

ENGL 111-001: INTRO TO CREATIVE WRITING

CRN: 10734 ♦ MWF 9:30 – 10:20 AM ♦ Armstrong Hall, Room 117

PROFESSOR: Anna Davis-Abel

OFFICE: G23 Colson Hall

OFFICE HOURS: *by appointment* or Mondays 11:30-12:30

EMAIL: akdoo12@mix.wvu.edu

You can typically expect a response within 24 hours if sent M-F.

PRE-REQUISITES: Sophomore or Higher standing

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

What is a piece of writing *saying*? What is it *doing*? Are those two ever the same thing? In this seminar-style, introductory fine arts course, you will answer these questions for yourself by studying the three main forms of writing: poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction writing. We will center our discussions on ideas of craft (think: plot, tension, diction, characterization, rhythm, etc.) and interpretation (what is the purpose? Why create this at all? What does it make you feel, and why does that matter?). You can expect to read a great many things: things you'll love, things you'll hate, things you might not understand, and things that might just challenge you to reconsider what you thought you already knew. You can also expect to write at least one short assignment weekly, to discuss texts and writing prompts in class, and to challenge yourself creatively on the page whether you're a total novice or a seasoned veteran of the writing world. If you keep an open mind, are accepting and welcoming of your peers and their experiences, and are willing to work a bit, we will have an excellent semester together!

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Clabough, Casey. *Creative Writing*. New York: Alpha Books, 2014.

Ebook Available through WVU Libraries:

<https://learning.oreilly.com/library/view/creative-writing/9781615645015/?ar>

All readings will be provided through eCampus and are available in the course outline.

COURSE-SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. You will **analyze and compare** various modes of writing in order to formulate your own preference of writing style. You will practice applying this style in response to **weekly creative writing prompts**.
2. You will be **familiar with the basic techniques and terminology** of poetry, fiction, and nonfiction writing and will **demonstrate this familiarity through short written assignments**.

3. You will be able to recognize present-day writers and popular literary publications through **examining assigned readings and participating in discussions**.
4. Through weekly small group discussions with your peers, you will **create a communal writing community** in which each member is both an authority and a student of craft.
5. Three times during the semester, you will **submit polished writing samples** to me (your instructor) in order **to demonstrate growth** in your knowledge of craft and style as well as your ability to integrate various styles into a new, original product.
6. You will **reflect** on your growth and quantify your tangible areas of learning by **constructing a final portfolio and reflective letter** that summarizes your strengths and improvements over the semester. This portfolio will also **demonstrate your grasp of revision** by including re-worked pieces from earlier assignments during the semester.

DEPARTMENT LEARNING OUTCOME GOALS

- × Create and revise a thoughtful, sophisticated work of art that is the product of a careful process of invention and revision (**Objective 6**)
- × Demonstrate a personal and coherent artistic style (**Objectives 1, 5, & 6**)
- × Demonstrate a sophisticated awareness of and engagement with (or clear challenge of) conventions of the genre (**Objectives 1, 2, 3, & 4**)

LATE WORK

Late assignments will not be accepted unless discussed with me in advance and/or you can supply proper documentation explaining the assignment's lateness. Point deductions and/or penalties will be decided at the instructor's discretion.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Our classroom community assumes your honesty and that you will turn in original work. Failing to do so may result in a failing grade for a paper, a failing grade for the course, or a more serious penalty. For more information about academic honesty and the student code of conduct at West Virginia University, visit www.StudentConduct.wvu.edu.

GRADE MAKE UP

310 Points - *Final Portfolio* (31%)

240 Points - *Polished Submissions* (24%)

80 Points – Poetry Submission

80 Points – Fiction Submission

80 Points – Nonfiction submission

150 Points – *Craft Analyses* (15%)

50 Points – Poetry Close Read

50 Points – Fiction Close Read

50 Points – Nonfiction Close Read

300 Points – *Homework & Participation* (30%)

150 Points – Informal Writing Exercises

150 Points – Attendance/In-Class Participation

Final Letter Grade

A 900 – 1000

B 800 – 899

C 700 – 799

D 600 – 699

F 0 – 599

1000 POINTS TOTAL

ASSIGNMENTS

Final Portfolio

The final portfolio will consist of no less than three (3) pieces of writing you have compiled during the semester. The works may be the ones you have previously submitted and received feedback on, but this is not a requirement. You will preface your portfolio with a ~3 page letter reflecting on your learning, writing process, and portfolio theme. The final portfolio will be submitted electronically, and credit will be awarded based on established criteria found on our course homepage.

Polished Submissions

Writing and revision is at the heart of creative writing as a discipline, from introductory courses to the very highest levels of craft study. As such, these submission periods will be an integral part of our class. It is only through communal effort, mutual engagement with the material, and willingness to be vulnerable that we will be able to question, challenge, and develop our own understanding of creative writing as a genre. *Each student will submit a piece of writing to their workshop group and instructor three times during the semester.*

Craft Analyses

For each of the three units, you will be asked to complete a short paper (approx. 1000 words) closely analyzing one of the works we read for class. Directions for the assignments are available on eCampus, but you can expect to be evaluated based on your creativity, attention to detail, and application of terminology discussed in class.

Homework & Participation

Informal Writing Assignments

Each week, you will be expected to participate in a variety of ways. In your workshop groups, you will be expected to prepare a one-page letter to your peers regarding their work, as well as posting responses to reading assignments each week.

Participation

Each week, there are 10 points available for participation for a total of 150 points (spring break is a bonus week). Class participation is determined by completing the week's readings and discussing in class, attendance and tardiness, phone use, and/or respectful engagement with peers. You will not necessarily be told when you have lost participation credit, but you can check the weekly tally on eCampus and request an appointment or come to my office hours if you'd like to discuss any element of your grade.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Participation is a significant part of our course, and it is difficult to build a constructive classroom community if faces are constantly appearing and disappearing. Excessive absences

will affect your ability to receive a passing grade. **You should plan for missing no more than 3 classes.**

This three-class allowance is accounted in your final grade calculation based on the 10 points awarded during spring break. After the initial 3 absences have been accrued, you will begin to lose 3 points per day of attendance and participation credit. After 4 weeks of accumulated absences (12 absences/25% of total classes), the instructor reserves the right to issue a failing grade, regardless of assignment completion.

IF THERE IS SOMETHING YOU FEEL PROHIBITS YOU FROM MEETING THIS ATTENDANCE GOAL, PLEASE REACH OUT SOONER RATHER THAN LATER. I cannot help you if you wait until the last few weeks of class.

Additionally, if there are religious or cultural holidays that will require you to miss certain classes, please notify me by the end of the third class of the semester; this will allow us to come up with alternative assignments and activities to ensure you do not fall behind.

SENSITIVE MATERIALS & CLASS EXPECTATIONS

The nature of writing occasionally requires vulnerability on the part of the writer and the reader. If you are unable to engage with your peers in a compassionate, professional way, please come speak with me about your concerns. We will approach every disagreement or discomfort with an open-mind and willingness to learn. Intolerance of anyone's identity or experiences will not be permitted. When you are in a moment that you want to react to with anger or accusation, consider wording your concerns in a question. Approaching discussion from a place of "learner" rather than "judge" is always the best course.

UNIVERSITY COUNSELING SERVICES:

The Carruth Center provides resources to help manage stress, improve relationships, make healthy lifestyle choices, and face new challenges and transitions. For more information about their hours, services, and location visit their website at Carruth.wvu.edu.

INCLUSIVITY:

The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in your classes, please advise your instructors and make appropriate arrangements with [the Office of Accessibility Services](https://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu/). (<https://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu/>) More information is available at the [Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](https://diversity.wvu.edu/) (<https://diversity.wvu.edu/>) as well.

SCHEDULE OF WORK

All homework assigned is due by the following class unless otherwise stated.

WEEK	DATE	IN-CLASS FOCUS	Associated Reading Due
Week 1 - Intros			
	Monday 1/13	Introductions Syllabus	
	Wednesday 1/15	The 3 Genres	Intro to "Three Genres" (eCampus)
	Friday 1/17	Literary Devices	Chapter 2 of CW: Compelling Craft
Week 2 - Poetry			
	MONDAY 1/20	MLK DAY (NO CLASS)	
	Wednesday 1/22	Intro to Poetry Rhyme Rhythm	Ch 13 of CW: The Arresting Poem "Rhymes and Reasons Writing Poetry (Hammond)
	Friday 1/24	Meter Rhyme Scheme	" Sono " (Kim) "Ives" (Kahn) " How to Read a Poem " (Univ. Wisconsin)
Week 3 - Poetry			
	Monday 1/27	The Sonnet	" Sonnet 18 " (Shakespeare) " I carry your heart with me " (cummings) " American Sonnet for Wanda C " (Hayes) " A Winter's Tale " (Davis)
	Wednesday 1/29	Epic Poems	" Howl " (Ginsberg)
	Friday 1/31	Close Reading Poetry	" Home " (Warsan Shire) " Write a Close Reading "
Week 4 - Poetry			
	Monday 2/3	Limerick Haiku	" There was an Old Man with a Beard " (Lear) " To My Daughter in a Red Coat " (Stevenson) " Suicide's Note " (Hughes) " Small Poems for Big " (Hodge) " Selected Haiku " (Issa)
	Wednesday 2/5	Ballads	" How to Write Ballad Poems " (Spurril) " The Walrus and the Carpenter " (Carroll) " Annabel Lee " (Poe)
	Friday 2/7	Odes	" Ode to Gossips " (Elhillo) " La Lupe " (Cruz) " Homage to H & the Speedway Diner " (Mayer)
Poetry Close Read Analysis Due by 5:00 PM on eCampus			
Week 5 - Poetry			
	Monday 2/10	Free Verse	" Miscarriage " (Adair) " Cardi B Tells Me About Myself " (Hogan) " Some titles for my childhood memoir " (Powles) Upload submission for Peer Group
	Wednesday 2/12	Narrative/Prose Poems	" Using Black to Paint Light " (Lewis) " Jakarta, January " (Kay) Prepare feedback for peer review groups
	Friday 2/14	Poetry Workshop Group	Polished Poem due by 5:00 PM on eCampus
Week 6 - Fiction			

	Monday 2/17	Intro to Fiction Short Story Novel	Ch 11 of CW: The Lifelike Short Story "Bits and Pieces" (Zinsser)
	Wednesday 2/19	Elements of Plot Structure	" The Lottery " (Jackson) " L. Debard and Aliette " (Groff)
	Friday 2/21	Point of View	Chapter 6 of CW: Influential Point of View " I Love You But I've Chosen Darkness " (Watkins)
Week 7 - Fiction			
	Monday 2/24	En Media Res	" Speech Sounds " (Butler)
	Wednesday 2/26	Setting Tone Diction	" The Era " (Adjei-Brenyah) Chapter 8 CW: Potent Setting
	Friday 2/28	Close Reading Fiction	" The Quiet Thing " (Yeun) "How to Read Like a Writer – Words" (Prose)
Week 8 - Fiction			
	Monday 3/2	Characterization	" The Things They Carried " (O'Brien) Chapter 7 of CW: Magnetic Characterization
	Wednesday 3/4	Conflict – MvN MvSe/G	" To Build a Fire " (London) " Harrison Bergeron " (Vonnegut)
	Friday 3/6	Conflict – MvM MvS	"Something Rich and Strange" (Rash) " The Scarlet Ibis " (Hurst) Fiction Close Read Analysis Due by 5:00 PM on eCampus
Week 9 - Fiction			
	Monday 3/9	Dialogue	" Protozoa " (Gorham) Chapter 5 CW: Convincing Character Voices Upload Submission for Peer Group
	Wednesday 3/11	Show Don't Tell	" Pastoralia " (Saunders)
	Friday 3/13	Fiction Peer Groups	Polished Fiction due by 5:00 PM on eCampus
Week 10 - NonFiction			
	Monday 3/16	Intro to Nonfiction	"What is Nonfiction" Ch. 10 CW: The Masterful Essay
	Wednesday 3/18	The Essay Types	"A Brief Guide To Essays"(Williams) "The Lyric Essay" (Miller)
	Friday 3/20	Online class – Flash Nonfiction	Brevity Selected Readings
Week 11			
 SPRING BREAK MONDAY 3/23- FRIDAY 3/27			
Week 12 - Nonfiction			
	Monday 3/30	Hermit Crab	"Three Play" (Collier) "Whistling in the Dark" (Kimpbell)
	Wednesday 4/1	Lyric Essay Braided Essay	" Woven " (Yuknavitch) "Two Lyric Essays" (Asymptote)
	Friday 4/3	The Personal Essay	"The Personal Essay" (Miller) " The Truth Is I Never Left You " (Regalado) " The Dark Month " (Collins)
Week 13 - Nonfiction			

	Monday 4/6	The Personal is Public	" The Fourth State of Matter " (Beard)
	Wednesday 4/8	Close Reading Nonfiction	"Style" and "Audience" (Gutkind) " First Bath " (Lea)
	FRIDAY 4/10	NO CLASS – SPRING HOLIDAY	
Week 14 – Nonfiction			
	Monday 4/13	Memoir	Excerpts from <i>Chronology of Water</i> (Yuknavitch) Excerpt from <i>Heavy</i> (Laymon)
	Wednesday 4/15	Memoir	Excerpt from <i>Woman Warrior</i> (Hong-Kingston) Excerpt from <i>An American Childhood</i> (Dillard)
	Friday 4/17	Inspired-By Nonfiction	"Can't Make This Stuff Up – Facts" (Gutkind) "Creative Nonfiction Police" (Gutkind) NonFiction Close Read Analysis Due by 5:00 PM on eCampus
Week 15 - Nonfiction			
	Monday 4/20	Research Nonfiction	" Greenhaired Gumshoes or Hideabound Hacks " (McGregor) Upload Submission for Peer Group
	Wednesday 4/22	Podcasts	" How Audio Stories Begin " (NPR) + Selected Podcast Prepare feedback for peer review groups
	Friday 4/24	Peer Review Groups	Polished NonFiction due by 5:00 PM on eCampus
Week 16			
	Monday 4/27	The Final Portfolio	Prepare final Portfolio
	Wednesday 4/29	Reflection	Chapter 22 CW: Revising and Editing Prepare Final Portfolio
FINAL PORTFOLIO DUE FRIDAY 5/1 BY 5:00 PM ON ECAMPUS			