

Creative Writing - Fiction

Fall Semester 2018 Hendrick Hall Rm 117
Dr. McQuiston – emcquiston@heritagehall.com

Course Description:

This semester-long class is an introduction to the techniques and principles of creative writing. Short in-class exercises and longer assignments motivate and refine your writing, both about the chronicler's main subjects (places, people, and things) and about the fiction writer's concerns (character, plot, and dialogue). Learning to approach a piece of writing critically is a key component of the course; we'll read published writers and analyze their diverse approaches to storytelling.

Required Texts:

The World's Greatest Short Stories, Ed. James Daley
The Little Prince, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry
The Murder of Roger Ackroyd, Agatha Christie
Pastoralia, George Saunders
.pdf files and links posted to class websites

Course Objectives:

- expand and refine vocabulary, grammar, and style
- become familiar with the conventions of fiction, with particular attention to genre
- learn about varied fiction-writing techniques
- learn how to give and take constructive critique
- reinforce revision skills for both language and ideas

Workload:

Our primary work is producing original writing. The second level of activity involves reading and giving constructive criticism on your peers' writing. The third level is learning from analytical consideration of published texts. In addition, we will explore the creative process via discussions, exercises, and interviews with writers/artists. Google Classroom will be our principal tool for all assignments and collective communications.

Over the course of the semester you will produce at least 6000 words (approximately 25 pages) of original writing. You are required to present your writing for peer review at least six times in the semester.

Class Policies:

- **Bring your book to class.** Literature courses don't work if you don't have the literature.
- While you don't have to agree with your peers in discussion and peer review, you do have an obligation to be respectful. Demeaning or rude comments will not be tolerated.
- Laptops are for class work **only**. Please exercise self-restraint.
- Cell phones must be silenced and put away during class. Those who text during class are subject to public shaming.
- You are responsible for catching up on any material, assignments, and announcements you miss due to absence.

Email Etiquette

You are welcome to contact me outside of class by email. I try to respond to emails within 24 hours, or 48 on weekends; any email sent after 5pm will be answered the following day. Email is a good way to ask shorter questions, but please don't wait to ask by email a question that occurs to you in class. Chances are good that other students may need clarification of the same point.

Grades

Grades are determined by dividing the total number of points earned during a marking period by the total number of points possible. Final grades are weighted as follows:

- Writing assignments (including peer review): 30%
- Quizzes and in-class assignments: 15%
- Midterm Project: 10%
- Final Project: 20%
- Final Exam: 25%

Late assignments are penalized at the rate of 10% per day, including weekends and holidays. If you have difficulty meeting a due date, you must inform me at least forty-eight hours before the assignment is due.

Lagniappe

You may hand in your Lagniappe Card in return for an extra 24 hours to complete any take-home assignment, without penalty. *This excludes quizzes, exams, presentations, or in-class writing exercises.*