

Summer 2010

ENGL 2210

Instructor:
Courtney Danforth



CREATIVE WRITING

Creative Writing (fiction and poetry), is a sophomore level course taught in a workshop format. Students write short stories, poetry, or both. Students study each other's work, as well as that of professional writers, to learn the fundamentals and techniques of literary writing. Exit requirements: a minimum of a C average on course work.

This course studies the craft of writing. Talent varies from writer to writer, and is neither interesting nor practical to study. Craft, instead, is a set of skills that can be studied and learned, so that will be the focus of this course.

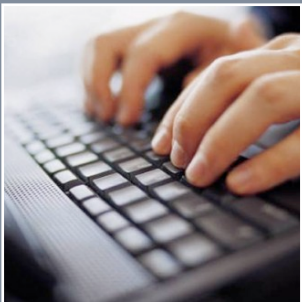
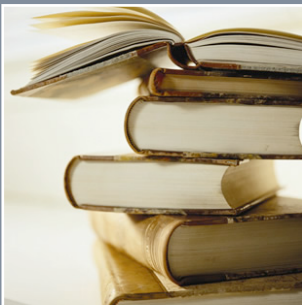
Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate the fundamentals and techniques of writing poetry and fiction, by writing five "flash fiction" stories and four poems.
2. Students will utilize the terminology used to discuss poetry and fiction, in writing/workshopping responses.
3. Students will critique the work of others with editorial "objectivity" in writing/workshopping responses.
4. Students will demonstrate the self-discipline necessary to complete class projects and become successful writers by following the course schedule.
5. Students will study available markets for poetry and fiction and submit one work for publication.
6. Students will write a critical essay that measures their writing skills against the methods used by two or more assigned poets or fiction writers showing and evaluating their critical acumen and mastery.



Remember! This is a 3 credit hour course, which means that you should plan to spend approximately 9 hours each week working on/studying for this course. Plan ahead-- use your time well!

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Required Texts & Materials

- Henderson, Bill, ed. Pushcart Prize XXXIV. New York: Norton, 2010.
- King, Steven. On Writing. New York:.,
- Strand, Mark and Eavan Boland. The Making of a Poem. New York: Norton, 2000.
- Access to a computer with Internet, able to use all features of GeorgiaView, and word processing software of your choice.

Minimum Requirements

Your semester grade will be calculated by averaging these five grades:

1. Five “flash fiction” stories
2. Four poems
3. Nine writing responses
4. Sixteen workshop responses
5. One critical/analytical essay
6. One pitch letter and publication submission

Academic Honesty

The receiving or giving of unauthorized assistance in any assignment is prohibited. The taking or attempt to take, stealing, or otherwise procuring in an authorized manner any material pertaining to the education process is prohibited. The selling, giving, lending, or otherwise furnishing of answers to any examination known to be scheduled any subsequent date is prohibited. The fabricating, forging, falsifying of test or research sources is prohibited. Plagiarism is prohibited. Homework, tests, and projects must be the work of the student submitting them. Direct quotations and paraphrases are to be appropriately acknowledged with MLA citations. Turning in the same work for this class that you have turned in for another class is prohibited. Plagiarism will be determined according to the guidelines set forth in the MLA handbook. Failure to abide by these policies may incur the following penalties: a zero on the assignment in question with no opportunity to rewrite/retake, a conference with the instructor, a conference with the Dean of Humanities, an F for the entire course, a hearing before the Darton College Judicial Committee to determine further action against the student.

Late Work

Late assignments earn a ten point penalty for each calendar day they are late. Technology snafus are inevitable and unacceptable excuses. Please plan to avoid them.

Grade Disputes

Should you believe a grade has been mishandled, please alert your instructor 24-36 hours after the grade has been posted. Your alert should take the form of an email stating your claim and a short discussion of any supporting evidence. The administration will evaluate your dispute for resolution.

Disability

Darton College will honor requests for reasonable accommodations made by individuals with disabilities. Students must self-disclose their disability to the Office of Disability Services before accommodations are implemented.

Writing Across the Curriculum

Writing is an integral skill that is required for all careers and professions. Because students need to be proficient writers, Darton College is committed to ensuring that students who attend Darton College have the competencies and skills necessary to properly and effectively communicate with the written word. One way to ensure that students are exposed to writing throughout their college experience is to incorporate Writing Across the Curriculum as a required component in each course. Every syllabus for each course taught, including online courses, must have a writing assignment. Instructors are free to choose how the writing component will be incorporated and are also free to make individual decisions about how the assignment will be graded and what percentage the assignment(s) will count with regard to the final grade of a student. One of the annual surveys conducted by the General Education Assessment Committee will address the familiarity of faculty with the writing across the curriculum policy. Examples of ways to incorporate writing across the curriculum include, but are not limited to, summaries of articles, essays, responses to discussions, speech outlines, lab reports, research papers, character analysis, and behavioral observations.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The instructor may alter this schedule as necessary.

<p>Week 1: 25–27 May</p>	<p>Introductions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read the syllabus thoroughly and email your instructor (in GAView, click on “Mail” and select “Courtney.Danforth”) with any questions or concerns you have.• Choose any form of creative writing you like (poem, short story, 1-scene play, song...) and use it to introduce yourself as a writer and a person to the class. You might talk about how you learned to write, what you like to read, what you like to write, what scares you about writing, what fantasies you have about writing, your best/worst experience with writing, and anything to help us understand who you are.• Read King (beginning to p. 30)
<p>Week 2: 1–3 June</p>	<p>Theme: Parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read van den Berg’s “What the World Will Look Like When All the Water Leaves Us” (Pushcart 261)• Write a 75 word response to van den Berg’s writing techniques (due Tuesday)• Read about Flash Fiction (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flash_fiction)• Write a story (Flash Fiction: 300-1000 words) featuring a parent-child relationship (due Thursday)• Read “How to Give Good Critique” (http://tinyurl.com/24mxtmy)• Read King (30-60)
<p>Week 3: 7–10 June</p>	<p>Form: Ballads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Following the critique guide, compose a 150 word response each to two of your classmates’ parent stories (due Tuesday)• Read “The Ballad at a Glance”, “The History of the Form”, and “The Contemporary Context” (Poem 73)• Read Brooks’ “We Real Cool” (Poem 94)• Write a 75 word response to Brooks’ writing techniques (due Tuesday)• Read “Close-Up of a Ballad” (Poem 99)• Read Nash’s “The Tale of Custard the Dragon” (Poem 92)• Read “The Cherry-tree Carol” (Poem 78)• Compose your own ballad on any theme (due Thursday)• Read King (60-90)
<p>Week 4: 14–17 June</p>	<p>Theme: Place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compose a 150 word response each to two of your classmates’ ballads• Read Hoagland’s “In Africa” (Pushcart 302)• Recommended: “You Are Here” (This American Life 136)• Write a 75 word response to Hoagland’s writing techniques (due Tuesday)• Write a story featuring place (due Thursday)• Recommended: Post a photo of the place in your story• Read King (90-120)
<p>Week 5: 21–24 June</p>	<p>Form: Sonnet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compose a 150 word response each to two of your classmates’ place stories (due Tuesday)• Read “The Sonnet at a Glance”, “The History of the Form”, and “The Contemporary Context” (Poem 73)• Read Millay’s “What lips my lips have kissed, and where, and why” (Poem 64)• Write a 75 word response to Millay’s writing techniques (due Tuesday)• Read “Close-up of a Sonnet” (Poem 71)• Read Keats’ “Bright Star” (Poem 62)• Read Cooper’s “After the Bomb Tests” (Poem 67)• Compose your own sonnet on any theme (due Thursday)• Read King (120-150)

<p>Week 6: 28 June – 1 July</p>	<p>Theme: Love</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compose a 150 word response each to two of your classmates’ sonnets (due Tuesday) • Read Hallman’s “Ethan: a love story” (Pushcart 369) • Recommended: “Love” (This American Life 13) • Write a 75 word response to Hallman’s writing techniques (due Tuesday) • Write a story about love (due Thursday) • Read King (150-180)
<p>Week 7: 6–8 July</p>	<p>Form: Sestina</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compose a 150 word response each to two of your classmates’ love stories (due Tuesday) • Read “The Sonnet at a Glance”, “The History of the Form”, and “The Contemporary Context” (Poem 21) • Read Pound’s “Sestina: Altaforte” (Poem 34) • Write a 75 word response to Pound’s writing techniques (due Tuesday) Read “Close-up of a Sestina” (Poem 41) • Read Swinburne’s “Sestina” (Poem 30) • Read Williams’ “The Shrinking Lonesome Sestina” (Poem 38) • Compose your own Sestina on any theme (due Thursday) • Read King (180-210)
<p>Week 8: 12–15 July</p>	<p>Theme: Mistakes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compose a 150 word response each to two of your classmates’ sestinas (due Tuesday) • Read Pritchard’s “Two Studies in Entropy” (Pushcart 208) • Recommended: “Hoaxing Yourself” (This American Life 155) • Recommended: post a photo of an inspiring mistake • Write a 75 word response to Pritchard’s writing techniques (due Tuesday) • Write a story about a mistake (due Thursday) • Read King (210-240)
<p>Week 9: 19–23 July</p>	<p>Form: Odes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compose a 150 word response each to two of your classmates’ mistake stories (due Tuesday) • Read “Overview” (Poem 240) • Read Shelley’s “Ode to the West Wind” (Poem 241) • Read Wright’s “Australia 1970” (Poem 249) • Read Creeley’s “America” (Poem 252) • Read Pinsky’s “Ode to Meaning” (Poem 252) • Compose your own ode on any theme (due Thursday) • Using the journal listings in Pushcart (509-521), select an appropriate journal to which to submit your best work(s). In no more than three sentences, say why your writing should be published by that journal. • Read King (240-270)
<p>Week 10: 26–27 July</p>	<p>Theme: Friends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compose a 150 word response each to two of your classmates’ odes (due Tuesday) • Read Clarke’s “Our Pointy Boots” (Pushcart 51) • Write a 75 word response to Clarke’s writing techniques (due Tuesday) • Write a story about friends (due Thursday) • Using your short, weekly responses to the published writing we’ve read and the course-long reading of Stephen King’s memoir, <i>On Writing</i>, compose a critical essay that measures your writing skills against the methods used by King and at least one more assigned author. Evaluate your progress as a creative writer during this course. Your essay must contain a formal, argument-driven thesis, thoroughly review evidence to prove your claim, and demonstrate excellent organization. 500 words • Read King (270-end)
<p>EXAM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read “Rites of Submission: Cover Letters and Query Letters” (http://www.underdown.org/covletr.htm) • Compose a one page pitch letter to the editors of Darton’s literary journal, <i>New Clay</i> along with your selected best work(s) of the semester (one story or two poems). Try to get the editors interested in publishing your work. CC me (courtney.danforth@darton.edu) on your email. Optional: submit pitch letter and selected best work(s) to your selected journal.

Response Guide

Giving and receiving criticism is difficult but we will practice most weeks of this course. In this course, you are asked to write responses to both published authors and your classmates. You can talk about tone, character, narrative arc, rhythm, rhyme, symbolism, theme, word choice, format, topic... just about anything, as long as your comments evaluate the writer's craft. You might want to click around in the "Literary Vocabulary" dictionary (http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms.html) for more ideas

Each time the course requires you to write a response to your classmate's work, you'll need to write about 150 words that help him or her be a "better" writer by improving his or her craft. You'll need to critique two of your classmates each time. You should leave your critiques as comments on your classmate's post. Please note that, just as the authors are leaving their writing out in GAView for everyone to read, so are you writing your critique "in public." I will grade your critiques based on the quality of their helpfulness. Please help to make sure EVERY writer gets at least two reviews of his or her submission.

If you get stuck, you might go back and reread "How to Give Good Critique" (<http://tinyurl.com/24mxtmy>). I recommend that you format your response thus:

Summary (25 words): "In this story, we meet a family of five goofy, fun-loving, average Americans who take a road trip to Texas for a family reunion. They leave home excited about the trip, fight and stop speaking to each other by the time they arrive, but then come home knowing that they mean more to each other than they previously recognized."

What You Liked (50 words): "You did a really good job of giving the characters different voices so we could see their personalities and almost hear them when they start bickering in the car and at the hotel pool."

What Didn't Work for You (50 words): "I wish there'd been more details about the car and about the food they were eating. I wasn't always sure where they were on the trip and some of the extended family at the picnic got mixed up because I didn't know who was a cousin or some other relative."

Concrete Suggestions (25 words): "Could you use a different word than 'very'? You use that word a lot. Also, I think you're supposed to break the paragraph when different characters are talking in dialogue."

In your shorter responses (75 words) to published authors, leave off the Concrete Suggestions, and write just 25 words each on What You Liked and What Didn't Work for You.

Notes

Most assignments will be submitted via the "Message Board" feature in GAView. The instructor will participate regularly in the boards but will record grades for student participation privately (through the "Gradebook" feature).

Students are encouraged to contact the instructor with questions and concerns throughout the semester. Sending mail through GAView is, generally, the most efficient method of communication, but the instructor is also available to you via phone, chat, and in person appointment. You can expect a response within 24 hours, Sunday through Thursday.

Assignments will be graded within one week of submission.

Students are encouraged to post photographs or avatars to their GAView profiles to foster a sense of community in the online environment.

Grade Calculation

Your semester grade will be calculated by averaging these six grades:

1. Five "flash fiction" stories
2. Four poems
3. Nine writing responses
4. Sixteen workshop responses
5. One critical/analytical essay
6. One pitch letter and publication submission

I recommend that you keep track of your grades using this worksheet or another method.

Workshop Responses

Parent 1	
Parent 2	
Ballad 1	
Ballad 2	
Place 1	
Place 2	
Sonnet 1	
Sonnet 2	
Love 1	
Love 2	
Sestina 1	
Sestina 2	
Mistakes 1	
Mistakes 2	
Odes 1	
Odes 2	
AVERAGE	

Writing Responses

van den Berg	
Brooks	
Hoagland	
Millay	
Hallman	
Pound	
Pritchard	
Clarke	
AVERAGE	

Semester Grade

Flash Fiction	
Poems	
Writing Responses	
Workshop Responses	
Critical Essay	
Pitch Letter and Submission	
AVERAGE	

Flash-Fiction

Parents	
Place	
Love	
Mistakes	
Friends	
AVERAGE	

Poems

Ballad	
Sonnet	
Sestina	
Ode	
AVERAGE	