Fall 8-15-2016

ENG 2000-001: Intro to Creative Writing

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Catalogue Description: 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.

Objectives:

a. Students will develop skills in craft analysis by discussing, reading and writing across poetry, fiction, nonfiction and dramatic genres.

b. Students will develop the ability to produce and revise original creative work across poetry, fiction, nonfiction and dramatic genres.

c. Students will develop the ability to analyze their creative work in the context of a tradition across poetry, fiction, nonfiction and dramatic genres.

d. Students will hone their ability to critique creative work in a creative writing workshop.

e. Students will develop skills to effectively present their creative work produced for this course.

Texts:
Burroway, Janet. Imaginative Writing: The Elements of Craft
Lamott, Anne. Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life
Starkey, David, Creative Writing: Four Genres in Brief

Assignments (with appropriate grade% for each):

1. Portfolio: A manuscript consisting of the various drafts, including the very first one and especially the final, finished draft, of each of the following creative works you will have worked on during the semester: 1 poem, 1 fictional work, 1 nonfiction essay, and 1 short dramatic work.

   The different drafts will enable me to evaluate the progress you have made for each creative piece. Many of these we will discuss in a workshop format in class. (40%)

2. Journals. This will be a log of your responses to the creative works you will be reading throughout the semester from the course texts. At the top of each entry you must write the creative work’s title, writer's name, text name, and page#. For each creative work, you will first write your initial thoughts / reactions / feelings and then reflect more fully on what inspired your response by looking at the creative work more closely.

   What words are especially concrete or tangible?

   Does the form of the creative work express its point, images, etc. in a more powerful way?

   Does the creative work sound or look a certain way which appeals to you?

   Why did you pick this creative work?

   What do you think it is trying to say?
In this journal, you are studying other writers' poems to understand better what makes each genre work well. By being a more careful reader of creative works, you will become a better writer of creative works, and will also be able to edit your own writing with a more objective eye. The Journal will be collected 4 times during the semester, and a final grade will be given at the end. (30%)

4. Participation: The main focus of this class is your writing. We will spend most of the semester discussing and critiquing your creative work in a workshop format. Therefore, your response to one another's poems is a crucial part of class. As each other's audience, you must provide feedback for the writing presented in class. You will also need to provide copies for the class of the works you will workshop (either in hard copy or by email). (30%)

Note: You are an important part of the class, so attendance is important. More than three absences will lower your grade. Please plan to complete all work and share with your peers.

COURSE PURPOSE: We will begin the class by examining poems written by published modern and contemporary poets in order to learn how to discuss a poem and to develop a sense of what makes a poem good according to contemporary standards. For example, we will talk about voice and point of view, rhythm, images, stanzas, line breaks. Then we will turn our attention to poems written by you and examine them in the same way. So, the purpose of the class is to help you become a better writer of poems by reading the works of established poets and understanding what makes their poems successful or not, by giving you exercises that make you write specific poems to help you understand what to avoid doing in a poem (such as rhyming, preaching, generalizing, using abstract language or clichés). We will follow the same pattern for each of the other genres (fiction, creative nonfiction, and dramatic writing).

Other Policies:  
Plagiarism: 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. In accordance with English Department and University policies, “Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—‘The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation as one’s 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 assignment of the grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course.”

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 to make an appointment.

The Student Success Center & Writing 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. The Writing Center is also a resource that students can utilize to improve their performance in this course. For more information visit their website (http://castle.eiu.edu/writing/). To schedule an appointment, call 217-581-5929, or stop by Coleman Hall, Room 3110 during open hours.

Themes: The English Department has recently identified a set of themes that students may choose to explore across multiple courses with the same theme. In each course, the theme may be explored differently. In this course, you will complete work that engages one of the following three themes: (1) Genre, Form & Poetics; (2) Media, Technology & Popular Culture.
Fall 2016 Tentative Calendar: ENG 2000

August

Poetry

22  Introduction to the class and each other. Writing exercise. Read 14-24 in Starkey for August 24.
26  Play with lines, stanzas, meter, and rhythm from reading. Discuss music, images, symbols, and figurative language in poetry. Writing exercise. Begin working on your journals and draft a poem for workshops (see sign-up sheet). Please note: you should bring copies of your poem for each of your classmates and me (18).

29  Workshop
31  Workshop

September

2  Workshop
5  Labor Day: No Class
7  Workshop
9  Workshop
12  Workshop

Short Stories

16  Discuss three sample stories in Starkey. Introduce structure and design. Writing Exercise. Read 116-128 in Starkey for September 19. Continue journal (3 stories) and begin planning your short story.
19  Play with characters and dialogue from Starkey. Setting, POV, tone, style introduction. Writing Exercise. Complete draft of short story for workshop (see sign-up sheet). Please note, you should email your story to everyone in the class the night before your workshop. I'll provide an email list.

21  Workshop
23  Workshop
26  Workshop
28  Workshop
October

3 Workshop

5 Workshop


Creative Nonfiction

10 Discuss Starkey and the three models in the reading. Writing Exercise. Read 185-193 and 203-206 in Starkey for October 12.

12 Discuss Starkey. Writing Exercise. Draft a short creative nonfiction essay for your workshop (see signup sheet). Again, please email your essay to your classmates and me the night before your workshop.

14 Fall Break: No Class

17 Workshop

19 Workshop

21 Workshop

24 Workshop

26 Workshop

28 Workshop

31 Workshop

November

2 Journals Due (3 creative nonfiction essays). Introduce dramatic writing (short plays and screenplays, for example). Writing Exercise. Read 233-239 and one of the sample 10-minute plays from Starkey for November 4.

Dramatic Writing

4 Discuss Starkey and the plays. Writing Exercise. Read 261-284 in Starkey for November 7

7 Discuss Starkey. Writing Exercise. Introduce the elements of production. Begin working on your short play or other dramatic writing. Continue with journaling.

9 Film

11 Film. Complete a draft of your short dramatic writing for your workshop (see sign-up sheet). Please email your work to your peers the night before your workshop.
14       Workshop
16       Workshop
18       Workshop
21-25    Thanksgiving Break: No Classes
28       Workshop
30       Workshop

**December**

2        Workshop

5        Workshop. Continue revising your work for your portfolios.

**Portfolio Preparation**

7        Work on portfolios

9        Last Class Day. Journals due (3 plays). Work on portfolios. Note: Portfolios are due by Wednesday of Finals Week.