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## ENG 5020-600 Graduate Workshop in Creative Writing

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*Eastern Illinois University*

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English 5020: Graduate Workshop: Creative Prose (3 cr.)

Colleen Abel

Spring 2022: online

crabel@eiu.edu

(Please allow 24 hours for a response)

Office: CH 3811

Office hours: TR 12:30-2:00; W 5-6 (virtual)

### Required Texts

Blackburn, Venita. *How To Wrestle A Girl*.

O'Farrell, Maggie. *I Am, I Am, I Am*.

Ross, Leone. *Popisho*.

Turchi, Peter. *Maps of the Imagination*.

Miscellaneous readings (D2L)

### Course Description

This advanced graduate workshop will focus on the creation and revision of creative prose, whether fiction or nonfiction. Our course is themed around the idea of maps & structure: How does a prose writer create a map through the imaginary spaces they and the reader are inhabiting? What kinds of structures are available to writers that go beyond tropes like the hero's journey or the narrative arc? No matter what kind of prose you write, and how unconscious you are of its organization, your prose has a shape. This course will teach you to think more consciously about those shapes—those maps—and will encourage you to revise toward risk and surprise.

### Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, you should be able to

- Develop your craft by identifying prose techniques and using terminology when reading texts
- Understand and evaluate the structural choices of creative prose
- Write and revise your own works of prose

- Evaluate, constructively, the works-in-progress of your peers
- Reflect upon your own creative processes and practices

## Course Delivery Method

This course will be delivered online through our learning management system, D2L Brightspace, <http://www.eiu.edu/d2l>. As far as I can tell every single one of you has used D2L for this class already to turn in assignments. However, if you need help: Contact ITS User Services for technical support issues.

Email: [support@eiu.edu](mailto:support@eiu.edu)

Phone: (217) 581-4357

Support Hours: 7:00 AM - 4:30 PM, Monday-Friday with your EIU NetID account or password, contact Campus Technology Support at (217) 581-4357 or [support@eiu.edu](mailto:support@eiu.edu).

## Grade Breakdown

Creative Work: 225 points (3 each x 75 points)

Portfolio: 100 points

Presentation & Analysis: 175 points

Workshops: 225 points (3 each x 75 points)

Exercises: 100 points

Discussion Posts: 100 points

Revision Plans: 75 (3 each X 25 points)

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1000 points total

## Learner Participation Guidelines

This class is asynchronous, which means “not happening at the same time.” This means that we aren’t going to be meeting at a specific time all together. Instead, most of our “meetings” will take place on the discussion board throughout each week. They are attendance, participation and in-class writings all rolled into one. Specific instructions will be given each week for the discussion board expectations, but the above guidelines

should give you a general sense of what to expect. Please note that I will give a short grace period of one week and then the board will close to new posts.

**Exercises:** Frequently, I will give you exercises to complete designed to get you to generate new work, or work through specific revision problems. These will be posted to the discussion board.

**Prose pieces:** Three times over the semester, you will turn in prose to me via Dropbox. These should correspond to the three workshops you'll have. For each, you may include a statement of purpose with your pieces—what you were trying to achieve with the piece, any struggles you had in executing the piece, how you see the piece in its finished form (i.e. is this piece a chunk of a larger novella? Meant to stand alone?)

**Revision Plan:** For your revision plan, I would like you to take a paragraph to attempt to synthesize the feedback you received in your workshop. Discuss what you found most valuable in your feedback for sparking a direction forward. What specific changes do you plan to make to your piece?

**Presentation & Analysis:** Each of you will “teach” one assigned text over the course of the semester from our course readings. You will be in charge of 1) coming up with a discussion post question for the class that should yield rich and fruitful discussion; 2) coming up with a creative prompt inspired in some way by the text; 3) some kind of mini-lecture on the text. You have the freedom to decide on your approach here: You may decide that some kind of context presentation is necessary. (For example, if you want to teach us more about magical realism if you have the Ross novel, or about Caribbean culture.) You may decide that a craft analysis is most beneficial and walk us through your story's structure. You may do a close reading of a couple of passages. This is your chance to \*teach\*: to deepen our understanding of the work in front of us. After your presentation, you will turn in an accompanying 3-4 page analysis of the story you chose.

**Workshop Participation:** Each of you will be workshopped three times, using three different workshop models. We will discuss workshop expectations more thoroughly but please note that there are two equal components to your workshop grade. The first is your own readiness for your workshop. You must turn in your piece to D2L by noon on the first day of that round of workshops, regardless of when your specific day is. Everyone posts at the same time. If you post more than 24 hours late, you forfeit the right to feedback.

### Late work

See above for my late policies on discussion boards and workshop. Late assignments or presentations will be docked two points for each day late. Late portfolios will not be accepted.

### What You Can Expect From Me

For emails, please allow me up to 24 hours to respond to your message; I may take slightly longer on weekends or in-semester breaks. For grades, please allow ten days for me to get back to you for large assignments, though it will likely take less time than this. For discussion board posts, I will grade all posts and responses the week they are completed. Please note that I read and grade all discussion board posts, responses, and exercises, though I may not necessarily respond to each one, as the discussion board is a space that is designed to be student-centered, just as our classroom would be.

### Classroom Etiquette

Perhaps the most important classroom policy of all concerns our learning environment. A successful learning community is one in which we can learn from people whose perspectives we might not necessarily share and I ask everyone to be constructive and mindful.

\*\*\*DISCLAIMER: One question that students often ask: is it okay if I write about ...? Usually, they want to know if I will be upset if their work contains profanity, violence, sexuality, drug use, etc. The short answer is no. What I care most about is the quality of

your writing. That being said, *please do consider your audience* before you workshop a piece. Is it worth it to you to spend one of your valuable workshop slots writing a piece that will almost certainly be offensive? You may also want to consider putting content warnings on pieces that contain graphic violence, depictions of abuse, etc. This is up to you, but I have found many of your peers appreciate it.

## EIU Policies

- Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct. Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.
- Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center for assistance with time management, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to McAfee 1301.
- If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by McAfee 1210, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

## Important Dates

Students with questions about these deadlines should contact the Registrar [(217) 581-3511, (217) 581-3831, records@eiu.edu].

- Jan. 14: Last day to add a class
- Jan. 24: Last day to drop a course with no grade
- Jan. 24: Last day to withdraw from all classes with full tuition and fees refund
- Feb. 7: Last day to withdraw from all classes with 50% tuition and fees refund
- Apr. 1: Last day to withdraw from a class

Spring 2022 5020 calendar

Week One: Monday January 10

Turchi, Chapter 1: “Metaphor, Or: The Map”  
Discussion Post

Week Two: Monday January 17 (no class Monday, 1/17)

Turchi, Chapter 2: “A Wide Landscape of Snows”  
Kate Chopin, “The Storm” (D2L)  
Robert Coover, “The Babysitter” (D2L)

Discussion Post  
Creative Exercise 1

Week Three: Monday January 24

Turchi, Chapter 6: “A Rigorous Geometry”  
Ernest Hemingway, “The Killers” (D2L)  
Italo Calvino, “QFWFQ” (D2L)

Discussion post  
Creative Exercise 2

**Event: journalist Rachel Monroe, January 27, 5 p.m.**

Week Four: Monday January 31

Blackburn, How to Wrestle a Girl

Presentations  
Discussion post  
Creative Exercise 3

Week Five: Monday February 7 (no class Friday, 2/11)

Small-group workshop  
All pieces posted by Monday 2/7 at noon and to Dropbox  
Blackburn, How to Wrestle a Girl

Presentations

Week Six: Monday, February 14

O'Farrell, I Am, I Am, I Am

Presentations

Discussion post

Creative Exercise 4

**Event: Todd Kaneko, February 17, 5 p.m.**

Week Seven: Monday, February 21

LG Workshop 1 (Traditional Model)

All pieces posted by Monday 2/21 at noon and to Dropbox

Revision Plan 1 due Wednesday 2/23 by 11:59 p.m.

Week Eight: Monday, February 28

LG Workshop 1

Discussion post

Week Nine: Monday, March 7

LG Workshop 1

Popisho

Creative Exercise 5

**Monday, March 14 Week of Spring Break**

Week Ten: Monday, March 21

Popisho

Presentations

Revision Plan 2 due Wednesday 3/23 by 11:59 p.m.

Week Eleven: Monday, March 28

Full-class Workshop (critical response model)

All pieces posted by Monday 3/28 at noon and to Dropbox

Discussion Post

Week Twelve: Monday, April 4

Full-class Workshop

Creative Exercise 6

**Event: English Studies Conference 4/6**

Week Thirteen: Monday, April 11

Full-class Workshop



Discussion Post

Week Fourteen: Monday, April 18

Full-class Workshop

Creative Exercise 7

Week Fifteen: Monday, April 25

Full-class Workshop

Portfolios due Wednesday, May 4

Workshop Details

Large-group workshop 1

Large-group Workshop 2

Julia, Mariah, Samantha

Orlando, Katra, Faith

Cole, Em

Kristy

Full-class workshop

W7

W8

W9

Keyaunna, Jackie, Alyssa

Sarah, Alessandro

Jonathan,

Week Eleven: Monday, March 28

Sarah, Mariah, Orlando

Week Twelve: Monday, April 4

Julia, Jackie, Kristy

Week Thirteen: Monday, April 11

Samantha, Cole, Katra

Week Fourteen: Monday, April 18

Keyaunna, Em, Jonathan

Week Fifteen: Monday, April 25

Alyssa, Faith, Alessandro