ENGL 335- Creative Writing
Instructor: Sarah York
Fall 2012 - MW 11:30-12:50 - EV3 3406
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Welcome!

This course is based in practical “workshops,” with the aim of encouraging your creative and critical writing, reading, and thinking. We will work closely with the genres of poetry, short and flash fiction, and creative non-fiction. We will also perform a number of improvisational in-class writing exercises to enhance our understanding of the power and possibilities of language. The heart of this course is based in community and shared work. You are encouraged to experiment and explore in your own writing and responses to writing.

Theme: “Tell it back different but the same”

Attendance
Much of this course depends on writing as a disciplined practice. Attendance is required and that means being “present” in every sense of the word. We will regularly respond to the writing of each class member. Any absence without good cause will affect your final grade.

Grades
Conventional grade systems challenge the spirit of creative writing practices. You will not be graded on raw talent. Rather, evaluation will be based on your efforts to engage the course situation, to thoughtfully and meaningfully revise your work, your regular participation, and your active role in our writing community.

Grades and Assignments

Participation 30%
(class participation and discussion; peer reviews; readings; presentations)
*Revised Poem 20%
*Revised Flash Fiction 20%
*Revised Creative non-fiction 20%
Reading Response 10%

Each of these should include writing statements of one to three paragraphs on top of the instructor’s copy. Details in-class.

Late Assignments
Late assignments without a medical certificate or proper documentation will not be accepted. Late assignments will be returned at the end of the course.

Copies
Please make sure to set aside money for copies this term. You will have to bring copies of your work to class for workshops. See the Schedule.
Workshop
Workshop drafts must be typed and carefully edited for grammar and spelling. They should be thoughtfully written well in advance of class. Please do not bring last-minute work, or writing for other courses.

Peer Critiques
Peer review is the responsibility of all students. Critiques are to be completed by one week after distribution. You are expected to show sensitivity, respect and thoughtfulness in your comments. We are here to help each other develop and improve. Constructive criticism is welcome, but personal attacks or aggressive language will not be tolerated.

Conferences
Short one-on-one conferences with the instructor will be held in October. Conferences are an opportunity to address questions and concerns about your writing, and to discuss your writing progress in general.

Bonus Marks
You can all earn up to three bonus marks for attending a literary reading, poetry slam, or other literary events such as festivals at which readings are held – at any time during the term. You will have to write a one-page response. Do not simply describe the event. A mark of 0-3% will be based on the depth of your response.

Readings
Readings will be distributed throughout the course either in-class or online. You are expected to complete assigned readings on time and to discuss texts in class.

*Textbooks are not required for this course.* However, you may consult the many texts on writing and the craft or art of writing that exist, and find what appeals to you. Approaches vary radically, for instance: Jerome Stern’s *Making Shapely Fiction*, John Gardiner’s *The Art of Fiction; The Artist’s Way*; George Orwell’s *Why I Write*; Stephen’s King’s *On Writing*.

Academic Policies
*Academic Integrity:* Members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean.

[http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html)

*Note for students with disabilities:* The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.
Schedule

Sept 12: Poetry lecture and discussion.

Sept 17: Two poems due (min 20 lines total, on one page). Please bring 27 copies.
Exercises.
Sept 19: Discussion, readings. Performance examples.

Sept 24: Workshop (class).
Sept 26: Workshop continues (class).

Oct 1: Fiction lecture.

Oct 8: Thanksgiving Holiday. No class.
Oct 10: “Reading week.” Reading Reviews due by email. No class.

Oct 15: Flash Fiction #1 due. Please bring 27 copies. Discussion and group work.
Oct 17: Student conferences. 11-2.

Oct 22: Workshop (Class).
Oct 24: Workshop (Class)

Oct 29: Short Fiction #2 due. Please bring 7 copies to class. Exercises.
Oct 31: Guest writer or storyteller. TBA.

Nov 5: Workshop (Small Group).
Nov 7: Creative non-fiction lecture.

Nov 12: Revised Fiction due. In-class exercises and readings
Nov 14: Collaborative writing.

Nov 19: Creative non-fiction draft. Please bring 5 copies (small group workshop).
Nov 21: Sign up for 5-minute performances. Discussion and exercises.

Nov 26: Creative non-fiction revision due. Performances.
Nov 28: Performances.

Dec 3: Final class.
ENG 335: READING RESPONSES

“Read, read, read. Read everything -- trash, classics, good and bad, and see how they do it. Just like a carpenter who works as an apprentice and studies the master. Read! You’ll absorb it. Then write. If it’s good, you’ll find out. If it’s not, throw it out of the window.” –William Faulkner

Include your name, the date, and the title and author of the work, and the title of your response in the heading. Your responses are to be approximately one page in length, single-spaced. Use the criteria below in writing your responses, to draw connections between writing and reading practices.

-- Respond generally to one of the assigned readings. Discuss how or why it moves, puzzles, inspires, intrigues, or troubles you. Aim for depth and clarity in your response, but feel free to choose whatever aspects of the work you wish to respond to. Do not summarize the text. Rather, discuss its general themes, subject matter, content, and style.

-- Use specific lines, words, scenes, and/or images from the text to support your response. Discuss your interpretation or understanding of the passage(s) you selected. Why is it significant to you? What “effects” does it generate on the reader? How does it relate to the text as a whole? Respond as a critical reader.

-- Respond to the effect(s) and effectiveness of the text from a writer’s point of view. Describe specific techniques, tools, or methods used by the writer, and discuss how and why you think they “work” (or not). Consider, for instance, the role of style in shaping the “meaning” of a text.

-- Explain how the reading informs or inspires your own writing practice. What can you take away from the text as a writer? How does it influence, reflect, or differ from your own writing? Consider this portion as a dialogue between writers.