

ENGL 312: Creative Writing Workshop, Fiction
 M 4:00 - 6: 50 rm. 120 ARM -D
 Fall 2008
 Professor Emily Mitchell
 Phone: 304 293 3107
 Email: Emily.Mitchell@mail.wvu.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to ENGL 312 Creative Writing Workshop. In this course we will analyze and create works of fiction with a view to improving your skills as both writer and reader. We will read texts by established writers that illuminate particular points of craft, and we will discuss what we can learn from them that may contribute to our own writing. You will submit, read, critique and discuss your own work with your classmates and with me. Finally, you will revise one or more stories in response to the feedback you receive in the workshop process. This class has a pre-requisite that of a B or higher in ENGL 212.

REQUIRED READING

Cassill, R. V. and Joyce Carol Oates. The Norton Anthology of Contemporary Fiction (2nd Edition). Norton, 1998.

Koch, Stephen. The Modern Library Writer's Workshop. Modern Library, 2003. ISBN: 0375755586

McEwan, Ian. Atonement. Anchor, 2007. ISBN: 0307387151

These texts are available at the university bookstore. Additional readings will be given as handouts in class and online.

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment	Date Due	Description	Percentage/Points
Class Participation		Because the success of this course depends on the exchange of ideas that we have in class, it is important that you come to class ready to talk about the readings for class.	10
Story #1	August 25th	10 - 20 pages of a complete work of original fiction	20
Story #2	October 20th	10 - 20 pages of a complete work of original fiction	20
Workshop Responses	In class weekly	A one - two page typed letter to the authors of the works read and discussed in workshop. There will be thirty of these. They will be handed-in in class.	30
Revision of Story #1 or #2	Dec 3rd	You will hand in a revised version of your first or second story, along with the marked-up original draft. You may arrange to meet with me to discuss your work during final exam week.	20

GRADE

Your grade will be calculated according to the following scale

100 - 97 = A
96 - 93 = A-
92 - 89 = B+
88 - 85 = B
84 - 81 = B-
80 - 77 = C+
76 - 73 = C
72 - 69 = C-
68 - 65 = D+
64 - 61 = D
60 and below = F

COURSE RULES AND PROCEDURES

Attendance -- I'll take attendance for every class. You'll lose a point off your final grade for each unexcused absence; you'll lose half a point for being late.

Late work -- No late work will be accepted for this class. Your stories will be graded in the following way: if they are turned in on time and they fulfill the requirements of the assignment, they will receive an A (20 pts). If they are late, they will receive a C+ (16pts).

Food and Drink -- No food in class; you may bring coffee, water, soda or juice.

Plagiarism -- I'm not really expecting this to be an issue in this class, but, obviously, you should do your own written work. If you are found to have plagiarized your written assignments for this course you'll get an automatic zero for that assignment.

Office Hours -- I will be available to see you during weekly office hours from 11:30 - 12:30 and 2:30 - 3:30 on Mondays. If you need to meet with me and this time doesn't work, please speak to me before or after class about setting up an alternate time to meet.

Email -- Please don't use email as a substitute for talking to me face to face! I am available to talk to you in person once a week in class, plus office hours, plus for any additional in-person meetings you'd like to set up, and this seems like enough time to respond to any course related issues that arise. You are welcome to email me if you'd like, but please be patient when waiting for a response.

WORKSHOP

You'll all be turning in stories on the same day; I'll arrange and distribute our workshop schedule for the weeks that follow each turn-in date. On those dates, **August 25th and October 20th**, you should bring a enough copies of your story to class with you for each member of the class and me to get a copy. Stories should be typed and double-spaced and pages should be numbered -- these things help your readers to make clear, useful comments on your work.

When your own story is being read and discussed, you should sit quietly and listen to what is being said. Even if you disagree with your classmate's comments, don't interrupt the discussion: it is more useful for you to know what readers gained from your story alone than from anything you say after the fact. At the end of the discussion you'll have a chance to respond and ask questions that weren't answered during the discussion. Remember: the comments that irk you often turn out to be the most useful in the end.

When you are commenting on someone else's story, you should write a one-page letter to the author of the story under discussion that includes what you liked and what you thought needed more work in the story, as well as suggestions for how the writer might improve what he or she has written. You can also write comments and responses right on the copies of your classmates' work. **IMPORTANT:** *When you talk about each other's work during class and in your written comments, you should make sure to be as courteous and helpful as possible. Of course, you will like some of the submissions better than others; but our goal is always to help the writer to write his or her story, not to try to make it into the story we would have written. This is not easy to do, but it can help us to grow as writers as we see the variety of different things that fiction can do.*

SYLLABUS

Readings are due on the date beside which they appear.

Week 1: Mon, Aug 18th -- Introduction to class.

Week 2: Aug 25th -- Read: Koch, p. xiii - 55. The practice of writing. **Story #1 due.**

Week 3: Sept 1st -- NO CLASS: Labor Day

Week 4: Sept 8th -- Read: Koch, p. 56 - 83; Cassill, "A Father's Story" by Andre Dubus; "Lust" by Susan Minot. Plot and structure. Workshop 1 + 2

Week 5: Sept 15th -- Read: Koch, p. 84 - 111. Cassill, "In the Garden of the North American Martyrs" by Tobias Wolff and "Girl" by Jamaica Kincaid. Character. Workshop 3 + 4

Week 6: Sept 24th -- Read: Koch, p. 112 - 156; "Saint Marie" by Louise Erdrich; "The Baby Sitter" by Robert Coover. Voice and style. Workshop 5 + 6

Week 7: Sept 29th -- Read: Read: "Cathedral" by Raymond Carver; "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" by Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Point of View. Workshop 7 + 8

Week 8: Oct 6th -- Readings. "The New Atlantis" by Ursula Le Guin; "The Things They Carried" by Tim O'Brien. Setting. Workshop 9 + 10.

Week 9: Oct 13th -- Atonement, pt. 1, p. 3 - 175. Workshop 11, 12, 13.

Week 10: Oct 20th -- Atonement, part 2, p. 179 - 250; **Story #2 Due.** Workshop 14, 15; conferences 16, 17; end 1st workshop cycle.

Week 11: Oct 27th -- Atonement, part 3&4, p. 253 - end. Workshop 1, 2,

Week 12: Nov 3rd -- Workshop 3, 4, 5

Week 13: Nov 10th-- Koch, p. 157 – 178. Revision. Workshop 6, 7, 8

Week 14: Nov 17 --- Koch, p. 179 – 201. Finishing. Workshop 9, 10, 11

Week 15: Nov 22nd - 30th -- NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Recess

Week 16: Dec 1st --- Workshop, 12, 13, 14, 15; conferences 16, 17; end second workshop cycle.
Dec 3rd -- **Revised story due.**