

ENGLISH 418

Professor Mark Brazaitis

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Office Hours: Tuesday (12-1), Thursday (12-1) and by appointment

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Class Hours: TTh 1-2:15 p.m.

Class Location: 223 Hodges

Objective: This is the capstone class in creative writing. In this class, you will complete a single, long writing project under the supervision of a graduate-student mentor as well as the class instructor. You will read an excerpt from your final project in the late fall, at a venue open to the public. Your final project should be the best work you have ever done. In addition, you will read works of poetry, fiction, and memoir regarded as classics. They are works every writer should be familiar with.

Requirements: Over the course of the semester, you will complete a long writing project (48 pages of fiction or creative nonfiction or 24 pages of poetry or a combination). You will take daily quizzes on the class readings.

Quizzes: Whenever a published work is assigned to read, 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 works we read. Although there will be no make-up quizzes, your worst quiz score, including a quiz you might have missed, will be eliminated. If you will be absent on the day a quiz is given and you would like credit for having done the reading, you may submit to me (via an email attachment) a one-page summary of the work(s) before our class meets. **Note:** Additional reading may be assigned.

Texts: *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*; *The Oxford Book of American Short Stories* (edited by Joyce Carol Oates); *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin; *Tell Me* by Kim Addonizio

Grades: Grades in this class will be based on the following: attendance/class participation (20 percent), quizzes (20 percent), written feedback given to fellow students on their writing (10 percent); project drafts (20 percent); final writing project (30 percent).
Grading Key: 100=A+; 94-99=A; 90-93=A-; 85-89=B+; 83-84=B; 80-82=B-; 75-79=C+; 73-74=C; 70-72=C-; 65-69=D+; 63-64=D; 60-62=D-; 59 and below=F.

Attendance: Attendance will be graded as follows: 0-1 absences (A); 2-3 absences (B); 4 absences (C); 5 or more absences (F). Note: You will flunk the entire class if you have five or more absences.

Extra credit: You may attend and write a one-page review of any two of the “special events” listed below. A review consists of a summary of the event as well as your opinion

of the event. It should be at least 250-words (one, double-spaced page) long. (Please type your review.) Each extra credit assignment counts for four extra quiz points or four extra writing draft points. You are encouraged to attend all of the events.

Class Schedule and Day-to-Day Assignments

Tuesday, August 20 Get acquainted

Thursday, August 22 Read: Chapters 1 and 2 in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and “The Things They Carried” in the *Oxford Book of American Short Stories*.

Tuesday, August 27 Read: Chapters 3 and 4 in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and “Edison, New Jersey” in the *Oxford Book of American Short Stories*.

Thursday, August 29 Read: Chapters 5 and 6 in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and “The Little Regiment” in the *Oxford Book of American Short Stories*.

Tuesday, September 3 Read: Chapters 7 and 8 in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and “A Death in the Desert” in the *Oxford Book of American Short Stories*.

Thursday, September 5 Read: Chapters 9 and 10 in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and “The Strength of God” in the *Oxford Book of American Short Stories*.

Tuesday, September 10 Read: Chapters 11 and 12 in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and “The Girl With a Pimple Face” in the *Oxford Book of American Short Stories*.

Thursday, September 12 Read: Chapters 13 and 14 in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and “The Rats in the Walls” in the *Oxford Book of American Short Stories*.

Tuesday, September 17 Read: Chapters 15 and 16 in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and “Battle Royal” in the *Oxford Book of American Short Stories*. **Due to your mentors:** At least 10 pages of prose or 6 pages of poetry.

Thursday, September 19 Read: Chapters 17-19 in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and “The Lottery” in the *Oxford Book of American Short Stories*.

Special Event: Thursday, September 19, at 7:30 p.m. in Colson Hall room 130, fiction and nonfiction writer Gary Fincke will be reading.

Tuesday, September 24 Meet with mentors.

Thursday, September 26 Read: Part 1 of *Tell Me*.

Tuesday, October 1 Read: Part 2 of *Tell Me*.

Thursday, October 3 Read: Part 3 of *Tell Me*.

Special Event: Thursday, October 3, at 11 a.m. in Colson Hall room 130, fiction writer Sarah Gerkenmeyer will answer questions about writing and the writing life.

Tuesday, October 8 Read: Part 4 of *Tell Me*. **Due to your mentors**: At least 20 pages of prose or 12 pages of poetry.

Thursday, October 10 Read: *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin.

Tuesday, October 15 Fall break - enjoy

Thursday, October 17 Meet with mentors.

Special Event: Thursday, October 17, at 7:30 p.m. in the Robinson Reading Room of the downtown library, memoirist Beverly Donofrio will read.

Tuesday, October 22 **Due**: At least 20 pages of revised prose or 12 pages of revised poetry. Bring enough copies for everyone in the class plus your professor.

Thursday, October 24 Workshop

Tuesday, October 29 Workshop

Special Event: Tuesday, October 29, at 10 a.m. in room 130 of Colson Hall, singer and poet Hugh Blumenfeld will read and perform.

Thursday, October 31 Workshop

Tuesday, November 5 Workshop

Thursday, November 7 Workshop

Tuesday, November 12 Meet with mentors

Special Event: Wednesday, November 13, at 7:30 p.m. in the Rhododendron Room of the Mountainlair: "Extending a Hand: Personal, Literary, Historical, and Political Perspectives on U.S. Efforts to Aid the Developing World" (panel led by Mark Brazaitis)

Thursday, November 14 **Due**: 20 pages of new prose or 12 pages of new poetry. Bring enough copies for everyone in the class.

Tuesday, November 19 Workshop

Thursday, November 21 Workshop

Thanksgiving break - Enjoy

Tuesday, December 3 Workshop

Thursday, December 5 **Final project due. Bring one copy for your mentor and one for your professor.**

Tuesday, December 9 Final reading

Core Values/Social Justice at West Virginia University

The following core values establish the foundation for Social Justice at West Virginia University.

Every person has intrinsic worth and dignity;

Respect for the law is fundamental;

Freedom from fear is universal;

A climate of opportunity, mutual respect, and understanding engenders a feeling that the future should be shared by all community members;

There is an absence of discrimination and harassment based on age, color, disability, ethnic origin, marital status, pregnancy, race, religious beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, and veteran status; and

The rich diversity of people, their cultures, and the bonds that tie people together are appreciated and celebrated.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Accessibility Services. Also, Accessibility Services has moved to Suite 250 at 1085 VanVoorhis Rd (beside Applebee's and across from the Mountaineer Station transportation center). The phone number is 304-293-6700, and email is access2@mail.wvu.edu. Access the website at <http://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu/>.