

Houston Community College

Department of English, Central College

ENGL 2307 – Creative Writing I

Spring 2013 / CRN 29944

Fine Arts Center (FAC) - Room 315, 5:30-7 p.m.

3 hour course / 48 hours per semester / 16 weeks

Professor: Ranjana Varghese, Ph.D.

Professor contact information: 713-718-6671 / ranjana.varghese@hccs.edu

Prof.'s office location, hours: FAC 206, Mon/Wed 4-5.30 p.m. and by appointment

Course description: A course designed to introduce the student to the forms, strategies, and techniques involved in creative writing. The student may be given a series of directed assignments which may be critiqued in class.

Course prerequisites: Must be placed into college-level reading and college-level writing.

Student learning outcomes:

The student will be able to: (1) Understand literary tropes and points of craft. (2) Apply terms to specific examples and written exercises. (3) Analyze representative works of published writers. (4) Analyze and evaluate other students' works. (5) Write creative works in a variety of genres.

Course Calendar / 16 weeks

WEEK 1

Jan 14 Course intro; In-class writing exercise; Poetry; *Read: Imaginative Writing (IW)* chapters 1, 2, 10; *HW:* Poetry

Jan 16 Exercise 1 due; Image; Form; In-class exercise; *Read:* In *IW* chapter 3; *HW:* Exercises 1, 2

WEEK 2

Jan 21 *** MLK, Jr. Holiday ***

Jan 23 Exercises 1, 2 Due; Voice; In-class exercise; *Read:* In *IW* chapter 4; *HW:* Exercise 3

WEEK 3

Jan 28 Exercise 3 Due; Character; In-class exercise; Poetry Workshop; *Read:* In *IW* chapter 5; *HW:* Exercise 4

Jan 30 Setting; In-class exercise; Poetry Workshop; *Read:* In *IW* chapter 6

WEEK 4

Feb 4 Exercise 4 Due; Story; In-class exercise; Poetry Workshop; *Read:* In *IW* chapter 7; *HW:* Exercise 5

Feb 6 Development and Revision; Poetry Workshop

WEEK 5

Feb 11 Exercise 5 Due; Poetry Workshop; *Read:* In *IW* chapter 9

Feb 13 Poetry Workshop; Start Fiction; *HW:* Fiction: Exercises 6, 7

WEEK 6

Feb 18 *** President's Day Holiday ***

Feb 20 Exercise 6 Due; Fiction Workshop; *HW:* Exercise 8

WEEK 7

Feb 25 Exercise 7 Due; Fiction Workshop; *HW:*

Feb 27 Fiction Workshop

WEEK 8

Mar 4 Exercise 8 Due; Fiction Workshop; *HW:* Exercises 9, 10

Mar 6 Fiction Workshop

WEEK 9

Mar 11 SPRING BREAK

Mar 13 SPRING BREAK

WEEK 10

Mar 18 Exercises 9, 10 Due; Fiction Workshop; *HW*: Exercise 11

Mar 20 Fiction Workshop

WEEK 11

Mar 25 Exercise 11 Due; Fiction Workshop; *Read*: In *IW* chapter 8; *HW*: Exercise 12

Mar 27 Fiction Workshop; Start Creative Non-fiction

WEEK 12

Apr 1 Exercise 12 Due; Creative Non-fiction Workshop; *HW*: Exercise 13

Apr 3 Creative Non-fiction Workshop

WEEK 13

Apr 8 Exercise 13 Due; Creative Non-fiction Workshop; *HW*: Exercise 14

Apr 10 Creative Non-fiction Workshop

WEEK 14

Apr 15 Exercise 14 Due; Creative Non-fiction Workshop; *HW*:

Apr 17 Creative Non-fiction Workshop

WEEK 15

Apr 22 Style Report Due; Creative Non-fiction Workshop

Apr 24 Creative Non-fiction Workshop

WEEK 16

Apr 29 Final Portfolio Due; Creative Non-fiction Workshop

May 1 Creative Non-fiction Workshop

Student Assignments:

Students will turn in at least 1 poem, 1 short story (at least 7 pages long, double-spaced), and 1 creative non-fiction piece (at least 5 pages long, double-spaced) to be workshopped over the course of the semester. Students will be able to sign up for the days when their work will be workshopped. As such, each piece is due a full week before it is workshopped. Students will need to make copies of their pieces to be workshopped for the rest of the class. Each piece must be typed with the student's name on it. I ask that the poems are single-spaced and the prose double-spaced.

The portfolio that students turn in to me by the end of the semester must contain at least 10 pieces (NOT 10 pages, but 10 individual pieces!) of writing that they have done for this class, including weekly assignments and the revised versions of all three workshopped pieces. All three genres (poetry, fiction, and creative non-fiction) should be represented in the portfolio. The portfolio should contain only the student's best work.

Every week students will be assigned a piece for homework. There will be 14 homework assignments this semester.

As part of this class is a workshop format, ten percent of the overall grade will be for class participation. What I reward is quality over quantity. Questions and polite well-argued disagreement get high marks. Negative critiques should always be accompanied with statements of what the writer is doing well. Any personal attack against a writer (i.e., critiquing the person instead of the work) or pettiness (e.g., revenge negative comments) will result in points being taken off of the final grade.

Once the workshopping of student work begins, students are required to write at least 250 words of specifically-argued evaluation and provide a copy to me and a copy to the writer of the piece.

Students will write a style report, a 500-word analysis of a particular famous writer (literary, non-genre, from the last forty years) whose style has an influence on them. This is not literary or thematic analysis so much as a discussion of style or technique. Specific examples (3-4 poems or excerpts of prose) from that writer and as well as some amount of evaluation or analysis of them must be provided.

Assessments (grade values of assignments):

- Portfolio (at least 10 pieces you have written for class; 30% it must include fiction, creative non-fiction, and poetry)
- Homework 30%
- Class participation 15%
- Written comments on fellow student pieces 15%
- Style Report 10%

Instructional materials: Textbooks: Burroway, Janet. *Imaginative Writing: The Elements of Craft*. 3rd Edition. Boston: Longman, 2010. (required)
Atwood, Margaret. *Moral Disorder*.

Tutoring: For free assistance on any of the writing requirements for this course, visit the English Department Writing Lab in FAC 321-B. Check the sign posted on the door there to determine specific hours of operation during the current term. (It's generally open mornings through early evenings, Monday through Thursday, plus half a day on Friday.

Open Computer Labs: Computers are available for word processing in FAC 302, SJAC 204A, JDB 203-204, the library, and elsewhere on campus. Check those sites for open hours.

Services to students with disabilities: Any student with a documented disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange for reasonable accommodations must contact the Disability Services Office at the beginning of each semester. For more information, please contact the disability counselor on campus (or call 713-718-5165).

Academic honesty: Students are expected to be familiar with the HCC policy on academic honesty (as detailed in various HCC publications) and are responsible for conducting themselves with honor and integrity in fulfilling course requirements. HCC officials may initiate penalties and/or disciplinary proceedings against any student accused of scholastic dishonesty (which includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion). Should you have any questions about proper handling of source material for your writing, consult the MLA guidelines, your professor and/or a tutor (FAC 321-B). Evidence of plagiarism on an assignment results in a 0 for the assignment.

Attendance: HCCS policy states that a student who is absent more than 12.5% (**6 hours**) of class may be administratively dropped from the course. Students who intend to withdraw from the course must do so by the official date or they may receive an F instead of a W. During the 16-week on-campus version of this course, 6 hours translates to two weeks; so in this 16-week version of this course you are indicating that you are "withdrawn" from the course after missing about 2 weeks of activity here in our distance format.

Course withdrawal: If you elect to withdraw formally from any HCC class and thereby receive a "W" on your grade transcript, you must contact a HCC DE counselor or your professor prior to the withdrawal deadline for the current semester to initiate the process. If you do not do so and simply cease to attend, you will receive a final grade by default (quite likely "F") based on your course average in relation to the full slate of required assignments.

Classroom decorum: We'll spend a significant amount of time having open discussions; please be respectful of your classmates. While you are encouraged to challenge both your own opinions and those of your peers, please do so with respect for different ideas. I will promise to do my best to try to keep the classroom a safe place to share ideas, even tentative, uncertain ideas. In discussions, making connections with the readings, with topics discussed previously, and with the comments that others have made in class is especially helpful to you and to everyone else, and therefore is especially noted and appreciated. I follow the guidelines in the *Student Handbook* closely, so please be aware that any unprofessional, discourteous, or inappropriate behavior will have its consequences. Please follow the Golden Rule and be respectful of others and their values and beliefs.

Grading scale: 90-100 = A, 80-89 = B, 70-79 = C, 60-69 = D, 0-59 = F.

NOTE: At her discretion, the professor may announce necessary changes in this syllabus and assignment calendar at any time during the term. All changes will be posted on EO.