

Course: Introduction to Creative Writing: Fiction – ENGL 3381-3, 3 Credit Hours
Term: Fall 2017
Times and Location: T/TH 12:30 - 1:50, EV 260

Course Description

This course is a writing workshop. A workshop, by its nature, is entirely dependent on the active engagement of its members. The structure of the class is similar to that of a studio art class: we create then critique. Students learn by doing, trial and error. As workshop leader, my role is to facilitate the discussion of the writing submitted for workshop and guide the workshop through readings selected to educate and inspire. You should take this class if you are committed to writing well and are willing to help your classmates do the same. Being a writer is a solitary profession requiring self-discipline, motivation, and the ability to work independently on your art. This work model will be stressed in class.

Learning Outcomes or Course Objectives

At the end of the semester students will:

- be able to describe the seven basic elements necessary for writing, analyzing, synthesizing, and criticizing prose.
- leave this course with a base (survey-level) knowledge of at least eight contemporary authors of short fiction.
- have gained self-awareness and will be able to articulate their self-discoveries and transfer them to creative writings.
- be able to utilize the above skills in group workshops to analyze, synthesize, and constructively critique other students' writings.
- understand the importance of the writer/reader relationship.

Instructor Information

Name: Dr. Amanda Nowlin-O'Banion
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Email address: nowlin-obanion@shsu.edu
Office hours: T/TH 2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. and by appointment
Office location: EV 453

Textbook and/or Resource Material

Burroway, Janet. *Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft*. 9th ed. New York: Longman, 2015.

Community Engagement

In this course you will not only gain skills listed above; you will apply them in our community to improve the quality of life. This experience, it is hoped, will help you see yourself as a positive force in the world and deepen your understanding of your role as a citizen. Specifically, we will focus on the relationship between writer and audience by dividing into teams to create book-related activities for an after school reading group I lead called BookUp, sponsored by the National Book Foundation. You can learn more about BookUp at <http://nationalbook.org/bookup.html#.VpZ0lXhYcYg>.

Grading Policies

Standard Letter Grading Scale applies to all work

A = 90-100, B = 80-89, C = 70-79, D = 60-69, F = 59 and under

1. **Original writing** (20% of grade) Original creative writings will be submitted to workshop according to a pre-arranged schedule. Students will take part in a formal group workshop involving the entire class and two small-group workshops. All work must be typewritten and proofread. Hard copies should be provided for each member of the group/class (and one for me) **one week prior to your workshop date**. The topic of each piece is left to the discretion of the writer with the exception that the writer may not submit genre fiction. Each piece should be 5-20 pages (unless discussed with me beforehand), typed, page-numbered and double-spaced.
2. **Participation** during workshop discussions and typed comments on student submissions: (20% = 10% written comments + 10% spoken comments). Students' typed comments must be handed in at each workshop, a hard copy for the writer being critiqued and also submitted to Blackboard for me. In addition to typed comments, students should make notes on the writer's manuscript. *Everyone* should verbalize his/her comments during each in-class critique. It is the critic's responsibility to speak during workshops.
3. **ACE Project for BookUp** (15%). In teams, students will create a lesson of activities to encourage 7th and 8th-grade BookUp members to read the book assigned to the team. Think book pep-talk more than academic lesson; think fun. Purchase of your team's book is required. The project will include elements of revision and written reflection. The written reflection will focus on the community engagement activities and how those activities have impacted the student's understanding of their role in community literacy, as a citizen and as a writer. Approximately nine hours will be devoted to this project.
4. **Final Portfolio** (15%). Revisions of a student's small-group story and her/his formally workshopped story will be handed in at the end of the semester. The portfolio also includes the original manuscript from formal workshop, edited by me, and the student's event responses. If students wish to discuss revisions in conference, allow me a week to review the work before the conference date. A successful revision should reflect an attempt at submission-level work.
5. **Exam** (15%) Midterm
6. **Daily Journal & Exercises** (10%). I will not read most of what is in student journals, but I will collect them at the end of the semester to grade them on the quantity of writing. Students will be required to include short responses to reading assignments, which I may read. The focus of our reading is to observe the use of craft in already published work, not on theory. We will watch how the masters do it, and then try to learn from them in order to improve our own writing.
7. **Event Responses** (5%). Students must attend at least two readings and write a one-page, single-space, typed document on her/his reactions. These responses will be attached to your final revision. If no readings are scheduled, this portion of the grade will be added into participation.
8. **Extra Credit** will be given for attending a third reading event after the student has handed in his/her one-page response.
9. No course papers will be **regraded** unless I request a rewrite.

Attendance: Do not miss class. Do not be late to class. Because English 3381 calls for daily practice in class and out, it is difficult to make up work for extended absences. A student with more than three unexcused absences will have his/her final course grade lowered by 10%. Three late arrivals to class equal one absence. The next two absences will lower the student's grade another 10% and so on.

Authorized Absences: Students are responsible for providing evidence to substantiate "authorized absences." If a student knows in advance that s/he will miss a class, s/he is responsible for informing me.

Religious Holidays: Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. "Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

Late Work: Late small-group manuscripts will not receive feedback from the group since they are reviewed on the spot. They will be docked 10 points per class late. Incidental exercises are also docked 10 points per class late. Formal workshop pieces that are not handed out to class a full week in advance of workshop are considered late. They will be docked 10 points if one class late, 20 points per week late after that. This typically isn't something to worry about, though. Few students are late turning in workshop manuscripts, because it's easy to keep up.

Cell Phone Policy: The use by students of electronic devices that perform the function of a telephone or text messenger during class-time is prohibited. Arrangements for handling potential emergency situations may be granted at the discretion of the instructor. Failure to comply with the instructor's policy could result in expulsion from the classroom or with multiple offenses, failure of the course.

Classroom Rules of Conduct: The Code of Student Conduct and Discipline is found at the following link: <http://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/StudentGuidelines2010-2012.pdf> - page=29
Section 5.2.22 defines classroom disturbances.

Evaluations: Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation near semester's end.

Course Topics and Major Assignment Dates

Week	Topic	Required Reading (other readings possible)
1	Course Introduction	
2	Process, Showing and Telling	<i>Writing Fiction</i> , Chapter 1, all & Chapter 2, pp. 21-52
3	Characterization,	Chapter 3, pp.67-82 & 106-114
4	More on Characterization	Chapter 4, pp.116-141
5	Setting	Chapters 5, pp.156-185
6	More on Setting Story/Plot	Chapter 6 pp.193-226 & Chapter 7, pp.230-250, 262-273
7	POV	Chapter 8, pp.276-305
8	Revision MIDTERM EXAM	Chapter 9, all
9	Formal Workshop	peer manuscripts
10	Formal Workshop	peer manuscripts
11	Formal Workshop	peer manuscripts
12	Formal Workshop	peer manuscripts
13	Formal Workshop	peer manuscripts
14	Formal Workshop	peer manuscripts
15	Publishing PORTFOLIOS DUE ACE REFLECTIONS DUE	Handout

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If a student has a disability that may affect adversely his/her work in this class, then the student is encouraged to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with the instructor about how best to deal with the situation. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center.

Academic Integrity

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. An assignment that can be proven to have been plagiarized will receive zero points. The second offense will lead to an F for the entire course.

Classroom Visitors

Any unannounced visitor to the classroom must present a current and valid SHSU ID. It is up to the discretion of the instructor if the visitor is allowed to stay for the class. Visitors must not present a disruption to class.

Concealed Carry on Campus

Effective August 1st, 2016, a license holder may carry a concealed handgun on or about the license holder's person while the license holder is on the campus of an institution of higher education. If I see a handgun or the printing (outline through clothing) of a handgun, then it is by definition not concealed, and I will respond as instructed by calling 911.