

W554.3848 Teaching Creative Writing

Fall 2015/RRDorsey

Monday 3:30-5:30pm
Pedagogy Conference Room, BH464

Office: BH460
phone: 812-855-4038
hours: T/R 9-11am & M/W by appt

The path to appreciating a book or writer should always begin with love. –St. Augustine

Do not fear mistakes. There are none. – Miles Davis

Try again. Fail again. Fail better. – Samuel Beckett

Description: W554 is a practicum in teaching creative writing at the university level. Through reading and experience we will explore the creative process as well as the assumptions and practices unique—and not so unique—to creative writing classes. We will consider invention, revision, and assessment; craft and content; various approaches to workshop; the role of reading in a writing life; authority; and writer-teacher / student-writer dynamics. While we will concentrate on the undergraduate experience, the model for most creative writing teaching comes from the graduate level workshop, and as such, we will reflect on the changing concerns of the maturing writer, exploring how teaching and writing lives coexist at the graduate level and beyond as well look at current takes on the writer in the academy.

Grade: Your course grade will be determined by the following (due dates on class calendar):

- active reading and contribution to discussion over the texts' central ideas and concerns and most importantly, *what use you can make of them*;
- several brief response papers to course texts;
- a written review and presentation of a writing text of your choosing;
- several annotated lesson plans and writing exercises for W103 sections;
- two observation write-ups on visits to creative writing classes;
- **final project:** develop a syllabus and sample set of supporting materials for a 200-level undergraduate creative writing course that includes: a course description complete with policies and a calendar of readings and assignments; an annotated set of exercises; and a grading system with rationale.

Texts

- Barry, Lynda. *Syllabus*
- Hugo, Richard. *Triggering Town*
- Prose, Francine. *Reading Like a Writer: A Guide for People Who Love Books and for Those Who Want to Write Them*

All other readings on the calendar are available on the W554 Canvas page under *Files* except for URLs which you'll find under *Modules*.

I invite you to recommend reading for the class, as well, which I will happily post to Canvas if you can get an electronic copy or url address to me the week prior.

CALENDAR

- Week One
8/24 Why?
Screening: *This American Life* “Making the Invisible Visible”
Handouts: Barry “Two Questions” & Rich “As If Your Life Depended On It”
- Week Two
8/31 Critiquing Student Work
Hugo *Triggering Town*
Canvas: Bishop “Responding & Revising” and “Evaluating & Responding”
Canvas: Wurzbacher “Grading Creative Writing”
Response paper due (1-2pp single-spaced)
- Week Three
9/7 LABOR DAY HOLIDAY
- Week Four
9/14 Teaching Poetry: The Artist as Teacher
Barry *Syllabus*
Canvas: from *Poets on Teaching*: {Talks/Directives (16pp)}
Canvas: Bishop “Ten Inventions and Variations”
Bring samples of student work: Assignment 1 comments
Annotated exercise due
- Week Five
9/21 Reading Like A Writer
Canvas: Hirsch *How to Read a Poem* Chs 1&2
Canvas: Lorca “Play and Theory of the Duende”
Canvas; Winterson “Art Objects”
Response paper due (1-2pp single-spaced)
- Week 6
9/28 Teaching Poetry: Practice Making
Canvas: Rosal “Poetry & the Art of the Accident”
Canvas: from *Poets on Teaching*: {Exercises/Praxis (9pp)}
Annotated lesson plan due
- Week 7
10/5 The Creative Writing Classroom
Canvas: Blythe & Sweet “The Writing Community: A New Model...”
Canvas: Cosgrove “Teaching and Learning as Improvisational Performance in the Creative Writing Classroom”
Response paper due (1-2 page single-spaced)
- Week 8
10/12 Reading Like a Writer redux
Francine Prose *Reading Like A Writer*
Response paper (1-2 page single-spaced)

- Week 9
10/19 Free Week (Teaching Fiction: Invention 1)
No class meeting (but you're still teaching, so...):
Of interest on Canvas: Kardos: Chs2&3 Relevant Detail & Starting Your Story; Ch5 Creating Scenes
- Week 10
10/26 Teaching Fiction / Burroway Ch 7 (Structure)
Canvas: O'Connor, excerpts from *Mystery & Manners*
Canvas: Kardos: Ch4 Working Elements; Ch6 Story Form &
Ch11 Fiction Mechanics Boot Camp
Response Paper Due
- Week 11
11/2 Story Drafting & Workshop/ Burroway Ch 8 (POV)
Canvas: Kardos: Ch7 Compelling Story; Ch8 Ending Story
Canvas: Cain, "Reinvisioning Workshop" & Sharma "Exploring Bias..."
Annotated lesson plan due
Bring range of sample student work
- Week 12
11/9 Teaching Fiction: Invention 2 / Burroway Ch 9 (Revision)
Canvas: Kardos, Chs9&10 Clarity & Revision
Canvas: "Common Pitfalls in Beginnings and Endings" &
Bishop, Ch7 "Revision & Your Writing"
Annotated exercise due
- Week 13
11/16 Course Design & Planning Workshop
Canvas: CD&P Folder
Last day to turn in Observation Reports for CW visits (103 & 203)
- 11/23 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**
- Week 14
11/30 Course Design & Planning Workshop, continued
Canvas: CD&P Folder
Bring W203 syllabus draft (4 copies)
- Week 15
12/7 Must-Reads for Writers
Presentations on creative writing texts
- Week 16
12/14 **Final Projects**
Due in my office, BH460, by 3:30pm.: Complete syllabus and supporting materials for a 200-level single- or mixed-genre creative writing course.