



CRWT 2301: Introduction to Creative Writing

Spring 2024	Carmon Brandow
Section 005	Email: carmon.brandow@utdallas.edu
Tuesday & Thursday 11:30 am – 12:45 pm	Office Hours: By appointment (virtual or in-person)
Class Location: PHY 1.103	I will be in the office on Tuesdays and Thursdays (most days) from 9 am – 9:45 am.

*Keep in mind the syllabus is subject to change at any time throughout the semester

Course Description

CRWT 2301 will focus on the fundamental principles and techniques of creative writing relating to fiction and nonfiction. Students will explore the creative process, develop their writing skills, and engage in constructive critique within a supportive workshop environment. Through readings, discussions, and writing exercises, students will gain a deeper understanding of the elements of creative writing as they cultivate and develop their own voice and style.

Throughout the semester, we will analyze short stories, literary essays, and some novel chapters, so please be prepared to read extensively during this course.

Core Objectives for Intro to Creative Writing

- **Communication skills** – Students will demonstrate effective written, oral, and visual communication through writing and discussing assigned readings, and through talking about their own writing in a creative workshop format.
- **Critical thinking skills** – Students will engage in creative and/or innovative thinking through analysis of the components that build interesting stories, poems, and essays. Students will also create and share their own creative works in class.
- **Teamwork** – Students will engage in weekly creative writing assignments and readings. They will discuss aspects of each other’s work and interpretations of the text in a supportive, nurturing environment.
- **Personal responsibility** – Students will apply ethical principles for writing their own original creative work.

Class Materials

The instructor may provide class materials to all students registered for this course in order to supplement the classroom experience. These materials may be downloaded during the course; however, these materials are for registered students' use only. Classroom materials may not be reproduced, shared, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student Accessibility accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Other Required Materials:

- Commonplace Book (notebook)
- Pen / Pencil
- Writing software
- Access to a computer and the internet (required)

Required Reading Materials

Some reading materials will be provided by the instructor either online via PDF or by hand. Students are responsible for completing the assigned reading before class and arriving prepared to discuss the texts.

Required Texts:

- *Character: The Art of Role and Cast Design for Page, Stage, and Screen* by Robert McKee (ISBN: 978-1455591954)
- *Description & Setting: Techniques and Exercises for Crafting a Believable World of People, Places, and Events (Write Great Fiction)* by Ron Rozelle (ISBN: 978-1582973272)
- *Stein On Writing: A Master Editor of Some of the Most Successful Writers of Our Century Shares His Craft Techniques and* by Sol Stein (ISBN: 978-0312254216)

Spring 2024 Assignments and Academic Calendar

Week 1	<i>Tues, 01/16</i>	Introduction to the Course Course syllabus and class expectations
	<i>Thurs, 01/18</i>	The Creative Process The basics of narrative: plot, characters, setting, dialogue, etc. Setting up the Commonplace Book Reading: “The Art of Fiction” by Henry James
	Due on eLearning	Discussion Post: Icebreaker – Thursday, Jan. 18 Response to Peers – Sunday, Jan. 21 Due in Class: Commonplace Book – Thursday, Jan. 18 **Sunday due dates refer to the following week listed. For example, “Response to Peers” in Week 1 is due Sunday, January 21.**
Week 2	<i>Tue, 01/23</i>	Plot & Character Reading: “The Art of Fiction” by Henry James Reading: McKee - Chapters 1 & 2
	<i>Thurs, 01/25</i>	Plot & Character Reading: McKee – Chapters 1 & 2 Reading: “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson
	Due on eLearning	Discussion Post: Plot/Character Exercise – Thursday, Jan. 25 Response to Peers – Sunday, Jan. 28
Week 3	<i>Tues, 01/30</i>	Character Dimension Reading: McKee – Chapters 9 & 10 Reading: “A Temporary Matter” by Jhumpa Lahiri
	<i>Thurs, 02/01</i>	Character Dimension Reading: McKee – Chapters 9 & 10 Reading: Selected Excerpts TBD
	Due on eLearning	Discussion Post: Plot/Character Exercise – Thursday, Feb. 1 Response to Peers – Sunday, Feb. 4

Week 4	<i>Tues, 02/06</i>	Setting Reading: Rozelle – Chapter 7 Reading: "The Things They Carried" by Tim O'Brien
	<i>Thurs, 02/08</i>	Setting & Tension Reading: McKee – Chapter 7 Reading: "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" by Joyce Carol Oates
	Due on eLearning	Discussion Post: Setting Exercise – Thursday Response to Peers – Sunday
Week 5	<i>Tues, 02/13</i>	Tension Reading: Stein – Chapters 8, 9, & 10 Reading: "Blood Child" by Octavia Butler
	<i>Thurs, 02/15</i>	Dialogue Reading: Stein, Chapter 11 Reading: "Hills Like White Elephants" by Ernest Hemingway
	Due on eLearning	Discussion Post: Dialogue Exercise – Thursday Response to Peers – Sunday
Week 6	<i>Tues, 02/20</i>	Imagery & Symbolism Reading: Rozelle – Chapters 4 & 5 Reading: "Story of an Hour" by Kate Chopin
	<i>Thurs, 02/22</i>	Imagery & Symbolism Reading: Rozelle – Chapters 4 & 5 Reading: "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gillman
	Due on eLearning	Discussion Post: Show Don't Tell Exercise – Thursday Response to Peers – Sunday
Week 7	<i>Tues, 02/27</i>	Perspective Reading: McKee – Chapters 4 & 5 Reading: "The Cask of Amontillado" by Edgar Allan Poe

	<i>Thurs, 02/29</i>	<p>Perspective</p> <p>Reading: McKee – Chapters 4 & 5 Reading: “The Cask of Amontillado” by Edgar Allan Poe</p>
	Due on eLearning	Assignment: Reading Reflection / Commonplace Book (Midterm) – Due Sunday, Mar. 3
Week 8	<i>Tues, 03/05</i>	<p>The Nonfiction Narrative</p> <p>Reading: Stein – Chapters 24 & 25 Reading: “No Name Woman” by Maxine Hong Kingston</p>
	<i>Thurs, 03/07</i>	<p>The Nonfiction Narrative</p> <p>Reading: Stein – Chapters 24 & 25 Reading: “Death of a Moth” by Virginia Woolf</p>
	Due on eLearning	Assignment: Nonfiction Narrative: Draft – Due Sunday, Mar. 17 Midterm Grades
Mar. 11 – Mar. 15		Spring Break – No Classes
Week 9	<i>Tues, 03/19</i>	<p>The Nonfiction Narrative: Peer Review</p> <p>Reading: Stein – Chapters 26 & 27</p> <p>In-Class Peer Review</p>
	<i>Thurs, 03/21</i>	The Nonfiction Narrative: Revision
	Due on eLearning	Assignment: Peer Review – Thursday, Mar. 21 Assignment: Nonfiction Narrative: Final – Due Sunday, Mar. 24
Week 10	<i>Tues, 03/26</i>	<p>Beginnings & Endings</p> <p>Reading: Stein – Chapter 2 Reading: TBD</p>
	<i>Thurs, 03/28</i>	<p>Beginnings & Endings</p> <p>Reading: Stein – Chapter 2 Reading: TBD</p>

	Due on eLearning	Assignment: Final Workshop Submission – Due Sunday, Mar. 31
Week 11	<i>Tues, 04/02</i>	Poetry – A Quick Peek Reading: TBD
	<i>Thurs, 04/04</i>	Workshop Guidelines
	Due on eLearning	Assignment: Reading Reflection / Commonplace Book (Final) – Due Sunday, Apr. 7
Week 12	<i>Tues, 04/09</i>	Workshop
	<i>Thurs, 04/11</i>	Workshop
	Due on eLearning	Assignment: Workshop Letters (in class)
Week 13	<i>Tues, 04/16</i>	Workshop
	<i>Thurs, 04/18</i>	Workshop
	Due on eLearning	Assignment: Workshop Letters (in class)
Week 14	<i>Tues, 04/23</i>	Workshop
	<i>Thurs, 04/25</i>	Workshop
	Due on eLearning	Assignment: Workshop Letters (in class)
Week 15	<i>Tues, 04/30</i>	Workshop
	<i>Thurs, 05/02</i>	Workshop
	Due on eLearning	Assignment: Workshop Letters (in class) Assignment: Final Portfolio – Due Sunday, May 5

GRADING

Final Grade Levels

A+	970-1000	A	930-969.9	A-	900-929.9
B+	870-899.9	B	830-869.9	B-	800-829.9
C+	770-799.9	C	730-769.9	C-	700-729.9
D+	670-699.9	D	630-669.9	D-	600-629.9
F	599.9 and under				

Detailed Breakdown of Assignments

Assignment	Number of Graded Items	Point Value	Total Points
Major Assignments (40%)			
Nonfiction Narrative	1	150	150
Final Portfolio	1	250	250
Process (25%)			
Workshop Submission	1	50	50
Workshop Participation	1	50	50
Nonfiction Narrative Draft	1	50	50
Peer Review	2	25	50
Reading Journal	2	25	50
Discussion Post Exercises (25%)	5	50	250
Attendance & Participation (10%)	1	100	100
Total			1000

I will make use of the +/- system in grading as stipulated by the current University of Texas at Dallas Undergraduate Catalog.

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

You must submit all major assignments to Turnitin.com by the deadline.

Discussion Board: Posts and Responses

Each week, you will be responsible for participating in a writing exercise and a discussion about the writing exercise. Your initial discussion post (writing exercise) will be due on Thursday at 11:58 pm. Please read the assignment details for the week's discussion to earn full credit for your work. Each exercise (initial post) will require a word count between 300 (minimum) to 400 (maximum) words per submission. Points will be deducted if you write too little or too much.

Your responses to peers will be due on the first Sunday following your initial post. Feel free to respond to as many of your peers as you would like, but you must respond to at least two. If a post already has two responses, please find another post that doesn't have as many. The two graded responses should be 2-3 paragraphs in length (150+ words) and attempt to acknowledge and extend your peers' ideas in addition to inviting further conversation about the concept being discussed for the week. Please remain mindful and respectful of varying ideas and beliefs when responding to peers and avoid pointing out any mistakes in writing conventions. These posts are

intended to deepen your understanding of craft and synthesize relevant information through the act of writing. You are encouraged to reference weekly readings in addition to other supporting scholarly work to back up any and all claims. Be certain to cite all your source material. Please review the rubric in eLearning for more information.

Nonfiction Narrative

Format: MLA 9th ed. (12-point Times New Roman, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, etc.)

Length: 750–1000 words

Submitted to: Turnitin (under Assignments)

Due: **Sunday, March 24 by 11:58 pm**

For this assignment, you will write a nonfiction narrative based on a real-life experience or event that is interesting and meaningful to you. By applying the fiction-writing techniques and concepts discussed throughout the course, you will produce an original work that captures your own distinctive style and demonstrates your knowledge of narrative structure. Be certain to read the full assignment details and directions in “Assignments.”

Workshop Submission

Format: MLA 9th ed. (12-point Times New Roman, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, etc.)

Length: 5-10 pages

Submitted to: Turnitin (under Assignments) & Discussion Board (copy & paste)

Due: **Sunday, March 31 by 11:58 pm**

For this assignment, you will submit an original work of fiction or creative nonfiction. Stories can be fully rounded, excerpted from an ongoing project, or the beginning pages of a new project. Please keep in mind that any excerpts need to be given a brief synopsis to place the reader at the point where your work is starting. Do not deviate from the page limitations. This assignment will be submitted to both the discussion board and Turnitin. Be certain to read the full assignment details on eLearning.

Workshop Letters (to be turned in via the Discussion Board)

Format: Single-spaced, (12-point Times New Roman, 1-inch margins, etc.)

Length: 300-word minimum. No more than 1 page

Submitted to: Printed copy to classmates; digital copy to Final Portfolio

Due: **Hard copy due on the day of the workshop; digital copy due with Final Portfolio, Sunday, May 5 by 11:58 pm**

Students are expected to write a one-page letter for each classmate, responding to their peers’ workshop submission. A hard copy of the letter must be brought to class on the day of the peers’ workshop. The letter will also be included in the final portfolio. Students will be asked to share their responses in class. The protocol for workshop will be addressed more extensively in class during Week 11.

Guide for Workshop Letters:

1. Summarize (2-3 sentences): The summary should be succinct and include the basics of narrative writing. What meaning is being conveyed by the writer or the work?
2. Notice: What is notable about the writing piece? Do any particular elements of craft stand out and distinguish the writing or the writer? How does the perspective chosen by the writer enhance the story?
3. Strengths and Suggestions: What are the strengths of the work on a craft level? How are dialogue, characterization, setting, or description working well? What questions or suggestions do you have for the writer? What are some areas that could be considered more closely for revision? In what ways could the craft elements be tightened, honed, or clarified?

Final Portfolio

Format: MLA 9th ed. (12-point Times New Roman, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, etc.)

Length: TBD

Submitted to: TBD

Due: Sunday, May 5 by 11:58 pm

This will include but not limited to the following:

- A book cover and finding aid
- One workshop revision
- One expanded story from the writing exercises over the course of the semester (minimum 500 words)
- One reflection essay (no more than 1000 words)
- 20 workshop letters
- Two annotated drafts and notes for revision (nonfiction and final)
- Selections from Commonplace Book

Your portfolios should include two pieces you consider finished. One final draft must be radically revised from its first introduction in our workshop. Radical revision can include major changes to perspective, character, setting, genre, plot, and tone. *If you do not revise robustly, your grade will reflect this.*

Your reflective essay should discuss craft and philosophical concerns you've negotiated in your writing over the course of this semester. How do you feel your writing, overall, has changed? You should also use this space to discuss the decisions you made in the revising process. What led you to make the decisions you did as you revised? How did these decisions strengthen the work? How did comments from the professor and peers influence your choices in your second drafts?

COURSE POLICIES

All submissions must be your individual original work for this section, class, and semester. You may not submit work that you have written for other classes (called “self-plagiarism”). You may not use any writing service, AI writers, grammar checkers (including Grammarly), or translators (including GoogleTranslate) without your instructor’s written permission for each assignment.

You may not submit work from another person. Original work is proven through the writing process: invention, drafts, revisions, and document history as well as a consistent tone in a student’s writing.

Attendance

Because each class period consists of a mixture of class discussion, group work, and free writing, your thoughtful, attentive, and active participation is essential (and will form a portion of your grade). If you sleep, engage in non-class-related activities, or interfere with your classmates' ability to learn, you will be counted absent for that day. Be on time - class starts promptly. Leaving early will count as an absence.

Each student is allowed three (3) absences, no questions asked. Save them for when you really need them. Your final grade will suffer a 4% reduction for each absence you accumulate over three (e.g., 7 absences = 12% total reduction). *You are responsible for your attendance. You must make sure you sign the roll sheet and/or notify me if you arrive late and after I have taken roll.* Please keep in mind that lack of attendance will also reflect on your participation grade. Extenuating circumstances will be treated on a case-by-case basis and require supporting documentation.

Punctuality

Persistent tardiness to class is disrespectful to both your instructor and your peers. Continually arriving late to class will affect your participation grade in the course. Three late arrivals will result in one absence for the course, and I will consider you absent if you arrive more than 10 minutes late to class.

Class Participation

Regular class participation is expected regardless of class modality. Students who fail to participate in class regularly are inviting scholastic difficulty. A portion of the grade for this course is directly tied to your participation in this class. It also includes engaging in group or other activities during class that solicit your feedback on homework assignments, readings, or materials covered in the lectures (and/or labs). Class participation is documented by faculty. Successful participation is defined as consistently adhering to university requirements, as presented in this syllabus. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

Your success in this course is a function of your level of engagement, your preparation for class, and your behavior in the classroom. I am interested in the quality of your remarks rather than the quantity. Please use your analysis of the readings, your daily/weekly assignments, and prior research and/or study when responding orally in class, and please be prepared to back up any

points you make. Points will be deducted from your participation grade if you are absent.

Participation in this course does not include doing work unrelated to this course during class, sleeping in class, or using computers or other personal electronic devices for personal messaging, research, or entertainment.

Class Recordings

Students are expected to follow appropriate University policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures. Unless the Office of Student AccessAbility has approved the student to record the instruction, students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course. Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

Late Work

All drafts, including final, must be submitted when and as required in order to successfully complete this course. **Late assignments will not be accepted for credit.** Major assignments (Nonfiction Final) will be accepted up to one week late with a penalty of 10% applied to the grade of the essay. After one week, the assignment will receive a grade of zero.

Personal Communication Devices

Turn off all cell phones, music players (including headphones), and other personal communication devices before the start of class. Do not use such devices during class. Laptops and tablets may be brought to class but must remain stowed away until specifically requested or approved. **You will lose 10 participation points for each violation.**

Academic Integrity

Students in CRWT 2301 are expected to maintain a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. It is critically important you produce original written work and document all sources accurately using MLA format.

Please consult the following websites addressing academic integrity as well as what constitutes cheating at UTD:

- <https://conduct.utdallas.edu>
- <https://conduct.utdallas.edu/students>
- <https://conduct.utdallas.edu/policies>
- <https://conduct.utdallas.edu/integrity>
- <https://policy.utdallas.edu/utdsp5003>

Ask your instructor should you become concerned that you are possibly committing an act of scholastic dishonesty. UTD will hold you accountable regardless of whether or not you intended to plagiarize your paper.

CRWT 2301 students suspected of plagiarism or any other act of scholastic dishonesty are

subject to disciplinary proceedings. Should the Judicial Affairs Officer find a student responsible, then he or she will typically receive a “0” on the assignment in question.

Sharing Confidential Information

Students considering sharing personal information in email, in person, or within assignments or exams should be aware that faculty members and teaching/research assistants are required by UT Dallas policy to report information about sexual misconduct to the UT Dallas Title IX Coordinator. Per university policy, faculty have been informed that they must identify the student to the UT Dallas Title IX Coordinator. Students who wish to have confidential discussions of incidents related to sexual harassment or sexual misconduct should contact the Student Counseling Center (972-883-2527 or after hours 972-UTD-TALK or 972-883-8255), the Women's Center (972-883-8255), a health care provider in the Student Health Center (972-883-2747), a clergy person (or other legally recognized religious advisor) of their choice, or an off-campus resource (i.e., rape crisis center, doctor, psychologist). Students who are sexually assaulted, harassed, or victims of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, or stalking, are encouraged to directly report these incidents to the UT Dallas Police Department at 972-883-2222 or to the Title IX Coordinator at 972-883-2218. Additional information and resources may be found at <http://www.utdallas.edu/oiec/title-ix/resources>.

Comet Creed

This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:

“As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”

University Policies

Please review the university policies at <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>.

The Writing Center

Located in McDermott Library (MC 1.310), the UT Dallas Writing Center is a free resource for students seeking help with a writing assignment. Tutors are available to work with you on your assignment during all stages of the writing process.

The UTD Writing Center philosophy stems from the peer-to-peer model of collaborative learning. Students and Peer Leaders engage in one-on-one conversations about their work and Peer Leaders will lead sessions by asking open-ended, engaging questions which allow the student to take ownership of their own writing. The Writing Center aims to provide direct, honest feedback to students in each tutoring session. The main goal of the Writing Center is to help the writer, not just the piece of writing.

Visit the Student Success Center website for the most up-to-date information and to schedule appointments: <https://studentsuccess.utdallas.edu/programs/writing-center/>

I have read and understood the policies for CRWT 2301. I agree to comply with the policies for the Spring 2024 semester. I realize that failure to comply with these policies will result in a reduced grade for the course.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name (print): _____

UTD e-mail address: _____