13.   Girl gets boy; girl loses boy; girl gets boy back and they marry under the periwinkles.

A Note on Writing Basics and Online Tutoring:

Many of the MFA students I work with—some who've never had a strong background in English (or Spanish) classes even at the college level—need to do more than simply write early drafts and work on editing and crafting later drafts for their portfolios: ***They also too often need to learn the basics of sentence structure, syntax, grammar and usage***.

While I worked on my MFA in the mid-eighties, I was the go-to guy among grad students on issues of grammar, and since then I've become something of an expert—which for some students means that I'm still the go-to guy on issues of grammar and for other students means that my comments seem nit-picky and annoying. For example, I've assembled many boilerplate comments about many grammatical issues I see in workshop documents and I paste them—some quite long and detailed—into writers' manuscripts, mostly because I want to be helpful and specific about how to overcome specific grammatical an other problems rather than critical and general, writing in red ink: *Fix this! It's wrong!*

Students who'd rather not have me comment in such detail should just tell me in their Workshop Cover Sheets, which allow you to check off the kinds of critiques they prefer, and not marking typos and grammatical errors is included in the list of options. Not making line-by-line comments actually saves me time, so if you don't want them let me know. Of course, I'm also glad to give some instruction on the basics of grammar in workshops and during my office hours— but my time is limited and I highly recommend that students seek help from UTEP's online Writing Center.

While I believe strongly that *writing craft can be taught*, I also need to make time to work on my own writing. For this reason, I may mark up only a page or two of your workshop documents (if you request my help on the Workshop Cover Sheet, of course); then Il end with a note like this: "I'm stopping my editing here. I'm going to read the rest and make comments mostly on content. Put on your editor's cap from here on and follow my lead?" Please don't take such a note personally. I've struggled for years to find the right balance between teaching writing to students and giving myself enough sacred time to work on my own writing, and because my writing has often suffered in that equation, I've had to cut back on the amount of editing I've done in the past. We all have to find a similar balance between work, family, school and our important work, and setting priorities is often hard for writers, who must often make a living doing something else and still find time to write in the sacred niches they create between work and all the other responsibilities they may have.

Since learning the basics is your responsibility ultimately, if you're still having trouble after I've worked with you on issues of grammar, etc., please note that UTEP's Writing Center offers **free tutoring for on-campus *and* online UTEP Students**:

On-Campus Tutoring: Website:
> http://academics.utep.edu/writingcenter

Online Tutoring: Website:
> **Online MFA Students may use Online Tutoring, even if they don't live in El Paso:**
> http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=57766
> Be sure to follow the directions and fill in the tutoring form; then upload your document by clicking on *Submit*.

Even though the writing center *doesn't proofread documents*, I highly recommend using UTEP's tutoring services, especially if you're having trouble with basic writing errors like these:

- **Misuse of Common Conventions of Grammar and Punctuation in Narrative** (dialogue, paragraphing, etc.)
- **Comma Splices, Fused Sentences and Run-on Sentences**
- **Sentence Fragments** (dependent clauses and phrases punctuated with end-stop punctuation like periods and semicolons)

- **Subject/Verb and Pronoun/Antecedent Agreement Errors**
- **Pronoun Reference Errors** (the vague *this* and confusing uses of *he*, *she* or *it* which could refer to more than one antecedent)
- **Apostrophe Errors** (especially in possessives and contractions)
- **Confusion between Words** like *It's* and *Its*, *There*, *Their* and *They're*, etc.
- **Misuse of Words** like *lie* and *lay*, *sit* and *set*, *hang* and *hung*, *ya* or *yea* for *yeah*, etc.
- **Parallel Structure in Sentences and Lists**
- **Dangling and Misplaced Modifiers**
- **Overuse of the Passive Voice and Other "Is" Verbs**
- **Tense Shifts**
- **Point of View Shifts**
- **Problems with the Sequences of Tenses**
- . . . and so on.

If I identify problems like these, you can actually show tutors my comments and have them give you a bit of one-on-one instruction. I used to direct a writing center, so I know just how helpful that one-on-one help can be. I also know that because our program is bilingual and many Spanish-speaking and writing MFA students want to learn how to write skilfully in English (and Spanish!), the writing center can be a great help, even for graduate students.

A writer knows instinctively that the rules of grammar aren't about becoming a boring conformist, blindly following rules; she knows that if she makes such errors—especially if they're numerous—she will constantly awaken the reader from the narrative or poetic dream, calling more attention to the writer than to the story, poem or essay the writer's worked so hard to write.

A Note on Sentences

Annie Dillard tells the story of a famous writer who, when a student asked him, "Do you think I could be a writer?" said, "Do you like sentences?"[4]

If you can't answer *yes* to this question, you may be in the wrong line of work, but if you *can*—if you really like screwing around with sentences, moving words around on the page, sometimes spending entire hours or even days trying to make a single sentence or paragraph work—just the right syntax, voice, music and rhythm, boiling the sentence down so that it reflects nothing but a kind of direct and elegant simplicity—then that's all any writer needs to know whether she should keep on writing. Unless writing sentences makes you happy, writing will always seem like a chore, something to avoid. For this reason, I highly recommend these books on sentences simply because they're written by people who love writing and reading sentences:

- Nora Bacon's *The Well-Crafted Sentence: A Writer's Guide to Style*
- Strunk and White's *Elements of Style*
- Claude Faulkner's *Writing Good Sentences*
- Virginia Tufte's big, beautiful, complex book, *Artful Sentences: Syntax as Style*
- Stanley Fish's *How to Write a Sentence: And How to Read One.*

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[4] http://www.nytimes.com/books/99/03/28/specials/dillard-drop.html