

English 233: Introduction to Creative Writing

Course Policies, Spring 2010
Section 011, T/TH 2:00 PM – 3:15 PM
Architecture & Urban Planning Bldg, Rm 116

Instructor: Craig Medvecky
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Course Description & Learning Outcomes

Being a Creative Writer in a public setting such as the university means embracing the notion of one's written voice as personal *and* political, private *and* public. In this course we will examine several genres of poetry and short fiction to discover how different writers approach the transformation from personal/private to impersonal/universal creative expression.

In keeping with this exploration, we will read works by a diverse selection of authors, including both published and unpublished writers. In the published texts, we will explore a variety of approaches to the theory and practice of creative writing in attempt to understand how different writers deploy various strategies and creative philosophies to reach their audiences in specific ways. These outside readings will serve as examples to be investigated as they fit individual goals for writing. Their purpose is not to stand as inviolable objects for blind imitation, but rather to serve as a foundation in the development of the student's own emerging sense of creative purpose.

In addition to the published texts, one of the main activities of this course will be reading and discussion of student texts and works-in-progress. At various times students will be required to submit their own writing to the class, to D2L, or to small groups for guided critique. Likewise, students will also be required to respond in kind when others' work is similarly distributed. The purpose of these sessions is two-fold: as writers, students will receive focused and intentional feedback from a variety of sources; and as readers, students will be exposed to various styles of writing and thus practiced in various critical reading and thinking strategies. Along these lines, the course will endeavor to provide guidance and methodology for professional, thoughtful and critical responses as tempered by an attitude that is fundamentally developmental and appreciative of the nature of writing as a work-in-progress. The English 233 classroom should be a place where students can experience a sense of joy and freedom in their own and others' experiments with writing within a structured environment that allows for honest, sincere, constructive feedback.

Learning Outcomes

Students should be aware of how their work in a creative writing class fits within the English major, and how it addresses learning outcomes that the department has indicated are essential for success in this field. These include:

- **Inquiry and analysis** — Students will be able to demonstrate close reading and careful interpretation of a complex text.
- **Critical Thinking** — Students will be able to develop, in writing, an original, evidence-based analytic argument about an appropriate text or topic.

- **Written Communication** — Students will be able to write clear expository prose demonstrating knowledge of academic written conventions.
- **Civic knowledge and engagement** — Students will be participatory community members able to articulate in speech and in writing descriptions and analysis of others' choices and their possible consequences for the community of readers and writers they impact.
- **Synthesis** — In their writing, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of vocabulary, methods, and conventions of the discipline.
- **Creativity** — Students will produce original creative work that reflects thoughtful, informed engagement with its literary genre and awareness of diverse identities, perspectives, and positionalities.

Prerequisites:

In order to be eligible for enrollment in this class, a student must have received a grade of C or better in English 102 or a score of "4" of the EPT.

Required Texts:

All students are required to purchase the following materials:

1. Starkey, David. *Creative Writing: Four Genres in Brief*. Available from: Boswell Book Company, 2559 N. Downer Ave. (414) 332-1181
2. *ENG 233-011 Course Reader* (Medvecky). Available at Clark Graphics, 2915 N Oakland Ave. (414) 962-4633

Other Required Materials:

In addition to the textbook listed above, I may from time to time post electronic readings as .PDF texts on the course D2L site. Students will be required to download these texts and to have access to them during subsequent class discussions either via a portable computer or in hard copy. Students will also need such school supplies as will allow them hand-write assignments during class. Students should also plan on small monetary outlays for the printing and photocopying costs associated with standard writing studio course. In general, students are strongly encouraged to plan for, develop and employ some system of organization for ready access to previously distributed course materials and their own accumulated writing. It is expected that all homework assignments will be typed or printed out and that multi-paged assignments will be stapled.

Grading:

Grades will be determined according to the following rubric:

Participation & Professionalism:	30%
Timely Completion of Assignments:	30%
End of Term Paper (3-5 pp):	15%
Final Portfolio Assessment:	15%
End of Term Test (In-Class):	10%

Participation, Professionalism and Attendance:

One of the main goals of this course is to introduce college students to customs and practices specific to a community of writers. As such, student participation in class discussions, workshops, online forums, etc. is integral not only to one's own success but also to the success of the community as well. Accordingly, students should come to class prepared and ready to discuss the topic of the day.

Students are required to treat others' work and contributions with respect. Professional conduct means being attentive to the discussion and striving toward the expression of new and deeper contexts for one's own comments as well as those of others. It does not include arriving late, leaving in the middle (or early); nor does it include listening to music or text messaging.

Any student who is not in the classroom at roll call will be marked tardy for the day. Three tardies equals one absence. Any student who misses more than twenty (20) minutes of a class will be marked absent for the day. Five (5) or more unexcused absences during the semester will result in a significant reduction of a student's final grade. The only excusable absences will be for medical reasons. Students who have to be absent or leave early should let me know in advance. Students who arrive late or miss class are expected to catch themselves up on missed work, including handouts and homework assignments. To help in this regard, the course D2L site will provide convenient, 24 hour access to all past and present documents and assignments. Please be advised, an absence is not an excuse for subsequent late work.

Lastly, student-teacher conferences will be held in place of class meetings once or twice per term. During those weeks, class will be cancelled; however, missing a scheduled conference will be counted as one (1) absence.

Workshops:

At various points throughout the semester we will convene as a workshop either in small groups or as an entire class. In order to make these workshops effective, students will be asked to distribute the appropriate number of copies of their workshop materials in the session prior to the workshop. Please note, workshop materials must be distributed in hard copy. Poetry is usually single-spaced and fiction is usually double spaced. Work should be typed or printed in Times New Roman font. Please include your name, course information and title for each work submitted. Respondents are expected to give written feedback for each submission according to the practices discussed in class. This feedback may be written on the materials themselves or attached as a separate sheet of paper.

Homework Assignments:

The work in this course will consist of creative writing, critical reading, and responses designed to supplement and focus one's individual creative efforts. Much like any other English department course offering, students can expect that homework assignments will contain a reasonable amount of reading and writing every week, and homework will be assigned for every class.

Individual homework assignments, whether creative or critical, will not receive a letter grade. However, they will be reviewed for thoroughness, effort and rigor; and frequently they will be returned with comments and suggestions for revision. The comments are intended to provoke further development of the student's work, but they do not constitute a grade. As long as the student responds to the assignments in good faith and in the time allotted, they will receive full credit for the completion of that assignment.

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class specified by the instructor and/or the course time-line. Late assignments will not receive written comments. Further, a pattern of late completion will negatively affect the final grade. Please note, assignments in this class

frequently build from one to the next. Please make an effort to stay on top of your writing deadlines, so that late work does lead to an ongoing pattern of lateness.

End of Term Paper:

Throughout the semester we will be exploring various approaches to, and theories of, poetry and prose in an attempt to understand deeply why it is that writers choose to write creatively in a public space, and further, to understand why they choose particular forms or generic modes for their creative expressions. Toward the end of the semester students will be expected to formulate a reaction to the course readings and discussions that centers around the topic of their own developing “creative philosophy.” This paper is an opportunity for students to present some initial thoughts on the purpose of, and audiences for, their own creative work in the context of an established tradition. Students should reflect on the choices they have made in various assignments over semester and to quote from their own work as freely as from other course texts. This paper will be turned in and read together with the Final Portfolio. 3-5pp.

End of Term Exam:

Being an introductory course to a broad discipline, English 233 introduces a great many terms and concepts. At the end of the course, there will be a short in class exam to test the student’s knowledge and retention of the broad-level course content. This should not be an intimidating experience. Basic note-taking and periodic review of the course textbook should suffice for preparation in most if not all cases.

Final Portfolio

The Final Portfolio should consist of approximately 10 pages of revised fiction and 3-5 revised poems. To be eligible for Final Portfolio a piece of work must have been written for this class during this semester, and it must have been revised at least once since my last comments were given.

The UWM Writing Center:

Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with The Writing Center. As a resource, UWM’s Writing Center offers a wide range of reading and writing-related services free of charge. The trained staff offers a high degree of flexibility in scheduling one-on-one, peer-to-peer, confidential consultations for readers and writers at all in any stage of their reading/writing process.

Locations: Curtin Hall room 382, and Library East Wing (1st floor)

On-line: <http://www.writingcenter.uwm.edu>

Phone: 229-4339

Director: Margaret Mika, mmika@uwm.edu

EMAIL AND D2L

This section of English 233 will use both email and the D2L online course system. If you have not already used these technologies, please familiarize yourself with them as soon as possible. You will need to know your ePanther ID. If you do not know your ePanther ID and password, please visit <https://www-ssl.uwm.edu/uits/ePanther/pwhelp.html> or call the UWM Help Desk at (414) 229-4040 and ask for Account Admin. UWM provides all students, staff, and faculty with Panthermail, a free email account that can be accessed with your ePanther ID and password at <http://pantherlink.uwm.edu>

- All course correspondence will be sent to your Panthermail account
- You must check your Panthermail at least 24 hours prior to and after each class session

This course will also make use of the D2L online system. Anyone who is unfamiliar with D2L may refer to the handout provided on the first day and/or follow the help link below to learn more: <https://uwm.courses.wisconsin.edu/>

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:

Plagiarism has serious consequences for writers at every level of their academic career. Plagiarism can involve actual copying, having someone else write your papers, or even unintentionally borrowing without proper documentation. Any student caught plagiarizing in this course will receive a failing grade and may be subject to further disciplinary action at the departmental or university level.

Student Accessibility Center (SAC):

Students who work with an advisor at the SAC should bring their VISA statement to their instructor in the first week of class. Any student having questions or concerns about their unique learning abilities may visit the Center at UWM in 112 Mitchell Hall.

Administrative Drop:

Any student who does not attend the first full week of class (or its equivalent) will be automatically dropped from the course.

Other University Policies:

For more information about the full range of UW-Milwaukee policies on-line, please visit: <http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf>