

English 212

Ellesa C. High, ENGL 212, Spring 2004, Creative Writing: Fiction

ENGLISH 212

CREATIVE WRITING: FICTION

Professor: Dr. Ellesa High

Office: 333 Stansbury Hall

Office Hours: To be announced

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Description

This is an introductory course for students interested in writing short stories. Class discussion of theory and technique will be based on readings from assigned texts, other materials, and class work throughout the semester, with particular attention given to description, narration, dialogue, characterization, story structure, etc. We will begin with journal writing and other exercises, working up to the short story form by midterm. Students also will be expected to learn correct manuscript form and to attend at least one of the readings on campus this semester.

Texts

Warren and Erskine, *Shon Story Masterpieces*

Requirements (subject to revision) `

1. ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION. More than 3 absences will result in a lowering of your grade (generally, I lower the final grade a letter for every absence beyond the three absences mentioned above).
2. Reading of assigned works, including texts, hand-outs, etc.
3. Written assignments: weekly pieces, including 2 shon stories, each approximately 10 pages in length (the final one of which is due three or four weeks before the end of the semester), and written critiques of final student stories. All work should be typed (clear computer print-out also is fine), proofread, and duplicated for class members when required.
4. Quizzes and exams over class material as needed including a mid-term and/or final exam, at the discretion of the professor.

Evaluation

Evaluations are based mainly on the quality of your writing. All work (marked with my comments) should be kept throughout the course. I may ask you to resubmit it (in a folder or manilla envelope) at the end of the semester for my review.

Note

If you are disabled in any way and feel that there is anything I need to know that

might enhance your learning environment in our class, please contact me by phone (293- 3107) or in person during my office hours or by appointment.

If I have inadvertently overlooked days of special concern or religious holidays, please , do not hesitate to bring this to my attention.

Social Justice Statement

West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I concur with WVU's commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment, based upon open communication and mutual respect. If you have any suggestions how to further such an environment, I would appreciate them and give them serious consideration.

COURSE SCHEDULE: ENGL 212

1. January 13 -15

Tues.: intro. to class
discuss syllabus

Thurs.: "That was the Summer of Mockingbirds" by David Brendan Hopes (hand-out) "Practice and the Passion" by Elizabeth Ogilve 3 gifts that writers have importance of concrete description begin journal work

2. January 19 - 21

Tues.: from A Tl'riter's Life by Eudora Welty (hand-out)
where do stories come from?
importance of showing not telling
more discussion of concrete description
continue journal work

Thurs.: "Freeing the Writer Within" by Natalie Goldberg (hand-out) wntmg exercises continue journal work

3. January 26 - 28

Tues.: "Barn Burning" by William Faulkner

Nobel Prize acceptance speech (hand-out)

"The Nun" from Writing for Your Life (hand-out)

review exercises

continue journal work

Thurs.: the mysterious process of writing

What do you do as a writer to be creative and productive?

visualizing the creative and inviting it in

continue journal work

4. February 3 -5

Tues.: "Soldier's Home" by Ernest Hemingway

"A Very Short Story" by Ernest Hemingway (hand-out)

more discussion on concrete description (in short declarative style)

importance of what is not said

continue journal work

Thurs.: characterization

How is a character created?

5 levels of characterization

character sketch (in journal)

continue journal work

5. February 10 -12 Tues.:

"Torch Song" by John Cheever

further discussion of character

discussion of correct manuscript form. (hand-out)

Journal due (approx. 20 entries)

Thurs.: point of view, discussion (hand-out)

"Why I Live at the P.O." by Eudora Welty

"The Equality" by Ellesa Clay High (hand-out)

3 page scene due

6. February 17-19

Tues.: point of view continued

"Easy" by Christopher Coe (hand-out)

revision of scene from a different point of view

Which point of view works better for this assignment?

point-of-view assignment due

Thurs.: setting, discussion

"The Egg" by Sherwood Anderson

7. February 24 - 26

Tues.: plot, discussion

action, pace, structure

discussion of first story

"The Open Window" by Saki

Thurs.: the short-short story as a form--sudden fiction, flash fiction, bombers

"The Cage" by Heinrich Boll (hand-out)

"The Vertical Fields" by Fielding Dawson (hand-out)

share rough drafts of first stories editing session

8. March 2 - 4

Tues.: discussion of workshop rules, expectations

"12 Steps to Edit a Winning Short Story" (hand-out)

first stories due

Thurs.: workshop first stories

9. March 9-11

Tues.: workshop first stories

"Writing Exercises for Dead Times when Nothing Works" (hand-out)

Thurs.: individual conferences

(Spring recess: March 13 - 21)

10. March 23 -25

Tues: individual conferences

Thurs.: typed rough drafts of second story due
editing session

"Writing is a Practicing Art" (hand-out)

11. March 30 - April 1

Tues.: critiques discussed: samples, objectives, use in workshop, etc. (hand-out)
continue work on second story

Thurs.: "Judy Delton's Twenty-nine Hints" (hand-out)
second story due

12. April 6 - 8

Tues.: workshop second stories critiques due

Thurs.: workshop second stories critiques due

13. April 13 - 15

Tues.: workshop second stories
critiques due

Thurs.: workshop second stories
critiques due

14. April 20 - 22

Tues.: workshop second stories
critiques due

Thurs.: workshop second stories
critiques due

15. April 27 - 29

Tues.: workshop second stories
The Writer's Market, etc.
critiques due

Thurs.: workshop second stories
"She Unnames Them" by Ursula K. LeGuin (hand-out)
critiques due

Finals Week: On Thursday, May 6, at 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. we will meet somewhere in town--to relax, have refreshments, and finish the class. At this time, you will receive the student critiques concerning your story, your critique grade, and your course grade for the semester.

Graded assignments for the course

journals 20 pts.

scenes 5 pts.

first story 25 pts.

second story 25 pts.

critiques 25 pts.

Semester total 100 pts.