

Introduction to Creative Writing

Instructors – Azar Kohzadi, Director of Creative Writing & Jess Jordan-Schumacher, CW guest artist

Contact: Azar_Kohzadi@dpsk12.org

Course Objectives

Students will:

- Be introduced to the major genres and forms of creative writing, including: fiction, poetry, dramatic writing and creative nonfiction;
- Develop a body of work in all genres of creative writing;
- Increase language skills and fluency in all types of writing;
- Cultivate a love for reading through seeing books/texts as evidence of a creative process;
- Practice and refine their ability to work independently and meet writing deadlines.

Course Description

Introduction to Creative Writing is a year-long course designed for students with a passion for writing but who are not creative writing majors. A similar, yet abbreviated curriculum and method for students in the CW program is implemented. In this class, we will experiment with the art of language, participate in a multitude of writing activities, closely examine the craft of experts, engage in journal exercises, workshop the work of peers, and complete several writing assignments.

Class Curricular Components

- **Teacher-led Writing Workshops**—These workshops will take place at least once per week. In each workshop, students will be introduced to a literary genre focus or element of craft that will help to expand writing ideas and repertoire of creative work.
- **Student-led writing exercises** - Each student will be responsible for leading the class in a short writing prompt.
- **Close Readings**—For this reading focus, the instructor will select a short piece of writing to be read, examined and explored through writing.
- **Reading Days**—A few times each month, students will be given entire class periods simply to focus on pleasure reading (for a book of their choice).
- **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 the teacher. Students will discuss the story as well as examine the particular genre and techniques used in the story.
- **Share-out Days**—Periodically, we will hold specific days for everyone in the class share out.

Expectations and Grading

Each student's grade will depend entirely on participation and the completion of in-class writing practice and assignments. There will be very little homework. Students can easily receive an A in the course if they show up to nearly every class period on time and are prepared to listen, write and occasionally share. When students are not in class, they can still make up most work through similar writing exercises that align with classroom workshops. It is the student's responsibility to connect with the instructor about make-up work; this includes an email stating the exact dates of absence and a request for the make up assignments. Please note that while I've had the occasional student who is successful in the course despite being absent frequently, most students who are habitually gone tend to struggle with completion of make-up work. Additionally, there is no way to make up participation/sharing points.

Late Work – If you miss a class, you must connect with me about missed work within a couple of days. For full credit, you must complete the work within a week of the missed class. For each subsequent day, the score is dropped 10%.

Regarding grades that consider participation: Simply being in class doesn't mean you receive full credit for the day. To receive full credit, you must be "actively participating". This means you:

- Are on time;
- Write to the class-specific writing exercises when asked;
- Listen to peers when they share without interrupting;
- Occasionally share your own work or ideas;
- Stay for the entire class/workshop and do not take extended breaks;
- Do not wear headphones, sleep or put your head down during class.

Materials

- Journal
- A working writing utensil (every day!)
- Email account

Rules/Policies

Notebooks - Please note each student must have a notebook to write in. Unless a student has a technology-specific accommodation, students will not write on phones, laptops, tablets, etc., for in-class writing. Computers will be available when quarter assignments are due.

Phones - They should not be used or even seen during class, except during a break, unless a particular directive is given.

Other - Using common sense, respect and empathy usually cover any necessary rule. However, we will clarify a few things during a class discussion where everyone's views and needs are considered.