

2016-17 MS Creative Writing (7th/8th grade)

Periods 5 & 6/ Levels 2 & 3

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Room 232 (Office hours during lunch and after school by appointment.)*

Greetings, writers! Welcome to Azar's middle school intermediate creative writing class. Please see below for the class framework, weekly schedule, curricular components, department and class policies, as well as expectations for class participation.

Cornerstones/Objectives for all levels:

- **Heightened awareness/ways of seeing**-Learning to cultivate effective writing is learning to become more adept at seeing from diverse perspectives and exploring how external sight is linked to internal sight.
- **Develop, honor and celebrate students' voices**-Both verbally and in writing, through sharing and critique work, students will engage with one another's writing in a variety of capacities.
- **Meeting deadlines/working independently**-Through contracts & various assignments/projects, as well as contest entries, students will work independently to meet myriad, strict deadlines.
- **Development of diverse writing styles/forms** -from learning new poetic forms, to exploring various genres, students will engage in variety of diverse writing exercises which allow them to learn new elements of craft, in order sculpt, experiment with, and develop their art of writing.
- **Inspiration/reverence**- Throughout the course, students will develop a repertoire of reading alongside writing, as well as look at a variety of examples from classic authors to contemporary poets in order to discuss talent in craft and model examples of excellent writing.
- **Artistic risks** -Students will often engage in writing that's associated with other art forms, from crafting dialogue for movie clips to writing poetry in response to visual art. Students will occasionally participate in projects which are multi-genre artistic works.

All-Class Elements of Curriculum

Workshop-based Assignments—Based on a workshop led by a major teacher or guest artist, students will be responsible for short writing assignments approximately once a quarter.

Student-led FE's (short writing workshops)—Each student is responsible for leading one writing exercise for the class each semester.

Teacher-led Writing Workshops—At least once per week, students will be introduced to an element of craft that will help to expand writing ideas and repertoire of work.

Author Appreciation Symposiums—Once per semester, students will present on an author they've read recently whom they admire.

Explications—Approximately twice per month, the class instructor will select a short piece of writing to be explicated (thoroughly analyzed) by the class.

Critique Groups—In small groups, students will carefully examine one another's work and provide feedback for peers regarding the strengths and weaknesses in their writing. Critiques will run throughout the school year.

Story Hour—From time to time, students will have a class period just to listen to a story read by an actor, famous storyteller, or just the teacher. Students will discuss the story as well as examine the particular genre and techniques used in the story.

Performance Project (Moving Pictures, Moving Sounds): Combining writing with sound, cinema, imagery, etc. students create a performance project in December.

Coffee Talk/Food Fridays—In order to encourage healthy debate and deepen connections between peers, philosophical and introspective questions will often be posed to students in small groups while sharing in food.

A typical week:

Mondays—Short non-stop FE's or spill pages; 1st year workshops; silent work time for contracts

Tuesdays—Teacher-led workshops; writing meditations; outdoor writing activities

Wednesdays—Critique Groups

Thursdays—Explications; close readings; story hour; author appreciation

Fridays—Food gatherings; coffee talk discussions; student-led FE's

Grading Policies

(grading scale & method, deadlines, method of delivery)

Grading is based on a traditional grading scale and will primarily reflect a student's ability to consistently meet deadlines, carry out specific assignment requirements, and hand in polished copies of work. Students' writing will not be graded based on artistic merit or traditional writing rules, such as a rigid focus on punctuation, paragraph development, etc. (Of course, however, polished final copies will be required and habitual sloppiness, etc., will require intervention in the way of conferencing and/or a lowered grade).

Deadlines

Dates for contracts and other deadlines will be posted in the classroom weeks in advance. Additionally, all students will have Gmail accounts through which they can access an online master calendar that contains assignment deadlines, events, and an overview of class agendas. Students should access their gmail accounts and check the class calendar every few days.

Late Work

For full credit, you must have your work in by 3:00 pm on the day it is due. After 3:00 pm and for the following 24 hours, you may still turn in the work for 50% credit. After 24 hours of the date/time it is due, the assignment becomes a zero and can no longer be submitted.

Make-up Work

Making up work missed from excused absences needs to be completed within the amount of time legally allotted (so for every day you miss, you have an additional forty-eight hours to submit the assignment before it is considered late). It is your responsibility to find out what work you missed if you were absent

Submitting Work

- Per my request, most of your work will be submitted electronically to kohzadicw@gmail.com. And while I love the idea of going completely paperless for environmental reasons, I also know I cannot review all work via my computer screen. Some work, yes; but I will kindly request that for specific types of assignments, a hard copy be printed and handed to me directly. I will discuss this on an individual basis; however, as a general guideline, I request that poetry be submitted in hardcopy form; conversely, I request that prose be submitted via email only.
- Under no circumstance, unless there is a special situation which has been pre-discussed with me, should students submit work in any method other than directly in my hands or directly to my gmail account. (i.e.-I will not have a folder or tray for handing in assignments.)

- Any final work (contracts, story assignments, etc.) should be typed and relatively free of spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors, including typos. An occasional mistake is perfectly fine, but work laden with such errors is not deserving of an above-average grade. Please make sure to proofread and edit all work so that final submissions are polished and professional.

Participation

You are part of a community of writers where each individual voice adds richness to the collective experience; therefore, it is imperative you are consistent about attending class and being **on time**. Also, when you are present you must actively participate (Not all moments are good for daydreaming, texting, etc.); the CW program is built upon such participation (as you know), so please make sure to do your part.

You will be given a participation grade at the end of each week; we will review the criteria evaluated for this grade.

Materials

Each student, regardless of his/her year in the program, is required to have an in-class journal. I strongly recommend each student have his or her own flash drive as well. Additional materials for independent projects, such as art/tech needs, may be needed as such assignments come up; there are also materials available in the classroom for student use.