

Fall 8-15-2018

ENG 2000-001: Introduction to Creative Writing

Bess Kosinec Winter
Eastern Illinois University

Follow this and additional works at: https://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_fall2018



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Winter, Bess Kosinec, "ENG 2000-001: Introduction to Creative Writing" (2018). *Fall 2018*. 42.
https://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_fall2018/42

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the 2018 at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Fall 2018 by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

ENG 2000: Intro to Creative Writing—3 cr hrs

Coleman 3159 * MWF 11-11:50 am

Instructor

Dr. Bess Winter

bwkosinec@eiu.edu

Office: Coleman 3576

Office Hours: Mon and Weds 2pm-3:30pm, Fri 2pm-3pm or by appointment

Required Texts & Materials

Janet Burroway, *Imaginative Writing: The Elements of Craft*

Readings posted on d2l

A notebook you love

A pen you love

Course Description

Catalog description: (3-0-3) F, S. This course will introduce students to reading for craft and writing creatively across poetry, fiction, nonfiction and dramatic genres. Students will participate in workshops of their creative work and read writing in each genre. WC

Think of this class as imagination boot camp. Here, you'll learn to tap into your innate creativity, and to give voice to ideas that excite you, intimidate you, even scare you. In short, you're in this class to undo much of the general-held wisdom passed down to us about what "normal" means or the idea of "fitting in" and to start down the path of the artist by training yourself to be observant, curious, and open to the world around you.

Through a tasting menu of four different genres—poetry, playwriting, fiction and nonfiction (in the prose unit)—you'll learn the basic tools necessary to turn your fascinations into work written, or performed, for others. This means you'll learn both the habits of the artist—you're expected to write in your journal daily, and to read extensively—and the artist's tools in the form of writer's craft.

This course is designed to be fun, but also to be rigorous. It is a process-based class, meaning your success, grade-wise and otherwise, depends on your attendance and participation, and your willingness to engage with the writing process. You are expected to take part in class discussion and workshops, to complete the assigned readings and exercises, and to turn in writing that you've spent considerable time drafting and revising, culminating in a revised final portfolio. You will share your work often and kick off our class discussions with engaged questions at least twice, as well as conference one-on-one with me mid-semester. In short, you're expected to participate fully in this community of writers, and to support your fellow community members by being thoughtful and generous in your contributions.

By the end of the course you will:

- Have developed the beginnings of a consistent artistic practice;

- Possess a basic understanding of the writer's craft and the revision process;
- Possess a basic understanding of the generic characteristics of poetry, playwriting, nonfiction and fiction, and the beginning of a solid body of work.

Assignments & Grading

Notebook exercises & discussion kickoff—5%

Poem packet & reflection—15%

10-Minute Play & reflection—15%

Prose piece & reflection—15%

Participation (workshop contributions, class discussion, conferencing with me, questions for Dr. Hurt)—25%

Revised portfolio & artist's statement—25%

**Optional extra credit: review, The Moors—5%*

**I reserve the right to hold pop quizzes and minor in-class and out-of-class writing assignments as the class's needs arise, as well as make minor changes to the syllabus in accordance with the class's needs. If any changes are made, you will be notified by email.*

On Grades

Your grade in this class is based on the amount, and quality, of effort you put into the course. This is measured by how you've changed or grown as an artist and a student of writing (in short, how invested you are in the process—you tell me how much in your artist's statement and our own meeting), not by your talent or promise as a writer.

Notebook Exercises

Daily writing exercises will be completed in your notebook, which will be taken up twice during the semester.

Discussion Kickoff

You will be assigned two days during the semester on which you're expected to share your notebook exercise with the class and come prepared with one well-considered discussion question, for the class, about the reading.

Poetry Packet, 10-Minute Play, and Prose Packet (fiction or nonfiction), plus Reflections

At the end of units 2, 3, and 4 you'll turn in a completed draft of 4 poems, one ten-minute play, and one short story OR three pieces of flash fiction OR a piece of non-fiction, respectively. Each will be accompanied by a 500-word reflection about your writing process and the elements of craft you used in your piece(s). The reflection should be well-written and deeply considered. As mentioned above, you are being graded on your engagement with the writing process, not your talent or promise as a writer.

Workshop and Responses

You may workshop *one* of the three packets you turned in over the course of the semester. Choose carefully, because **this will be the packet you revise for your final portfolio submission.**

Prepare for every workshop class by doing the following:

- 1) Write comments in the margins of the piece up for discussion.
- 2) Write a 1-page critique for each peer-written piece we read this semester.

Pieces should be submitted a week (7 days) before class via d2l. Works that are not submitted on time will not be workshopped. Speak to me if an emergency comes up so we have time to make alternate arrangements. Students should post their responses on d2l.

Revised Portfolio and Artist's Statement

You will use your workshop comments and the revision techniques you learned in class to revise your poetry, playwriting, or prose submission for a final grade. The portfolio will include a 600-word artist's statement that tells the story of your piece(s) from first draft to final submission, touching on how you used workshop comments and elements of craft to guide your revision choices. You can refer back to that unit's reflection in your Artist's Statement.

Extra Credit: Review a performance of The Moors

To receive an extra 50 points on your grade (roughly half of a letter grade), you may attend a performance of Jen Silverman's *The Moors*, running Oct 4-7 at EIU's Black Box Theatre, and write a review, due at the end of Unit 2. See me for details.

Course Policies

Attendance & Late Assignments

You are free to take up to five (5) unexplained absences. Further absences will result in a loss of 50 points (half a letter grade) per day on your overall grade (see EIU's official policy here: <http://castle.eiu.edu/auditing/043.php>). Don't bother sending excuses for absences after the fact, and please do not send emails asking if we did anything important (we did), or to be caught up or assigned make-up work for an unexplained absence. Do, however, let me know ASAP beforehand if you need to request an emergency extension on an assignment per EIU's policy, otherwise late assignments will receive a deduction of 50 points per day. Extensions are granted at my discretion, and you must provide a valid reason (emergency, documented health issues, etc) with your extension request. **Repeated tardiness (more than once or twice) reduces your participation grade.**

**This course makes use of EIU's Early Alert system. Repeated absences beyond your allotted 5, failure to turn in assignments, etc, all mean you may be contacted by your advisors.*

Email

This policy is borrowed from Dr. Tim Taylor's ENG 1001 syllabus.

I welcome emails if you have questions or concerns about your work in this class. However, I expect you to write emails in a professional manner-not like you are texting a close friend.

If you want to send me an email, follow the guidelines below. Emails should:

- Have a clear and concise subject line that provides gist of the email, such "Absent This Friday" or "Question about Revision" or "Availability for a Meeting?"
- Begin with a formal address, such as "Dr. Winter:" or "Dear Dr. Winter,"
- Use a respectful tone
- Provide questions or information in a succinct manner
- Use paragraph breaks for reading ease and strong organization
- Be edited and proofread effectively so as not to cause confusion
- Refrain from using abbreviations, "text-prose," or emojis
- Close with a short statement followed by a comma and your name, such as "Thanks for your time," or "Sincerely," or "Have a good weekend,"

If an email does not follow these guidelines, I will simply reply to the email with this message: "Please resend this email once it's been revised to fit the standards of a professional email. See pages 4-5 of my course policy." I do my best to reply to all emails within 24 hours of receipt, but you're not likely to receive an instant reply, particularly if you're emailing within an hour of class. In that case, please speak to me directly after class.

Plagiarism

EIU English Department's Statement on Plagiarism: Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's own original work" (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)—has the right and responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office. Respect for the work of others should encompass all formats, including print, electronic, and oral sources.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.

The Student Success Center

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center (www.eiu.edu/~success) for assistance with time management, text taking, 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 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

Accommodation for Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and are 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. Stop by Ninth Street Hall, room 2022, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

Once you have received your accommodations letter, please meet with me immediately, during office hours, in order for us to plan on arrangements specific to your needs and this course's assignments.

Schedule

Unit 1: Elements of Craft

Mon Aug 20 – Becoming a Writer

Read for today: Burroway chapter 1 pgs. 1-4 (end of “and reading”) and 6-11 (journal section)

Wed Aug 22 – Image

Read for today: Burroway pgs. 16-23, Kooser excerpt “Neighbors” and “Cosmetics Department” (d2l)

Write for today: Get a notebook and pen you like. Go out to a public place and notice as much as you can. Write it down: what you see, feel, hear, smell, touch. Be sure to use as many concrete images and details as possible.

Fri Aug 24—Metaphor and Simile

Read for today: Burroway pgs. 24-27, and excerpt from Doyle *The Wet Engine* (d2l)

Write for today: Try the exercise in Burroway “Try This” 2.5, pg. 27—choose three abstractions to write about (eg. love, anger, ugliness, despair, silliness, etc etc) and make them into a poem.

Mon Aug 27 – Setting

Read for today: Burroway “Setting as the World” pgs. 137-140 and “Setting as Mood and Symbol” pgs. 144-146, Angela Carter “The Werewolf” pgs. 153-154

Write for today: Do Burroway’s “Try This” exercise on pg 154 and write a short modern fairytale.

Wed Aug 29 – Voice

Read for today: Burroway pgs. 48-55 (to “Point of View”), Amelia Gray “Snake Farm” (d2l), Jorge Luis Borges “The Book of Sand” pgs. 82-85

Write for today: Choose an incident from your life. Write about it in either the voice from “Snake Farm” or from “The Book of Sand.”

Fri Aug 31— Character

Read for today: Burroway “Character as Desire” pgs. 95-97 and “Character as Action” pgs. 102-104, Aleksander Hemon “The Book of My Life” pgs. 109-111

Write for today: Do Burroway “Try This 4.16” pg. 134

Wed Sep 5— Point of View

Read for today: Burroway pgs. 55-61, George Saunders “Victory Lap” pgs. 69-82

Write for today: “Try This” 3.6 in Burroway (pg. 58)

Fri Sep 7— Story

Read for today: Burroway “Story as Journey” pgs. 167-168, Hass “A Story About the Body” pg. 187, Komunyakaa “Nude Interrogation” pg. 157, Daniel “Frontiers” pg. 168 and Kemper-French “This is How I Remember It” pg. 170

Write for today: Do “Try This” 6.8, pg. 187. Be prepared to continue working on this in class.

Unit 2: Poetry

- THIS CLASS A NO-RHYME ZONE UNTIL SEP 21-

Mon Sep 10—A New Way of Looking (and reading)

Read for today: Kooser “Being of Service” (d2l), Gwendolyn McEwen “Jewellery” (d2l), Pablo Neruda “Ode to a Large Tuna in the Market” (d2l), and Kooser “The Imaginary Reader” and “Selecting a Reader” (d2l).

Write for today: Write a poem describing your imaginary reader. You may wish to place them in a scene, describe their gestures, describe their dress, etc. Further examples of “imaginary reader” poems available on d2l.

Wed Sep 12—Parts of a Poem: Lines and Stanzas

Read for today: Burroway “Working with Sound” pgs. 302-304, “The Poetic Line” pgs. 305-306

Write for today: TBA

Fri Sep 14—Beginnings and Endings

Read for today: Kooser “First Impressions” pgs. 25-26, Brad Aaron Modlin “What You Missed that Day You Were Absent from Fourth Grade” (d2l), and Eve L. Ewing “to the notebook kid” (d2l).

Write for today: Write a list of six titles for imaginary poems—you fill in the blank:

To _____

How _____

What _____

Why _____

When _____

Where _____

Mon Sep 17—Collaging, Borrowing, Digging In, Stealing

Read for today: Ocean Vuong “Aubade with Burning City” (d2l), David Lehman “POEM; These Fragments I Have Shored” (d2l), Terrance Hayes “The Golden Shovel” (d2l) and Doris Cross “Bolt” (d2l)

Write for today: Gather materials that inspire you—audio, visual, written, even items of clothing, household items, etc. You’re only limited by your imagination. Collage or weave them together into a poem. Bring these materials with you to class, if possible.

Wed Sep 19—*The Persona Poem* *tentative*

Read for today: “Who is Sasha Fierce?” (d2l), “ look at “How David Bowie Invented Ziggy Stardust” (d2l—you don’t have to read the whole thing), Kevin Young, “Reward” and bio of Kevin Young (d2l), Margaret Atwood “Pig Song” and bio of Atwood (d2l).

Write for today: Invent a persona for yourself. If this is a person with a particular job or from another period in history, do some research on how this person would have lived. Write down a bio of your persona. *Note: Do not use this exercise to culturally appropriate. Your persona can be dynamic and fascinating without co-opting a culture/race that’s not your own.*

- OK, YOU CAN RHYME NOW -

Fri Sep 21—*Rhyme, Meter, Form*

Read for today: Edgar Allan Poe “The Ballad of Annabel Lee” (d2l) and Gwendolyn Brooks “the vacant lot” (d2l); Dylan Thomas “do not go gentle into that good night” (d2l) and Elizabeth Bishop “One Art” (d2l)

Write for today: The forms for both the ballad and the villanelle are posted on d2l. Choose one and write it.

Mon Sep 24—*Form, Continued*

Read for today: Tanka Journal, “What is Tanka?” (d2l), Sadakichi Hartmann “Tanka” (d2l), Description, “Renga” (d2l), “Pantoum: Poetic Form” and Randall Mann “September Elegies” (d2l)

Write for today: With your partners, you will write a renga. Poet 1 writes a haiku (a 3-line poem with a 5-7-5 syllable scheme), and sends it to partner 2, who adds to that haiku with a rhyming couplet and sends the poem to poet 3, who adds a haiku stanza in response to the couplet, then back to poet 1 for another couplet, etc. Try to keep your renga going as long as possible. You can even do it over text/FB or IG message as long as you can take and print a screenshot.

Wed Sep 26—*Writing Your Fascination, Poetry Edition: Depictions of the Self*

Read for today: Rochelle Hurt excerpts, *The Rusted City* and *In Which I Play the Runaway*

Write for today: Write a self-portrait in a place you’ve never been but would like to go, or like the name of.

Fri Sep 28 – *Class visit, poet Rochelle Hurt*

Read for today: Interview with Rochelle Hurt from *Midwestern Gothic* (d2l)

Write for today: Three questions you’d like to ask Dr. Hurt

- **POEM PACKET AND REFLECTION DUE VIA d2l DROPBOX by 11:59PM**
- **Schedule one-on-one meetings**

Unit 3: Drama

Mon Oct 1— Character and Conflict

Read for today: Chekhov “The Proposal” pgs. 341-352, “The Invisible Three-Act Structure” (d2l)

Write for today: Write a sketch of two or more characters who are in conflict over ownership of something. Explain why they’re in conflict, what their relationship is like, etc. This should be in prose format or notes rather than scripted.

Wed Oct 3— Character pt. 2: Motivation, Objectives, Beats

Read for today: Handout on d2l, possibly another reading TBA

Write for today:

Fri Oct 5— Dialogue

Read for today: Burroway pgs. 336-338, excerpt “The Moors” Act 1, Scene 1 (d2l)

Write for today: Write at least a page of dialogue between two of the characters you invented for your exercise for Monday. These characters should be in conflict.

Mon Oct 8 — Monologue & Soliloquy

Read for today: Rivera, “Gas,” pgs. 353-356

Write for today: Select one of the characters you created for your dialogue and write a monologue for them in which you discover something about that character that you didn’t know before. Remember to set the scene and provide stage directions.

Wed Oct 10– Setting the Scene

Read for today: Burroway pgs 330-333, Excerpt, “How the Colds Were Razed” (d2l), and “The Moors” opening stage directions (d2l).

Write for today: Write the cast of characters and opening stage direction for a ten-minute play (you may wish to include the characters you sketched for Monday). Remember, the inciting incident for this scene has already happened before the play has begun.

- **NOTEBOOK DUE**

Mon Oct 15—Writing Your Fascination, Playwriting Edition: Writing in Four Dimensions

Read for today: Excerpt from *The Moors* (d2l), article, “Theater That Uses the City as a Stage” (d2l)

Write for today: Write a scene, to be performed outside a theater, that interacts with a unique space: part of EIU’s campus, for example; a furniture showroom; a public park; etc. Be sure to include stage directions that indicate how characters interact with the setting.

Wed Oct 17—Dramatic Reading Workshop pt. 1

Read for today: Read the one-act you’re working on and select a section or scene you’d like your groupmates to read aloud.

Write for today: Make sure anything you bring to class is readable and edited—ie. that you’re ready to show it to other people.

Fri Oct 19—Dramatic Reading Workshop pt. 2

- **TEN-MINUTE PLAY AND REFLECTION DUE VIA d2l DROPBOX by 11:59PM SAT OCT 20**
- **Optional extra credit: Review of *The Moors* due, via d2l dropbox, by 11:59PM Sat Oct 20**

Unit 4: Prose

Mon Oct 22—Scene and Summary

Read for today: Burroway “Scene and Summary” pgs 263-266, more TBA

Write for today: Divide a page from your notebook in half. Write your life story on one half of the page.

Wed Oct 24— World Building

Read for today: Ursula LeGuin, “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas” pgs. 280-285

Write for today: Write a description of a beautiful or idyllic place. Then describe something small about that place that feels “off” or “wrong.”

Fri Oct 26— Dialogue in Prose

Read for today: Excerpts on d2l

Write for today: TBA

Mon Oct 29— Crafting plot

Read for today: Burroway pgs. 260-263, Thomas King, “Borders” (d2l)

Write for today: TBA

Wed Oct 31—Writing Horror

Read for today: Brian Evenson, “A Collapse of Horses” (d2l), Kathy Zlabek “Sterling’s Women” (d2l)

Write for today: Write a scene in which the protagonist encounters something that deeply unsettles them.

Fri Nov 2-- Time

Read for today: Jesmyn Ward, “Cattle Haul” (d2l)

Write for today: Write a scene in which a character has five minutes in which to finish an overwhelming task.

Mon Nov 5— Writing Your Fascination, Prose Edition: Objects

Read for today: Camila Grudova, (d2l) and excerpt from Edward P. Jones, “The Store” (d2l)

Write for today: Write a scene that centers around a list of objects owned or used by a character or group of characters.

Wed Nov 7-- Flash Fiction, Micro-Fiction, Short-Shorts

Read for today: Selection from *The Rose Metal Press Field Guide to Writing Flash Fiction* (d2l),

Write for today: TBA

Fri Nov 9—Workshopping and Revision
Read for today: TBA

- **SHORT STORY/FLASH/NON-FICTION AND REFLECTION DUE VIA d2I DROPBOX by 11:59PM SAT NOV 10**

Unit 5: Workshops and Readings

Mon Nov 12—Workshop participants 1 and 2

Wed Nov 14—Workshop participants 3 and 4

Fri Nov 16—Workshop participants 5 and 6

Mon Nov 19—Fri Nov 23—Thanksgiving Break—no classes

Mon Nov 26—Workshop participants 7 and 8

Wed Nov 28—Workshop participants 9 and 10

Fri Nov 30—Workshop participants 11 and 12

Mon Dec 3—Workshop participants 13 and 14

Wed Dec 5—Workshoppers 15 and 16

Fri Dec 7 - Workshoppers 17 and 18

- **NOTEBOOK DUE**

FINAL PORTFOLIO AND ARTIST'S STATEMENT DUE VIA d2I DROPBOX by Wed Dec 12, 5pm