

# Advanced Creative Writing

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## Cornerstones/Objectives

**Heightened Awareness/Ways of Seeing**--Learning to cultivate better 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 in several 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 Writing** 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, either responding to various works or constructing work which uses creative writing as a component of a larger piece that also includes visual art, etc.

## Assignments/Expectations of Work

For high school students, here is the track for the core assignments/ projects for each year in the program:

**A. First Year Curriculum**--Regardless of grade level, all new students will complete a curriculum that surveys myriad components of creative writing, including an overview of most major forms/genres. Students of this level will not complete contracts. First year students will receive a separate list of topics for exploration.

**B. Contracts (2<sup>nd</sup> year)**--The year after the first year curriculum is completed, students will spend one year focusing solely on personal contracts, which allow for completely individualized assignments and personal artistic/literary development. Students of this level will complete four 9-week contracts (no umbrella project). Each nine weeks students must focus on one of the four major form areas of creative writing: fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, and dramatic writing. 8<sup>th</sup> graders will have the freedom to choose their contract areas, provided that select equally between single-discipline and multi-discipline forms. Middle school students complete the first year curriculum and up to two years of contract work before beginning umbrella projects in high school depending on when they enter CW.

**C. First Umbrella--Writer's Bible (HS only--3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year)** --Four 9 Week Contracts + Umbrella Project (Writing responses to/development of *The Writer's Bible*)

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**D. Second Umbrella—Novel-writing (HS only—3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> year)** This level will engage in a series of short workshops and assignments which aid in the writing of a novel. Additionally, each of the contracts will focus on writing the novel.

**E. Third Umbrella—Modeled Writing (4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> year)**

Two semester-long contracts and completion of a series of modeled writing workshops and assignment.

**F. Senior Seminar**

Development/publication of senior chapbooks (first semester), development/execution of senior projects (second semester). In addition, CW major requirement of a 45-hour internship must be complete by the end of the first semester senior year. Seniors are also responsible for planning an all-major fieldtrip in the fall, and completing their senior class graduation video.

In addition to the level requirements listed above, students will complete additional poem and story assignments that are introduced by CW teachers, guest artists, etc. Other whole class assignments include: author appreciation assignments, responses to teacher, guest artist and peer FE's, explications, critiques & multi-genre performance projects.

### Elements of Curriculum

**Workshop-based Assignments**—Based on a workshop led by a major teacher or guest artist, students will be responsible for at least one specific writing assignment approximately once per month.

**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.

**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.

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## Grading Policies (grading scale & method, deadlines, method of delivery)

Grading will be based on a traditional grading scale and will primarily reflect a student's ability to meet deadlines and carry out specific assignment requirements. 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 will be posted in the classroom, and also on the google calendar. Additionally, all students will have gmail accounts through which they can access an online master calendar that contains assignment deadlines, event critique options, and an overview of class agendas. Students should access their gmail accounts and check the class calendar every day.

### Points

The bulk of points that determine a student's grade come from meeting contract and senior seminar deadlines. Additional points will also come from academic participation, poetry and story deadlines, daily writing exercises, critique groups and explication completion; however, the aforementioned list isn't necessarily exhaustive.

### Late Work

For full credit, you must have your work in by 3:00 pm on the day it is due (if it is an assignment that isn't required for a critique group, etc.; otherwise, the assignment would be due at the beginning of class). 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. This includes contracts.

### 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

- Depending on the assignment, work will either be handed in hard copy or emailed to me at: [mrmosskaplan@gmail.com](mailto:mrmosskaplan@gmail.com) I will indicate which method depending on the assignment. In general, I like poetry and shorter prose assignments hard copy and longer work emailed. It is my responsibility to indicate which for any given assignment. Please note that submission guidelines for contracts are specifically mentioned on the contract sheet.
- Any work not submitted in alignment with the style sheet, which will be covered in class, will be dropped a letter grade (10%).

### Attendance/Academic Participation

We assume you are here because you love to write and you value the opportunity to be part of a community of writers. On the basis of this assumption, the following criteria for participation will be used to evaluate/grade each student on a weekly basis:

**Students must:**

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- Attend class everyday, on time;
- Actively listen, engage and share in classroom writing activities and discussions;
- Be courteous and respectful to students, teachers and visiting artists;
- Have a positive attitude and actively help to shape an atmosphere of trust, openness and respect;
- Not make excuses or disclaimers when it's his/her opportunity to share;
- Be on task during the class period, including designated work time;
- Have respect for both individual and shared space, as well as the computer equipment.

### 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 visual art supplies, may be needed as such assignments come up; there are also materials available in the classroom for student use.

