



**CRW 3362-Introduction to Creative Writing
CRN 17851**

Professor: Nelson Cárdenas
Classes: MW, 10:30 – 11:50 am
Room: HUDS 313
Office: LART 415
Phone: TBD

Office Hours: Mondays 3:30 pm – 4:30 pm, Weds 10:30 – 11:30 am. You should always make an appointment; we can also meet another time by appointment.
Email: ncardenas2@utep.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES:

This course will serve two primary purposes. Firstly, it will introduce you to the fundamental techniques of creative writing. Secondly, it will introduce you to the discipline of creative writing, to discussions about writing, and to the creative writing workshop. We will begin the course by looking at the different ways fiction and poetry employ common elements, such as image, voice, character, and setting, and use writing exercises and workshop critique sessions to strengthen and develop your understanding and employment of them. During the second half of the semester, we will spend time looking at the components of each genre, and produce writing that explores a range of approaches. Most importantly, this course is designed to introduce you to a variety of styles so that you become a better reader and, therefore, a more confident writer. Students will be expected to learn the necessary terminology, to identify and discuss various writing techniques, and to apply those techniques in their writing.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Burroway, Janet. *Imaginative Writing: The Elements of Craft*. **3rd Edition**
- Supplemental readings (distributed in class or via Blackboard)

BLACKBOARD & EMAILS

All assignments, announcements, and workshop posts will be sent via Blackboard or Email. It is your responsibility to check both regularly.

GRADING SCALE:

| | |
|----------|---|
| A | 100-90% |
| B | 89-80% |
| C | 79-70% |
| D | 69-60% |
| F | 59% and below. |
| W | This grade will only be assigned if you drop this course before the university's |

drop deadline of **Friday October 28th, 2016**. If you do not officially drop but you stop attending, you will receive an F for the course, as I will not drop the course for you.

GRADING POLICY:

| | |
|-----|---|
| 5% | Participation and Attendance |
| 15% | Midterm Exam |
| 15% | Writing Exercises and Quizzes |
| 10% | Attendance of a Literary Event |
| 35% | Poems, Stories and Workshop Participation |
| 5% | Conference |
| 25% | Final Portfolio |

REQUIREMENTS:

Participation and Attendance: 5%

- Active participation (asking questions, commenting on readings, etc.) shows me that you are reading the material and are fully engaged in the class. It is very important that you read all of the assignments carefully and come to class prepared to discuss them.
- Please bring the Burroway 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 five absences will affect your overall grade, as will tardiness. More than six absences can result in failure of the course.

Midterm Exam: 15%

- A midterm exam will be administered in class.

Writing Exercises: 15%

- Each week in which you are not scheduled to workshop, you will write a story or poem in response to a question or prompt from me or from the Burroway text.
- These exercises are meant to help you generate ideas and material for the writing you will hand in for workshop and, ultimately, for your final portfolio.
- Unless I ask you to do otherwise, choose any "Try This" prompt from the Burroway chapters we are reading from week to week. Make sure that you number each exercise, Week 1, Week 2, etc, and that you indicate what the exercise entails and on what page it can be found.
- You should email me these each by Wednesday at 11:59 pm.
- By the end of the semester, you should have a collection of 10 exercises you've tried.

Attending Literary Readings: 10%

Students are required to attend two literary readings and write a small 250-300 words (printed) response no later than 1 week after attending. I will announce poetry readings eligible for this assignment. Those unable to attend a reading due to some work or school conflict will be given an alternate assignment. You can choose to attend a different event, but I urge you to discuss it with me beforehand.

Writings and Workshops Participation: 25%

- Beginning in the fourth week of class, we will workshop the writing you produce for this class. The class will be divided into five groups, and each will have two workshops and two responses.
- If it is your group's turn to workshop, you must post your short story or poem on Blackboard by Friday at 11:59 pm if you are scheduled for Monday, and for Sunday by 11:59 p.m. if you are scheduled for Wednesday, unless otherwise noted in the course calendar.
- Responding group and the rest of the class should comment by Sunday at 11:59 pm if the Workshop is scheduled for Monday, and by Tuesday at 11:59 pm if you are scheduled for Wednesday.
- For workshop, you should turn in either a short story or poem, well crafted, but by the end of the semester, you'll be required to workshop one poem and one story.
- Short stories for this class should be 1000 words (approximately 3-4 pages,) double-spaced in a single standard font, 11-12 pt. size.
- Your poems should be typed, printed, single-spaced in a single-column (unless you are purposefully writing a multiple-column poem), in a single 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 you to 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.
- Etiquette: During workshop I ask you to take your role as a poetry/prose critic with seriousness and 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.

- If you post your work late, you forfeit your opportunity to workshop.
- Everyone in the class is to download, print, and read each work posted. Additionally, for each workshop, each member of one other group will be assigned to write a cover letter of no less than 250 words, offering concrete feedback and suggestions. See the course calendar for a schedule of workshops and the groups assigned to write cover letters.
- Turning work in late, not showing up for your workshop turn, not actively participating in workshop, not writing cover letters for your critiques, or turning in sloppy work, will affect your grade. How well you prepare to discuss someone else's work will also help to determine this portion of your grade.
- 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.

Conference: 5%

- You will be required to turn in poems and short stories, as the bulk of your creative work in this course, in 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 poetry, your writing process, or your progress in the class during this one-on-one conference.
- If you do not turn in your conference portfolio complete and/or 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 main elements:

1. 1 page introduction in which you state what was your revision strategy, i.e. what you were trying to accomplish reviewing your creative work.

2. A revised poem and
3. a revised short story.

COURSE POLICIES

Scholastic 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, just do not submit work under your name that you did not do yourself, do not turn in work you've written for another class, and always cite sources for ideas or language taken from another writer. Please refer to UTEP's policy for further information: <http://sa.utep.edu/osccr/academic-integrity/>

Cell Phones / Laptop computers

In order to avoid receiving calls and text messages during class time, please turn off your cell phone before entering the classroom. Answering a call, texting, writing e-mail or surfing the web during class will result in being counted absent that day.

Student with Disabilities

I will make reasonable accommodations for students with limitations due to disabilities, including learning disabilities. Please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services within the first two weeks of class:

Web: <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/>

Phone: (915)747-5148 voice or TTY

E-Mail: cass@utep.edu

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. ***

COURSE SCHEDULE:

| WEEK | DAY | TOPIC |
|-------------------|------------|---|
| 1 | M-22 | Introduction to course |
| | W-24 | IW (<i>Imaginative Writing</i>), Invitation to the Writer, 1-12. |
| 2 | M-29 | IMAGE: IW, Chap. 2, 13-24. IW 30-40 For discussion: Gordimer, Komunyakaa & Bonair-Agard |
| | W-31 | VOICE: IW, Chap. 3, 47-60 For discussion: Borges, Poems 80-84, Rosa Alcalá's "Paramour" |
| 3 | M-5 | LABOR DAY |
| | W-7 | CHARACTER: IW, Chap. 4, 87-101 For Discussion: Poems, 119-123, García Márquez, 114-118 |
| 4 | M-12 | SETTING: IW, Chap. 5, 132-144 For Discussion: Barthelme & Carter, 151-154; Komunyakaa, 158; Ives, 159. |
| | W-14 | Workshop - Group 1 workshops/ Group 3 responds |
| 5 | M-19 | STORY: IW, Chap. 6, 167-176 For Discussion: Wallace & Goldbarth, 180-182, 185 |
| | W-21 | Workshop - Group 2 workshops/ Group 4 responds |
| 6 | M-26 | DEVELOPMENT & REVISION: IW, Chap. 7, 196-229. For Discussion: Bishop's Revision of "One Art" |
| | W-28 | Workshop - Group 3 workshops/ Group 5 responds |
| 7- OCT | M-3 | MIDTERM |
| | W-5 | FICTION: IW, Chap. 9, 264-283 & 291-293 For Discussion: Bloom |
| 8 | M-10 | Workshop - Group 4 workshops/ Group 1 responds |
| | W-12 | Workshop - Group 5 workshops/ Group 2 responds |
| 9 | M-17 | FICTION 2: Read "Some Aspects of the Short Story" by Julio Cortazar (to be posted) For discussion: "Continuity of the Parks" by Julio Cortazar (to be posted). TBD |
| | W-19 | Workshop - Group 1 workshops/ Group 4 responds |
| 10 | M-24 | POETRY: IW Chap. 10: 294-319. Supplemental: Appendix A "Basic Prosody", 365-372 |
| | W-26 | POETRY: "The Philosophy of Composition" by E.A. Poe (to be posted) For discussion: "The Raven" by E.A. Poe (to be posted) |

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| 11- NOV | M-31 | Workshop - Group 3 workshops/ Group 1 responds |
| | W-2 | CREATIVE NON-FICTION: IW, 230-242, 261 |
| 12 | M-7 | Discussion Board |
| | W-9 | Workshop - Group 4 workshops/ Group 2 responds |
| 13 | M-14 | For Discussion: Readings p. 242-256 + TBD |
| | W-16 | Workshop - Group 5 workshops/ Group 3 responds Final Portfolio Draft is due. |
| 14 | M-21 | CONFENCERES |
| | W-23 | CONFERENCES |
| 15 | M-28 | CONFERENCES |
| | W-30 | Final Portfolio. Email me <i>one single PDF document</i> named "LAST NAME_ Final Portfolio" that includes the introduction and the clean, final revisions of 1 Poem and 1 Short Story. |