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ENG 2000-001: Introduction to Creative Writing

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ENGLISH 2000, Introduction to Creative Writing Spring 2020

T/TH 2:00 to 3:15 Coleman Hall 3159

Dr. Daiva Markelis

Email: dmmarkelis@eiu.edu Office: Coleman Hall 3375

Office Hours: W 2:30 to 4:00 and T/TR 12:30 to 1:30 and by appointment

NOTE: I will be assisted this semester by graduate student Karen Reed, who is working on her Master's degree in creative writing.

Purpose of the Course

This course will introduce students to writing creatively in four major genres of creative writing: poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, and drama. We will articulate the distinctions of each genre, such as the importance of dialogue in drama and character development in fiction, while simultaneously exploring the connections between the genres and the need to create a text that fully engages a reader's imagination. Finally, we will grapple with the larger questions of why it is that we write and why it is that we want to be a part of somebody else's imaginative world. Through analysis of literary models and individual and class criticism of student work, students will create a portfolio of writing to present at the semester's end.

Objectives of the Course

- Students will develop a repertoire of artistic strategies in the writing of creative nonfiction, fiction, drama, and poetry.
- Students will develop their eye for detail, dialogue, and voice.
- Students will more fully realize the importance of revision.
- Students will deepen their understanding of the historical importance of various genres through the reading of classic and contemporary authors.
- Students will develop critical reading and interpersonal skills through workshop participation.

Books and Materials

Imaginative Writing, 4th edition, by Janet Burroway

Bird by Bird, by Anne Lamott

Requirements

1. Read the assigned material by the assigned date and participate in class discussions and occasional in-class writing exercises.
2. Participate in three writing workshops by having your work critiqued by classmates as well as by responding to the work of others in an insightful and constructive matter, both orally and on paper.
3. Submit a portfolio of creative work at the end of the semester. The portfolio will include a short story, a personal essay, a short play, and several poems: 4 pieces in all.

Grade Breakdown

Workshopping of Writing/Writing Portfolio: 50%

Participation: Written peer critique: 25%/

Oral peer critique and discussion of essays from book: 20%

Attendance at Lions in Winter: 5%

Writing Portfolio

In creative writing courses, grading is a necessary evil. I have found through experience that a specific grade on every written piece of work sometimes discourages writers. Often they look at the grade and forgo the comments. Portfolios, where one grade is given at the end for your entire creative output, work to your advantage. You can rewrite as many times as you like; I will give you ample feedback on each piece and encourage you to make appointments to see me about your writing progress.

Workshopping Procedure/Participation

A large part of this course will be devoted to the workshop, a popular method of critiquing creative writing. Students sign up for workshop days in class. We will aim for three students per class period. Every student will have a chance to workshop three of their four assignments.

Attendance

Many of the ideas used in your essays will be generated in class discussions or in-class writing, which is why it is very important that you come to each class session. I realize, however, that emergencies do occur. Excused absences are those outlined in the student catalogue: “illness, emergency, or university activity.” Documentation is required for all excused absences. Unexcused absences are pretty much all others—oversleeping, finishing papers for other classes, out-of-town trips “because I’m homesick.” More than three unexcused absences may lower your final grade for this class.

Writing Center

Please visit the Writing Center if you need help with any aspect of writing, including brainstorming, organization, development, sentence structure, documentation, and grammar. The Writing Center is located at 3110 Coleman Hall and is open Mondays through Thursdays from 9am to 3pm and 6pm to 9pm, and Fridays from 9am to 1pm. Drop by to make an appointment or call (217) 581-5929.

University Policies

(1) 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.

(2) Students with disabilities - 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 Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583.

(3) 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, test 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.