

First Year Creative Writing

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Description:

First Year Creative Writing is a year-long course survey course for new Creative Writing Majors. In this class, we will experiment with the art of language, participate in a multitude of writing activities, close-examine the craft of experts, engage in journal exercises, workshop the work of peers, and complete writing projects in the four main genres: fiction, poetry, dramatic writing, and creative nonfiction.

CW 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 assignments/projects, as well as contest entries, students will work independently to meet 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, performance, etc.

Expectations and Grading:

Your grade in this class will depend primarily on participation and the completion of assignments. If work is turned in at the end of class on the day it is due, you will be granted full credit. A generous amount of class time will be given to help aid in the completion of the required work; consequently, **late work will be penalized by dropping a letter grade for each day it is late.** In terms of your participation grade, several factors will be examined, including: attendance, sharing your written work with the class, being a supportive listener when others share, contributing feedback for editing/evaluation, and actively engaging in group activities. **Punctuality is also extremely important; please arrive to class on time every day.**

Materials:

- Journal
- A working writing utensil.
- Gmail email account

Creative Writing First Year Curriculum Overview

Core assignments/Activities for each quarter:

- Unit-connected writing workshops/lessons
- Short writing activities for exploring vocabulary, variant ideas, etc.
- Final Assignment connected to focus/activities in unit (short story, screenplay, poetry chapbook, etc)
- Critique groups/Author Appreciations

1st Quarter: (CW fundamentals, fiction writing (elements of story), and focus on Setting)

- Various workshops on story writing--how to get started, story arc, importance of internal/external conflict, etc.
- Fiction Focus: Approaches, six-word stories, hint fiction, flash fiction, short story
- Creative writing fundamentals (sentence construction,"show & tell", providing concrete details, etc.)
- Lessons on setting
- Author appreciation with setting focus (teacher-driven w/modeled writing)

- Critique Groups
- Writing activities in language play and introspection (FE's, seed sentences, etc.)
- PBS Story Competition

2nd Quarter: Focus on Character, Voice & POV

- Various workshops studying character development from film clips, short stories, etc. (Examining various character elements such as "action is character")
- Journal--10 entries providing character sketches for 10 different people (five POV/five character) coming from a variety of backgrounds, age groups, etc.
- POV Videos--From pov of xmas tree, etc.
- Picture book story must be written from student interviews and fully edited by the end of the quarter
- (One complex character sketch, describing the character's history, physical traits, personality, behaviors, idiosyncrasies, etc. and then use this person as a protagonist in a character-driven short story.)
- Explore developing characters through thematic elements & conflict
- Introduce interviewing as a way to enrich story and character development (Assign before Thanksgiving break: Interview with a parent over a particular decade--due after winter break.)
- Calliope submissions
- Performance Project

3rd Quarter: Focus on Poetry & Poetic Voice

- Lessons reviewing and exploring poetic devices (simile, metaphor, rhyme schemes, etc.)
- Intro poetry explication /brief practice
- Multiple workshops where students create various free verse and form poems
- Memorized poem (perform for class), sonnet/sonnet, etc., decade poem (from parent interview)

- Photo poem, Sound poem, poetry on poetry, political poem, music poetry, ethnic form poetry
- Letter: To self as though from another, etc. or to another, signed and sealed (such a letter should take place at some point)
- Assign grandparent interview (before spring break) with focus on grandparent as the age of student
- Small poetry compilation

Fourth Quarter: Focus on Dramatic Writing

- Examine/explore unique elements of writing intended to be heard/seen, rather than writing with the intention of being read
- Survey/analysis of elements of various types of dramatic writing: film, theater (monologues/scripts), stand up comedy, slam poetry, etc.
- Writing workshops/activities exploring various dramatic forms
- Snoop Journals (exploring dialogue)
- Final steps of picture book project, including presentation of books to children
- Turn grandparent interview into a monologue (write and perform)
- Slam poetry guest artist (students wrote and performed mini slams)
- Focus on dialogue
- Ten-minute play script