**INTRODUCTION TO CREATIVE WRITING**

**ENGL 2513**

**Spring 2020**

Tuesday/Thursday 12:30-1:45 PM

Engineering South 111

Instructor: Sara Gilbert

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Office: Morrill Hall 406

Office hours: T/R 2:00-3:00 pm

W 1:00-2:00

\*\*e-mail is the best way to reach me—I will try to respond within 24 hours, but sometimes it may take longer (i.e. weekends, near deadlines/midterms). E-mail me early if you ever have any questions.\*\*

*“You can, you should, and if you’re brave enough to start, you will. Writing is magic, as much the water of life as any other creative art. The water is free so drink. Drink and be filled up.”*

*-*Stephen King

*“There is nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and bleed.”*

-Ernest Hemingway

**Course Description:**

First and foremost, my goal for this semester is to make sure each of you writes well and often. I want you to be able to use language, imagery, and storytelling to move your readers. I want you to leave this class as better creative writers. Throughout the semester, I aim to create a classroom that feels comfortable and productive. It will be a space to ask questions and grow. We’ll discuss assigned readings, craft, insights, ideas, and, most of all, write. You will be discovering what pieces you want to write for your Portfolio. The best stories, essays, and poems will come from a place close to you.

**Course Outcomes:**

Students who successfully complete ENGL 2513 will:

-Develop artistic skills and techniques in creative writing including knowledge of and careful attention to the craft and process of writing.

-Understand, appreciate, and recognize the discipline necessary to produce creative writing—one that can be improved with practice.

-Enhance personal creativity and self-expression

-Learn about literary forms and traditions that shape your own creative writing

**MATERIALS:**

**Required Texts:**

*Vintage Book of Contemporary American Short Stories (CASS)*, ed. Wolff

*Contemporary American Poetry (CAP)*, ed. Poulin and Waters

*Short Takes: Brief Encounters with Contemporary Nonfiction (ST),* ed. Kitchen

\*Additional essays, fiction, and poetry will be accessible through either links in emails, PDFs on Canvas, or handouts\*

**Other materials:**

-One **notebook** for in-class writing

-One **2-pocket plastic folder** to store comments from myself and your peers

-**Daily access to Canvas** (I suggest the smartphone app)

-The ability to **check emails daily** to see if I have sent any reminders or clarifications about assignments

**Weekly Coursework:**

-Freewrites:

-Most classes will start with a 5 minute freewrite. These are nonjudgmental writings on a topic, form, or genre I assign. If you arrive late, you miss out. You will keep all of these freewrites in a journal or notebook; make sure to bring this journal or notebook to class every day. Hopefully, these journals will give you ideas for your workshop pieces, so it’s important to remember them! I will be checking these for completion at the end of the semester (as part of your final grade).

-Writings:

-You will have THREE different workshops throughout the semester and THREE REVISION workshops—so, basically, you’ll go once every two weeks. That’s a lot, I know. But the most important part of this class is to write and revise constantly! These will receive feedback from both myself and your classmates. You should be open to constructive criticism—we are readers explaining what does and does not work in a given poem/essay/story—it is a unique situation, but the experience is worth it. For these workshops, you can write in either prose or poetry, but I would suggest you have at least one of each throughout the semester. This class pushes boundaries—that’s what makes better writers.

Revision Workshops:

-After spring break, there will be three rounds of revision workshops. For these, you must revise your work and resubmit for workshop. These workshops will be looking for new praises and criticisms: how did the changes work? Did they make the piece clearer? Did other things jump out as confusing? Are there lower order concerns (i.e. tense issues, setting unclear, etc). They do not have to be in order—for example, story 1 does not have to be submitted for revision round 1—but you must revise all 3!

-Workshop Letters:

-150-300 word letters will be due IN PRINT (hard copy) for your peer and myself (print 2 copies of each) in which you will comment on your peers’ work. These should comment on specific elements of crafts, what you thought the piece was about, and what you suggest may be improved. Always make sure to end on a genuinely thoughtful and kind note. We will discuss this more during Week 1. \*\*NOTE: You only need to write workshop letters for weeks you are not workshopping your own piece. Any week that you workshop, your feedback can be given verbally instead of written.

-Discussions:

-We will have class discussions about readings each class. It is important that you come to class having read—pick out things you liked or didn’t, why or why not, what could have made you like things more, etc. Each of these readings, even if you don’t like them, will have something to teach you.

-Homework:

-All homework will be turned in using MLA formatting. One inch margins, double spaced, Times New Roman, size 12 font. Always create an **original** creative title for every assignment, especially your essays, poems, and stories. For the header, (top left corner) type the following in this order: Your name, my name, ENGL 2513, the date, and the title of the assignment. Keep track of the daily assigned homework from creative activities, worksheets, and other miscellaneous items that may be assigned to help you grow as creative writers.

**\*\*REMINDER: SAVE ALL WORK\*\*** Create a folder on your hard drive or computer for this class! At the end of the semester, you will be turning in a digital portfolio showcasing your best work of prose and poetry. This will be titled as your final Portfolio—and who knows, maybe you can publish some of this work (submittable is a great place to look for literary magazines and journals that are searching for work from new writers)!

**NOTE: Genre fiction is not acceptable for workshop submissions for this course.** We are studying the conventions of literary fiction which is significantly different than genre fiction. Also, nursery rhymes or love poems should also not be turned into this course—although these forms may be cute and fun, they are not considered literary.

**Classroom Conduct:**

I expect common courtesy and mutual respect in the classroom. Treat everyone the way you want to be treated. Speak kindly and patiently. Rudeness, disrespect, and hateful comments toward anyone in the class will not be tolerated. Also, this class is a safe space: nothing shared within the course can be repeated elsewhere.

**Grading:**

Most of your work will be graded on completion rather than content. However, I will be grading your workshop pieces and final portfolio for **quality**. At the end of the semester, I will be looking at your **growth** as a writer since that is the ultimate goal of the course. If you are unsure of where you stand in this curse, feel free to talk with me during office hours, but I will not discuss grades through email.

**Grade Breakdown:**

**Final Portfolio: 50%**

-This will consist of revised (and revised revised) workshop pieces. Approximately 10-15 pages writing.

**Homework and in-class writings: 25%**

-This includes workshop drafts, pop quizzes, and written workshop letters to your classmates.

**Participation: 20%**

**Freewrites: 5%**

\*\*NOTE: showing up, trying your best, being courteous, engaging in class discussion, doing the work, and working on revisions are the best way to succeed!\*\*

**Expectations:**

**Participation:**

I understand writing may not be everyone’s passion, but each class member is expected to participate. It is worth it to communicate, be vulnerable, engage in thoughtful, respectful dialogue with your peers and myself. Participation is 20% of your final grade, so make sure you are talking in every class meeting. If there are any reasons you cannot share in class, please let me know on the first day of class.

**Preparedness:**

Do your assignments, bring necessary materials to class, post to Canvas on time, keep up with your readings, and give your 100%.

**Email Etiquette:**

I will communicate with you over email regularly (almost daily). Make sure you are checking your OSU and Canvas emails multiple times a day. If possible, I recommend setting up your email notifications on your phone. When you email me, please write in a professional tone—include a subject, salutation, and your name as a signature.

**Punctuality:**

Come to class on time. **Two unexcused absences will lower your grade by 10%, four will lower it by 20%, etc. Two tardies will count as one absence.** If there is an emergency, get in contact with me as soon as possible. I understand life can happen in ways we don’t expect. If you’re sick, I expect to see a doctor’s note (or, at least, a receipt for cold medicine).

**Technology:**

**No texting, tweeting, snapchatting, instagraming, etc. That means no laptops or phones out unless otherwise specified.** Having your phone out will lower your participation grade by 5% each time. However, if you feel more equipped to use technology, please let me know on the first day. I understand everyone has different learning needs.

**Office Hours:**

Come visit me during my office hours! I’m here for you and want you to succeed and grow as a writer. We can chat about writing or life or whatever. My first creative writing class changed my life, and I would love if it had the same effect on one of you.

\*\*This syllabus is subject to change\*\*

Schedule:

Week 1: INTRO

Tuesday, January 13: Introduction: review syllabus and class introductions

Thursday, January 15: How to Workshop: example workshop letters and the importance of revisions

Week 2: WORKSHOP ROUND 1

Tuesday, January 21: *CASS*, Allison

Thursday, January 23: *ST*, Perillo

Week 3: WORKSHOP ROUND 1 CONT.

Tuesday, January 28: *CAP*, Brooks

Thursday, January 30: *CASS*, Dubus

Week 4: WORKSHOP ROUND 2

Tuesday, February 4: *ST*, Kuusisto

Thursday, February 6: *CAP*, Rich

Week 5: WORKSHOP ROUND 2 CONT.

Tuesday, February 11: *CASS*, Carver

Thursday, February 13: *ST*, Daum

Week 6: WORKSHOP ROUND 3

Tuesday, February 18: *CAP*, Justice

Thursday, February 20: *CASS*, Kincaid

Week 7: WORKSHOP ROUND 3 CONT.

Tuesday, February 25: *ST*, Barnes

Thursday, February 27: *CAP*, Komunyakaa

Week 8: CRAFT

Tuesday, March 3: *CASS*, Johnson

Thursday, March 5: \*\*AWP WRITER’S CONFERENCE\*\*

**\*CLASS ONLINE\*** *ST*, Kitchen

Week 9: CRAFT

Tuesday, March 10: *CAP*, Lee

Thursday, March 12: *CASS*, Jones

Week 10:

\*\*NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK\*\*

Week 11: REVISION WORKSHOP 1

Tuesday, March 24: *ST*, Bergman

Thursday, March 26: *CAP*, Levertov

Week 12: REVISION WORKSHOP 1

Tuesday, March 31: *CASS*, Olmstead

Thursday, April 2: *ST*, Antonetta

Week 13: REVISION WORKSHOP 2

Tuesday, April 7: *CAP*, Glück

Thursday, April 9: *CASS*, Tan

Week 14: REVISION WORKSHOP 2

Tuesday, April 14: *ST*, Pancake

Thursday, April 16: *CAP*, Lowell

Week 15: REVISION WORKSHOP 3

Tuesday, April 21: *CASS*, Wideman

Thursday, April 23: *ST*, Saner

Week 16: REVISION WORKSHOP 3

Tuesday, April 28: *CAP*, Ai

Thursday, April 30: Class wrap-up

Week 17:

FINALS WEEK: no class

PORTFOLIOS DUE BY THURSDAY MAY 7 BY 11:59 PM