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Introduction to Creative Writing

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CUNY City College

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**City College of New York
City University of New York
Department of English**

English 22000 M
Spring 2020
T/TH 11 am – 12:15 pm
Classroom Shepard S/308

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Office hour by appointment
Office NAC 6/333C

INTRODUCTION TO CREATIVE WRITING

Description

The objective of this course is to sharpen students' creative writing skills in the genres of the short story, poetry and drama, depending on students' interests and ability. We will experiment both informally with various exercises and formally polished pieces. We will read some work by established writers, discuss various structures, and practice constructively critiquing each others' work.

Texts

Handouts and readings posted on Blackboard that you must print out as well as the work of your peers, distributed in class. (There is no required text).

Recommended Text

Cameron, Julia. *The Artist's Way Workbook*. Tarcher Perigee, 2006. Print.

Goldberg, Natalie. *Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within*. Boston: Shambhala, 2016. Print.

Technology

You need access to Blackboard via the Internet

Other Requirements

- 5"x8" notebook for use as journal
- Looseleaf paper or notebook for notes
- Folders in which to keep readings and your work
- Pens
- Stapler

Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will meet the following learning outcomes:

- Discuss course content in a range of critical contexts. (Assessment: graded class

discussions of readings, exercises and formal assignments or manuscripts)

- Demonstrate knowledge of themes and genres of course texts. (Assessment: graded creative pieces in response to course themes and experimentation, and self-challenge in the context of creative writing, class discussion)
- Critique the complexities within and differences among course texts. (Assessment: graded class discussions of readings, exercises and formal assignments or manuscripts)

General Education Outcomes

Students will achieve:

- Communication Skills—students will write, read, listen, and speak critically and effectively.
- Values—students will make informed choices based on an understanding of personal values, human diversity, multicultural awareness, and social responsibility.

Requirements and Evaluation of Students

Students receive letter grades, A through F, based on their writing, participation and course work. Course work counts for 60% of the grade and participation for 40%.

By the conclusion of English 22000, students will have completed three formal writing assignments or manuscripts, one for each genre covered in the class, fiction, drama, and poetry. In sum, you will write one short story or one to three short prose pieces, three to five poems, and one to two dramatic scenes which will have undergone some revision based on feedback you receive in class. You will meet in group workshops at the end of each genre section to exchange and discuss your work with your peers, who will also write up critiques. These three manuscripts make up 30% of the course grade.

Additional course work includes homework readings (handouts and Blackboard postings which you are responsible for printing up and bringing in to class), journal entries written at least two to three times a week, and informal writing assignments. I will inform you in advance of all assignments and due dates through regular monthly schedules. This comprises 30% of the course grade. Class participation, which includes attendance (see below), class discussion and workshop, is weighed heavily as it drives how this class works and comprises another 40%.

Students are responsible for work covered on days missed due to absence or lateness. E-mails to me about what you have missed will not receive a response. Therefore, please be sure to get the e-mail addresses of at least two of your classmates.

Students must come to class prepared to participate. Thus, the reading and assignments must be done on time before each class session. Manuscripts due are to be handed in at the beginning of workshops held at the end of each genre period. Critiques of manuscripts read in workshop are due the class after workshop. Workshop attendance is MANDATORY.

Manuscripts handed in late will be marked down one qualifier for each class meeting late (a manuscript due Tuesday but handed in Thursday will be marked down from B- to C+, for example). Manuscripts will not be accepted more than one week past the initial due date. Critiques and other homework will not be accepted more than one class past initial date. NO E-MAILED MANUSCRIPTS OR HOMEWORK WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Revisions are allowed for manuscripts graded below A-. They must be handed in one week from when they are returned to the student. The student must turn in the original graded draft with the revision. No more than 2 manuscripts can be revised. NO REVISIONS ARE ALLOWED FOR LATE MANUSCRIPTS.

In summary, the final grade will be based on 3 formal assignments or manuscripts (30%), participation (class discussion, fishbowl, workshop, attendance) (40%), and additional coursework (journals, critiques and informal writing assignments) (30%).

Attendance/Lateness/Classroom Etiquette

CCNY permits up to four absences. Emergencies come up, save absences for those. Attendance is graded as follows: 0-1 absences: A; 2: B; 3: C; 4: D; 5: F.

Late policy: 3 lates or leaving early count as ONE absence; however, if you are more than 30 minutes late or leave 30 minutes early, you will be marked a half-day absent. No more than 1 documented excused absence will be allowed. E-mails about your lateness or absence are not excuses. If you fail the attendance part of the grade, you will likely also get a low participation grade. MORE THAN 5 ABSENCES: Failure of the course.

All electronic devices should be turned off during class time. Do not leave the class to answer a call or text unless it is a real emergency. Using these devices is disrespectful to the learning process and demonstrates a lack of patience and focus.

No meals in the classroom as well. You may bring a beverage but no food that creates too much garbage or disruption.

Plagiarism Statement

Plagiarism is copying and using other people's words without proper acknowledgment or citation. All writing submitted for this course is understood to be your own original work. Passing off someone else's work, in part or whole, as your own is unacceptable and has serious consequences that can result in a failing grade and disciplinary action. You are expected to read, understand, and adhere to CCNY's Policy on Academic Integrity, which is available here:

http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/la/Academic_Integrity_Policy.pdf

Schedule (subject to change)

Week 1 – Tuesday, January 28th

Class introduction

In-class writing: birth/death

FICTION

Thursday, January 30th

“In Defense of Creative Writing Classes” by Richard Hugo

“Belief & Technique” Kerouac/“Commandments” Miller/“Quotes” Nin

In-class writing: music prose

Week 2 – Tuesday, February 4th

Syllabus/Journal/Fishbowl/ discussion

Thursday, February 6th

Critique/Rubric discussion

Excerpts from *Cronopios and Famas* by Julio Cortázar

Dalí/Picasso paintings

In-class writing: How to...

DUE: Music prose

Week 3 – Tuesday, February 11th

“The Husband Stitch” by Carmen Maria Machado

FISHBOWL DISCUSSION #1

Thursday, February 13th

“Invasions” from *Song of the Water Saints* by Nelly Rosario

in-class writing: image/photo (**bring in photo**)

FICTION MANUSCRIPT ASSIGNED

Week 4 – Tuesday, February 18th

Introduction from *Sula* by Toni Morrison

in-class: place

Thursday, February 20th

Fiction Workshop – Selection and Revision

Week 5 – Tuesday, February 25th

Fiction Workshop

FICTION MANUSCRIPT DUE

DRAMA

Thursday, February 27th

"36 Assumptions" by Jose Rivera
Basic Elements of Playwriting & Scene script
FICTION CRITIQUES DUE

Week 6 – Tuesday, March 3rd

The Road to Ruin by Richard Dresser

Thursday, March 5th

In-class writing: Enclosed place

Week 7 – Tuesday, March 10th

References to Salvador Dalí Make Me Hot, Act One by Jose Rivera
FISHBOWL #2

Thursday, March 12th

In-class writing: Random condition
DRAMA MANUSCRIPT ASSIGNED

Week 8 – Tuesday, March 17th

"Spic-O-Rama" by John Leguizamo (video)

Thursday, March 19th

"Four American Characters" by Anna Deavere Smith (video)
In-class writing: monologue
MID-SEMESTER JOURNALS COLLECTED

Week 9 – Tuesday, March 24th

Drama workshop – Revision and Selection
MID-SEMESTER JOURNALS COLLECTED

Thursday, March 26th

Drama workshop
DRAMA MANUSCRIPT DUE

POETRY

Week 10 – Tuesday, March 31st

Line / Shape / ABC or name
Poetry forms presentations assigned
DRAMA CRITIQUES DUE

Thursday, April 2nd

"Howl" by Allen Ginsberg & "Puerto Rican Obituary" by Pedro Pietri
FISHBOWL #3

Week 11 – Tuesday, April 7th NO CLASS Wednesday schedule

Thursday, April 9th – Thursday, April 16th NO CLASS Spring Break

Week 13 – Tuesday, April 21st

"Good Morning Blues" by Leadbelly
Hughes, Cortez, Dumas and others from *Blues Poems*
In-class writing: Blues

Thursday, April 23rd

In-class writing: Campus scavenger hunt

Week 14 – Tuesday, April 28th

"Datos Personales (Personal Records)" by Claribel Alegría
In-class writing: Self-portrait/Secret Self-Portrait

Thursday, April 30th

"first writing since" by Suheir Hammad
Various from *Def Poetry Jam*
Odes by Pablo Neruda
In-class writing: Odes
POETRY MANUSCRIPT ASSIGNED

Week 15 – Tuesday, May 5th

Poetry forms presentations

Thursday, May 7th

Poetry Workshop – Selection and Revision
JOURNALS DUE

Week 16 – Tuesday, May 12th

Poetry Workshop
POETRY MANUSCRIPT DUE

Thursday, May 14th LAST DAY OF CLASS

Reading celebration
JOURNALS DUE
POETRY CRITIQUES DUE