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### CRWR 480.01: Creative Writing BFA Capstone

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**CRWR 480 Section 01**  
**Creative Writing**  
**BFA Capstone**  
**Spring 2022**

**Instructor:** Robert Stubblefield

Office: LA 231

Email: robert.stubblefield@umontana.edu

Office hours: Monday 3:00-5:00 p.m.; Tuesday 1:00-2:00 p.m., Wednesday 2:00-4:00 p.m. (by appointment only and BFA Capstone meetings); Thursday 2:00-3:00 p.m., and by appointment on Zoom portal.

**Classroom:** LA 106

**Class Meeting Time:** Wednesday, 4:00-6:50 p.m.

**Required Text and Materials:** *The Seven Basic Plots* by Christopher Booker (provided as pdf). *Reading Like a Writer* by Francine Prose. *How Fiction Works* by James Wood. readings will be assigned online in pdf format.

A journal and folder for compiling all exercises, drafts, and in-class and out-of-class assignments. You must have access to UM Online for required readings and postings.

**Course Objectives:**

This course is designed as a capstone experience for undergraduates in partial fulfillment of the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Creative Writing. Incoming students will have completed workshop requirements and will have generated a substantial body of work in previous Creative Writing classes. We will focus on the craft of revising and editing fiction as applied by writers and editors. We will study and practice editing at the language level and revising larger elements of narrative and plot. We will read, study, and discuss contemporary, classic, and student short fiction selected and presented for critique by the instructor and students. Each student will choose a book-length work of contemporary fiction (novel or short story collection) and write a detailed response relating and applying the course texts to their chosen work.

In addition to the book-length texts there will be required weekly readings from sources such as *The New York Times Book Review*, *The New Yorker*, *The Writer's Chronicle*, *The Paris Review* interviews, and other daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly publications and websites. Each student will offer a presentation on a literary magazine that they have chosen to submit fiction to—they will present the magazine's guidelines, theme (if applicable), and a brief overview of the magazine's aesthetic, history/tradition, and standing within the literary community. Students will offer a rationale as to why they have chosen a specific magazine.

Students will study, discuss, practice, and apply revising and editing techniques and develop and articulate informed oral and written arguments presented in the form of class presentations, manuscript evaluations, and book reviews.

### **Course Requirements:**

- **Writing Exercises:** All writing exercises and assignments will be turned in on the date due and must be typed and double-spaced with one-inch margins. Exercises will focus on specified components or be of a specified length. Keep these in your portfolio upon return.
- **Journal:** I expect you to keep a reading journal to develop and document informed, thoughtful responses to the texts and readings. Although I will not ask you to turn in these journals, I will occasionally ask for a typed excerpt (one page or less).
- **Capstone Project Portfolio:** You will substantially revise and workshop works of fiction (novel excerpt, novella, and/or short stories) over the course of this semester and develop an informed argument applying the required texts to an additional and instructor-approved book-length work of your choice.
  - At the beginning of the semester, you will present a project proposal approved by a mentor selected from the current (including visiting) fiction faculty. Proposal will include subgenre, previous experience in subgenre, research plan, schedule for meetings with mentor, and projected outcomes including length and plan to submit for publication.
  - At the end of the semester you will submit 40 pages of revised, and edited work within *one* subgenre of your choice. This is not a class for “ideas,” “outlines,” or rough drafts. You must generate or have generated a body of work substantial enough to merit and withstand rigorous revision and editing. In addition to the required 40 pages of fiction, your portfolio will include a five to ten page artist statement detailing the following: project inception and drafting, editing, and revising strategy and process; original scholarship and research; how you utilized and applied specific craft elements and skills learned during your study of creative writing and literature here at the University of Montana, and plans to continue development and progress of this project and as a writer in general.
  - Course will conclude with a public presentation/reading of project. You will select material from portfolio highlighting results of project. Multiple venues will be available for project presentations and ideas and options will be developed collaboratively by students, instructor, faculty mentors, and program director.

### **Learning Outcomes**

- Successful application of editing and revising strategies and techniques

- Manuscript evaluation skills and the ability to articulate criteria for successful fiction in both discussions and written responses
- Ability to effectively target submissions to literary and commercial periodicals
- Portfolio containing a body of work satisfactory for submission as professional or graduate school application sample
- Ability to successfully offer, accept, evaluate, and incorporate criticism
- Understanding and application of fictional terms and craft elements including plot, narrative, characterization, dialogue, setting, atmosphere, point-of-view, metaphor, and simile
- Ability to draft, revise, edit, and proofread
- Ability to produce polished work on established and agreed upon timelines
- Ability and opportunity to effectively and engagingly present literary works and deliver craft-based lectures

### **Grading/Evaluation:**

You will be evaluated based on your active participation in class, your writing exercises and oral presentations, your improvement from draft to revision, and your attendance.

**DO NOT MISS MORE THAN ONE (1) CLASSES OR YOUR GRADE WILL BE AFFECTED**

- **30%** of your grade is based on active participation. Show up prepared, comment on required readings and the work of your peers, and contribute to the community of the classroom.
- **30%** of your grade is based on successful completion of all writing assignments. These will include responses to readings, reviews, and manuscript evaluations. Assignments must be completed and submitted on time and all out-of-class work typed and double-spaced. You will receive credit for and responses to your exercises, but not a letter grade.
- **40%** of your grade is based on your major revised work. Portfolio must be substantially revised and carefully edited by the end of the semester. Demonstrate improvement and the ability to effectively respond to criticism and incorporate course objectives.

All work submitted in this course must be your own. All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at: [Student Conduct Code](#)

### **Students with Disabilities**

Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course. Please speak with me privately after class or in my office. Please be prepared to provide a letter from your DSS Coordinator.

### **Important Dates and Deadlines:**

Monday, January 17, Martin Luther King Day, No Classes  
Monday-Friday, March 21-25, Spring Break, No Classes  
Monday, May 9, 3:20-5:20 Final Exam and Portfolio Presentations

Deadlines: Access this link for information on drop/add deadlines and policies.

<http://www.umt.edu/registrar/students/dropadd.php>

### **Extracurricular Opportunities:**

It is important that our classroom develop into a community of writers. You must be able to provide and accept criticism and feedback in a positive manner. I will be available during my office hours to meet with you and will also schedule individual and group conferences by appointment.

Missoula is a vibrant literary community. Watch the calendar for readings and events at local bookstores and establishments. These events offer valuable opportunities to participate in the broader literary community and learn from professional and published writers on how to effectively and engagingly present and deliver work to an audience.