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CRWR 210A.01C: Introduction to Fiction Workshop

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BEGINNING CREATIVE WRITING: FICTION
Syllabus, Spring 2016

Instructor: Dave Barrett

Section: Beginning Creative Writing: Fiction-CRWR 210A-01C--#31850

Rm./Time: AD 13 Tuesday and Thursday 3:40—5:00

Email: david.barrett@umontana.edu

Course Description: Students will write character sketches, short stories, chapters of novels, and other forms of written expression. We will read the work of fellow classmates as well as that of published authors. Because this is an introductory course, we will focus on the various elements and narrative strategies writers use to craft works of fiction. Students will consider these various strategies and elements when reading and responding to the works of their peers in workshops. Students will engage in intensive in-class writing as well as complete take-home assignments.

Suggested Texts:

Writing Fiction: A Guide to the Narrative Craft

Janet Burroway HarperCollins Publisher 3rd Edition

The Art of Fiction: Notes on Craft for Young Writers

John Gardner Vintage Books/Random House

Writing in General and the Short Story in Particular

Russ Hills Bantam Books

Grades: Grades will be determined accordingly:

20% Informal Writing This will be based on grades received for take-home writing assignments. It may also, occasionally, include in-class writing assignments.

20% Participation The main factor here will be how well the student participates during workshop discussion of their classmate's writing. On the day of discussion of a given text, the student should be able to cite two or three concrete examples of why that day's text works or doesn't work (critical and constructive analysis).

60% Final Portfolio This will consist of no fewer than ten pages of revised "finished" prose (stories, sketches, novel excerpts, etc.) **10 page minimum/ 30 page max.** Included with this portfolio will be a short cover-letter describing revisions made to your texts and a brief self-evaluation of your progress during the semester.

Common Policies and Procedures:

Attendance:

T-Th classes

More than four absences from a T-Th class will compromise your grade:

4th absence: final grade drops one letter grade

5th absence: final grade drops one additional letter grade

6th absence: final grade is an F

Participation. Participation includes coming to class or conference or electronic forums prepared and on time, taking part in class discussions (this involves listening/reading as well as writing/speaking), asking questions, contributing your knowledge and insights in whatever form is appropriate, and striving to make all your contributions excellent. It also includes doing the required reading and writing for each class. Note: Please come to class on time. Lateness will hurt your grade because it is an unnecessary interruption to the classroom community and because latecomers will miss valuable instruction. Please see *Participation Grade Descriptors* for more information.

Late Work. *Late work is unacceptable.* If you miss a draft deadline, you've missed a crucial chance for feedback on your work. If you aren't ready with a response to a group member's draft, you're letting down someone who is counting on you for help. If you aren't prepared for class, you limit your own voice and contributions to the class and community of writers and readers. If you ever have a problem with an assignment, talk to me in advance of the deadline and you may be able to negotiate a special arrangement. *Deadlines are not negotiable after you've missed them.*

Office Hours. Office hours provide us with an opportunity to talk one on one. You may drop in during these times or make an appointment with me to talk about any questions you have about your progress in the course. **By appointment.**

Communication. I'm happy to talk with you via university email if you have a question about the course or an assignment. Please do not email me drafts or attachments, text or IM me unless invited to do so. I will respond to emails Monday through Friday within 48 hours.

Classroom Community. Community is important in a small workshop class; we will work together to create an environment that promotes collaborative learning and effective, thoughtful discussion. The student conduct code asks students to "respect the rights, privileges, and dignity of others" – these are important (even sustainable) ways to engage in class discussion, particularly when the topic might be provocative.

Please be sure to shut off cell phones ringers and pagers during class and conference to prevent unnecessary disruptions. Please try to refrain from texting during class, so that your focus can be on our classroom community for the duration of the class meeting.

Students with Disabilities. Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course. Please speak with me after class and be prepared to provide a letter from your DDS Coordinator so I can do my best to support you.

TENANTATIVE OUTLINE FOR COURSE:

Week One through Week Six:

The focus of lessons will be on narrative craft—elements of fiction such as structure and plot, characterization, setting and tone, etc. These lessons are intended to set the foundation for the stories and workshops to follow.

Week Seven to Week Fifteen:

The focus will turn toward production of student's own stories. Critiques will take place in a constructive workshop environment as well as on and one-to-one basis with the instructor.

Final Portfolio Due: Last Day of Class (TBA).

Portfolio Returned during Final Exam Slot: Student must attend.