

English 212

Mark Brazaitis, ENGL 212, Creative Writing: Fiction, Spring 2003

ENGLISH 212/001

Professor Mark Brazaitis

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Class Hours: TTh 10:00-11:15 a.m.

Office Hours: Tuesday (2:30-5), Thursday (2:30-4) and by appointment

Objective: In this class, you will learn how to become a fiction writer. To become a fiction writer, you must dedicate yourself to both writing and reading fiction, and this class will allow you (read: require you) to do both.

Requirements: Over the course of the semester, you will read seventeen short stories, one novel and one writer's guide (*Bird by Bird*) and write at least one short story. In addition, you will be required to complete seven short writing exercises.

Quizzes: Whenever a short story is assigned, you will be quizzed on it. This brief, objective quiz is designed to give credit to students who do the reading and to encourage everyone to participate in class discussion about the stories we read. Although there will be no make-up quizzes, your worst quiz score, including a quiz you might have missed, will be eliminated.

Take-Home Exercises: Take-home exercises will be assigned during class. If you miss a class at which a take-home exercise is assigned, you should call or email a classmate for the assignment. You should type all take-home exercises because you will be handing them in. Please hand in the take-home assignments on time, as no late assignments will be collected. Note: You are required to hand in only seven out of the eight take-home assignments.

Texts: *The Oxford Book of American Short Stories* (edited by Joyce Carol Oates); *Bright Lights, Big City* (Jay McInerney); *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life* (Anne Lamott).

Grades: Grades in this class will be based on the following: attendance/class participation (20 percent), quizzes (20 percent), take-home exercises (30 percent), short stories (30 percent).

Class Schedule and Day-to-Day Assignments

Tuesday, January 14 Get acquainted

Thursday, January 16 Lecture (character) and in-class exercises

Tuesday, January 21 Read: "Rip Van Winkle" (page 18), "The Wives of the Dead" (page 63) and "Hunters in the Snow" (page 621). **Due**: Take-home exercise.

Thursday, January 24 Lecture (plot) and in-class exercises

Tuesday, January 28 Read: "The Tell Tale Heart" (page 92), "Two Kinds" (page 715) and "The Persistence of Desire" (page 560). **Due**: Take-home exercise.

Thursday, January 30 Lecture (point of view) and in-class exercises

Tuesday, February 4 Read: "The Yellow Wallpaper" (page 154), "The Management of Grief" (page 698) and "Red-Headed Baby" (page 365). **Due**: Take-home exercise.

Thursday, February 6 12: Lecture (setting) and in-class exercises

Tuesday, February 11 Read: "In a Far Country" (page 191), "Alaska" (page 571) and "A Distant Episode" (page 358). **Due**: Take-home exercise.

Thursday, February 13 Lecture (dialogue) and in-class exercises

Tuesday, February 18 Read: "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" (page 296), "Big Bertha Stories" (page 655) and "The Man Who Was Almost a Man" (page 372). **Due**: Takehome exercise.

Thursday, February 20 Lecture (style) and in-class exercise

Tuesday, February 25 Read: "Sweat" (page 353), "Heat" (page 607) and "Are These Actual Miles?" (page 583). **Due**: Take-home exercise.

Thursday, February 27 Lecture (autobiographical stories) and in-class exercises

Tuesday, March 4 Read: Pages 1 to 98 of *Bright Lights, Big City* by Jay McInerney. **Due**: Take-home exercise.

Thursday, March 6 Read: Pages 98 to the end of *Bright Lights, Big City* by Jay

McInerney.

Tuesday, March 11 Read: *Bird by Bird* (Parts One and Two)

Thursday, March 13 Read: *Bird by Bird* (Parts Three and Four)

March 17 to March 23 Spring Break—Enjoy

Tuesday, March 25 Review and Catch-Up

Thursday, March 27 Workshop

Tuesday, April 1 Workshop

Thursday, April 3 Workshop

Tuesday, April 8 Workshop

Thursday, April 10 Workshop

Tuesday, April 15 Workshop

Thursday, April 17 Workshop

Tuesday, April 22 Workshop

Tuesday, April 24 Workshop

Tuesday, April 29 Workshop

Thursday, May 1 Workshop