ENGLISH 335/335H
CREATIVE WRITING
Spring 1990

Times: Tues. and Thurs. 3:00-4:30 p.m. in HH139
Instructor: David Wade
Office: HH228C (883-1211 ext. 3886)
Tues. and Thurs. 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Books
to Finished Manuscript.
One other popular paperback will be chosen by each student from a shortlist provided in
class.

Objectives
This term the focus of ENGL 335 will be on the writing of popular fiction, the kind
of paperback novels you read on a plane or at the beach for your own pleasure, not
because someone else dictated they are 'required reading'. These so-called category novels
are sometimes dismissed as merely formulaic. This need not be the case. All genres
(mysteries, historical romances, quest fantasies, and so on) do have a shortlist of 'required
ingredients', but writers of popular stories also have a surprising freedom to exercise their
own ingenuity and inventiveness.

We will explore a very methodical approach to constructing the novel--one which
relies far more on sure and steady application than on the benign visit of some nebulous
muse.

The goals of ENGL 335 this summer then are (1) to build up your confidence for
tackling any lengthy and involved literary project, (2) to give you practice at creating
imaginative and commercially acceptable fiction, and (3) to provide an in-depth look at
exactly what is involved in producing a saleable manuscript today. We will examine the
whole process from "Where do you get the original idea?" to "Do you really need an
agent?".

The class will be divided into small teams for two very short assignments, but the
main concentration will be on each individual's major fiction project.

Marks (still subject to fine-tuning)
10% Resources report (a small group project)
15% Book/Market report (2nd small group project)
75% Major book project - probably broken down as follows:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concept/framework (point outline)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biographical/research notes</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plot synopsis</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample chapter</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 other major scene/part-chapter</td>
<td>15%</td>
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There is no specific percentage allocated for participation, however, your enthusiasm for
and contributions to the weekly workshops will almost certainly colour your overall grade.
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ENGLISH 335 & 335H: Creative Writing

Tues and Thurs 3.00-4.30 p.m. in seminar room HH139

First class Thurs May 3    Last class Thurs July 26

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Th 3 3.00-4.30 Administrative paperwork & other red-tape
What this course is about and, especially, what this course is not
Books & readings
Introductory overview:
The organized approach to writing Questionnaire

Tu 8 3.00-4.30 Genre/category fiction: what & why...
The importance of organization:
Knowing yourself as writer
Organizing your space
Organizing your time

Th 10 3.00-4.30 Ideas into Stories
Where do ideas come from?
Sorting out the useful ones
Developing ideas into essential storytelling ingredients

READ: Meredith, Chaps 1, 2, and 3
Madden, Introduction and Part VIII

Tu 15 3.00-4.30 BRAINSTORMING Workshop
From ideas to plots
Characters in conflict
Viewpoint

READ: Meredith, Chaps 4 and 5
Madden, Parts I and IV
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| Th 17 | 3.00-4.30 | Characters  
Creating believable characters  
Character 'management'  
Dialogue |
| Tu 22 | 3.00-4.30 | CHARACTER Workshop |
| Th 24 | 3.00-4.30 | Outlining  
Story sketching  
Names/place names pools  
Locales/mapping  
Glossary (jargon) |
| **READ:** Meredith, Chap 9  
Madden, Parts III and V |
| Tu 29 | 3.00-4.30 | OUTLINING/PROJECT DEVELOPMENT Workshop |
| **RE-READ:** all applicable sections of McCormick  
**WRITERS' RESOURCES REPORT I** |
| Th 31 | 3.00-4.30 | Research for the fiction writer  
The social-historical context  
Note-taking |
| **READ:** McCormick  
**BOOK/MARKET REPORT I** |
| **JUNE** |
| Tu 5  | 3.00-4.30 | RESEARCHING Workshop |
| **READ:** McCormick  
**WRITERS' RESOURCES REPORT II** |
| Th 7  | 3.00-4.30 | Putting it all together  
Making a word processing  
work for you  
Openings/hooks |
| **READ:** Meredith, Chaps 10 and 11  
**BOOK/MARKET REPORT II** |
| Tu 12 | 3.00-4.30 | PROJECT ASSEMBLY workshop |
| **WRITERS' RESOURCES REPORT III** |
Th 14  3.00-4.30  Working on the rough draft

READ: Meredith, Chap 6, 7 and 8
       Madden, Parts IV, V and VI
BOOK/MARKET REPORT III

Tu 19  3.00-4.30  WEEK OF
       INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

Th 21  3.00-4.30  WITH EACH STUDENT

Tu 26  3.00-4.30  DRAFTING workshop

READ: Meredith, Chap 12 and 13
       Madden, Parts VII and VIII
WRITERS' RESOURCES REPORT IV

Th 28  3.00-4.30  Rewriting & revision I

READ: Meredith, Chap 12 and 13
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BOOK/MARKET REPORT IV

JULY

Tu 3   3.00-4.30  REWRITING workshop

WRITERS' RESOURCES REPORT V

Th 5   3.00-4.30  Rewriting & revision II

READ: Madden
BOOK/MARKET REPORT V

Tu 10  3.00-4.30  REVISION workshop

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WRITERS' RESOURCES REPORT VI

Th 12  3.00-4.30  Preparing the polished copy
                 The finishing touches

BOOK/MARKET REPORT VI

Tu 17  3.00-4.30  MANUSCRIPT PREPARATION workshop
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Dealing with editors/publishers  
Contracts: Reading the fine print |
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Summary  
Q & A session  
Where do you go from here...? |
ESSENTIAL BOOKS

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OTHER REQUIRED READING AND ASSIGNMENTS

Purchase a copy of Writer's Digest every month

Try to get hold of some magazines which review popular paperback fiction, like the bi-monthly Rave Reviews

Each student, as part of a small team, will read ONE paperback from a given list and prepare an in-class report on both the particular book and the genre it represents.

Each student, again as part of a small team, will also prepare a short in-class report on resources of particular interest to writers in the local area.
BOOK/MARKET REPORT

The class will be sub-divided into five or six small workgroups, according to each student's expressed interests, and each team will report on a different popular paperback novel.

This is not an exercise in conventional literary analysis.

The book/marketing report should address the following kinds of questions and topics:

Give a brief overview of the field/genre to introduce the book

Where does this particular book fit in to its field?

How does it epitomize the genre, and how is it sufficiently different from other books in this category to make it interesting for us to read?

What makes it work for the reader...
The opening
How does the writer hook the readers' attention?
The characters--why do we care about them?
What about the setting of the story?
Narrative organization
The principal conflict
Plot devices
Chapter lengths and endings
How does the writer keep us hooked--why do we keep turning the pages?
The climax

Who are the top three writers in this field--who should we read to get a sense of the market today?

What do you see as the future opportunities for writers in this genre?

As each team presents its combined book/market report, they should tell the class what's happening in that particular category and what opportunities will exist in the forseeable future; how the book they've been reading serves as an example of its genre; plus any tips, tricks, and hints they've picked up and want to pass on to the rest of us.
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