

Course Syllabus
Introductory Creative Writing
University of Texas at Dallas
Fall 2012

Instructor: Andra Yount

Class: CRWT 2301

Section: 002

Classroom/Time: JO 3.908 TR 4:00-5:15 p.m.

Email address: andrayount@utdallas.edu

Office hours: TR 3:00-4:00 p.m. or by appointment

Course Description: (3 semester hours) An introduction to creative writing, the course will investigate and instruct students in the elementary approach to the process of creating original prose, poetry, and/or dramatic format works. The class will focus on a minimum of two genres and will cover both experimental and traditional forms. Prerequisite: RHET 1302.

CRWT 2301 is an introduction to creative writing that will guide students through the process of writing original poetry, prose, and drama. The goal of this course is to increase students' awareness and competence as writers and to allow for practice and appreciation of various creative writing forms. Students will first engage in reading and writing literary criticism, taking into account the techniques, styles, and forms of working writers. Janet Burroway identifies five areas of imaginative writing: image, voice, character, setting, and story. Each of these areas of emphasis will inform student writing, and classroom activities from various fields may equip students with tools for draft development. In this course, students should attempt to balance "open and closed modes" of working as described by actor/writer John Cleese in a 1991 speech on creativity (citing psychologist Donald MacKinnon)¹.

Students will attempt a project in each of the three listed genres and revise two of them after completing the work shopping process. They will also become familiar with the business side of creative writing by reading segments of the most recent version of the *Writer's Market* and submitting a letter of inquiry and a "personal best" work to a current publication.

Required Textbooks and Materials:

Burroway, Janet. *Imaginative Writing: The Elements of Craft*. 3rd ed. Penguin Publishers, 2010.

ISBN-10: 0205750354

ISBN-13: 978-0205750351

Pinsky, Robert. *The Sounds of Poetry: A Brief Guide*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 1998.

ISBN-10: 0374526176

¹ "John Cleese on Creativity." *Youtube.com*. 23 Mar 2012. Web. 15 Jul 2012.
<www.youtube.com/watch?v=VShmtsLhkQg>.

ISBN-13: 978-0374526177

Access to E-learning for referencing and downloading supplemental materials

Access to a rhyming dictionary and traditional dictionary/thesaurus

Access to an updated hard copy or online knowledge of the *Writer's Market* (available in McDermott library)

Students are responsible for bringing all textbooks, readings, and drafts to class each day. Print copies of E-learning handouts for class use as computers will not be used in the classroom except when applicable for visual examples on select class days.

Learning Outcomes: Upon successfully completing this course, the student will be able to:

1. Analyze the writings of others in the genres of poetry, fiction, and stage play.
2. Investigate and demonstrate an understanding of theories of writing in the various genres.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of a basic vocabulary for these genres.
4. Apply the techniques of well-known writers to the student's own creative writing.
5. Write open and closed forms of poetry and demonstrate the ability to go through the process of editing and revising the poetry
6. Write a piece of fiction of sufficient length to develop plot, character, setting, and theme with a coherent point of view, and demonstrate the ability to go through the process of editing and revising the piece
7. Write a dramatic scene and demonstrate the ability to go through the process of editing and revising drama for stage
8. Use the *Writer's Market* or a similar source to locate appropriate markets for original writings.
9. Write and send an appropriate letter of inquiry in an effort to secure publication of writing.

Grading Policy & Procedures: Final grades will be determined by the following percentage values:

Workshopping/In-class Work: 20%

*includes a literary analysis presentation and possible quizzes

Project #1 Draft 1 (Poems): 15%

Project #2 Draft 1 (Fiction): 15%

Project #3 Draft 1 (Drama): 15%

Submission to Publication: 5%

Portfolio: 30%

(one revised poem and one revised short story or drama scene with all drafts, including all other course work: all first drafts with peer/instructor comments, graded literary analysis, & submission letter for publication—exact order TBA in assignment sheet on E-learning)

100% Completion Policy: Please note that all students must attempt *all* assignments in order to pass the course. For example, a student may not neglect turning in the drama

project and still receive a B average if all else is superb. This class relies heavily on student participation, and therefore only committed students should pass the course.

Assignments:

Literary Analysis Presentation

Students will complete one short literary analysis presentation and write-up (2 pages) of representative genres and writers. An assignment sheet with details will be available on E-learning. This project will require some research and discussion.

Creative Projects

Each student will complete a first draft for 3 writing projects, one for each of 3 genres: poetry (2 poems, working in 2 different poetic traditions), short story (one draft at 8-15 pages), and a dramatic scene meant for inclusion in a full-length play or a one-act (8-25 pages). These projects will undergo peer evaluation and work shopping, and the revisions will be submitted at semester's end in a portfolio. Each student will have at least 2 projects work-shopped in class, and therefore 2 revisions will be due in the portfolio. There should be a significant difference between the first and second drafts. Students may choose which 2 projects that they want to have peer reviewed.

Submission to Publication

Students will consult the *Writer's Market* and other possible sources for publication possibilities for their individual work. At semester's end, each student must submit a query letter and receipt (for online or hard copy submission depending on the situation) proving that he or she has made an attempt to polish at least one project to publishable quality. This assignment is meant to show students' awareness of the practical side of the creative writing process and to motivate students to write for a target audience outside of themselves or their classmates.

Portfolio

Two of the three required creative writing projects will be work shopped (to be determined once the class is underway). Students should submit both revised drafts along with all original drafts in a final portfolio, including comments from peers and the instructor and all other course work, including the graded literary analysis write-up and submission letter/receipt for the submission to publication. A checklist with instructions will be provided mid-semester in E-learning.

Late Work:

No late work will be accepted—no exceptions. **No emailed work will be accepted. An electronic copy of your work must be submitted through the drop boxes on elearning, and stapled hard copies (quantity TBA) must be submitted in class for peer review 1 week prior to the due date listed on the final schedule.**

Grading Scale:

(I will make use of the +/- system in grading as stipulated by the University of Texas at Dallas Undergraduate Catalogue)

Grade Scale:

97-100 = A+ (4.00)
 94-96 = A (4.00)
 90-93 = A- (3.67)
 87-89 = B+ (3.33)
 84-86 = B (3.00)
 80-83 = B- (2.67)
 77-79 = C+ (2.33)
 74-76 = C (2.00)
 70-73 = C- (1.67)
 67-69 = D+ (1.33)
 64-66 = D (1.00)
 60-63 = D- (.67)
 59 & below = F (0.00)

A “C” paper or work is considered average; all the requirements are met. A “B” must be above average and an “A” must be exceptional.

Grammar, content, and format are considered. Therefore, mastery of basic grammar is expected and will play a major part in students’ success. Attention to appropriate and consistent point of view, voice, tone, use of figurative devices, characterization, and plot development will also be carefully considered in the grading process.

E-learning: Please check the E-learning course shell regularly for updates, assignment sheets, class notes, and supplemental readings (particularly for the drama unit). Students are individually responsible for checking this site at least twice each week (preferably on the evening following each class meeting).

Scholastic Integrity: Plagiarism or collusion will not be tolerated and will result in a failing grade. **Students should only submit *new*, original work, which means that they should not have submitted the work for another workshop or college course before at UT Dallas or elsewhere.**

Attendance Policy: Attendance is particularly important in a workshop class because the coursework is collaborative and group-based to a certain extent. Therefore, students should make an effort to attend *every* meeting. Attendance directly affects the final grade earned. Because this class meets twice (2x) per week, if any student misses **more than 4 classes (2 weeks)**, his or her final grade will suffer 1 letter grade deduction for each additional absence. Please note that it is the student’s responsibility to drop the course. Drop the course if it becomes clear that you will not pass otherwise.

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**

tardies will result in one unexcused absence for the course; I will consider you absent if you arrive more than 15 minutes late to class.

Class Conduct: Please turn off cell phones when in class and be respectful of others' opinions. Also, please do not obviously write about someone else in the class as this can lead to embarrassment. As a general rule, creative writing may be based on real events and people, but the characters and narrators should take on lives of their own and ultimately become fictional for the purposes of this course.

No computers, tablets, or other media will be allowed in the classroom as a general rule except when specifically indicated by the instructor.

Work shopping/Course Structure:

Literary Theory, Writing Concepts, and Lecture

The first part of each unit will consist primarily of lectures and participation-based in-class activities introducing concepts and tools for producing creative writing in each genre. Students should expect to read heavily during this time and to prepare a literary analysis presentation on various creative writing forms and representative established writers. An assignment sheet will be provided on E-learning.

Work shopping

The bulk of this course will consist of the writing component where student work will be work shopped by peers and the instructor. **Students will be expected to submit an electronic copy of each draft in the appropriate drop box on E-learning and bring hard copies for each group member one week before the workshop date. This means 1 week before the date indicated for work shopping on the final course schedule.** A schedule will be decided during the first week of classes, and then students will be expected to follow it. Students should expect to write a total of about 40 pages of fiction and drama work and revisions of at least 2 poems. Common sense and etiquette are expected.

Publication and Writer's Market

A final component of the course will focus on the business side of the creative writing process, where students will be required to submit (by the deadline listed on the course calendar) proof that they have researched possible publications for their individual creative endeavors and that they have submitted one polished draft. The idea behind this requirement is not to make students feel pressured to be perfect but rather to facilitate professionalism and allow students to demonstrate willingness to take the risk of showing their work to an objective audience.

Portfolio

All course work, including a second (and hopefully polished) draft of 2 of the 3 required writing projects, will be due at semester's end in lieu of a traditional final exam. A checklist and assignment sheet will be available on E-learning.

Course Calendar

UNITS OF STUDY (& Learning Outcomes)

LITERARY CRITICISM: POETRY, FICTION, OR DRAMA

LOs:1,2,3

WORKSHOP CREATIVE PROJECT #1: POETRY

LOs: 2,4,5,6,7,8,9

WORKSHOP CREATIVE PROJECT #2: FICTION

LOs: 2,4,5,6,7,8,9

WORKSHOP CREATIVE PROJECT #3: DRAMA

LOs: 2,4,5,6,7,8,9

PUBLICATION: WRITER'S MARKET

LOs: 11,12

TENTATIVE DAY-BY-DAY CALENDAR

*subject to change at the instructor's discretion—specific reading assignments will be added on our first day of class and workshop days may change depending on students' genre preferences

T Aug 28	Introduction to course Syllabus/class expectations Scheduling and Taking Care of Business Creativity: Open and Closed Modes, Play, and Planning
R Aug 30	Poetry Introduction, Concepts, & Strategies Vocabulary (see E-learning) Concepts: Image, Voice Poetry: Structured vs. free verse poems HW: <i>Burroway</i> , Poetry chapter <i>Pinsky</i> , chapters I-II
T Sept 4	Poetry HW: <i>Pinsky</i> , chapters III-IV
R Sept 6	Poetry HW: <i>Pinsky</i> , chapter V
T Sept 11	Poetry Project Workshop Group 1
R Sept 13	Poetry Project Workshop Group 2

T Sept 18	Poetry Project Workshop Group 3 *poetry projects due for all students not work shopping poetry
R Sept 20	Poetry Wrap-Up
T Sept 25	Fiction Introduction, Concepts, & Strategies Concepts: Character, Setting HW: <i>Burroway</i> , chapter on Fiction
R Sept 27	Fiction Day 2 Readings TBA (<i>Burroway</i> book + supplements)
T Oct 2	Fiction Project Workshop Group 1
R Oct 4	Fiction Project Workshop Group 2
T Oct 9	Fiction Project Workshop Group 3 *fiction projects due for all students not work shopping fiction
R Oct 11	Fiction Wrap Up
T Oct 16	Drama Introduction, Concepts, and Strategies Concept: Story HW: <i>Burroway</i> , chapters on Story, Drama
R Oct 18	Scenes from successful stage productions Stage vs. Screenplay HW: readings TBA
T Oct 23	Drama Day 3
R Oct 25	Drama Workshop Group 1 Day 1
T Oct 30	Drama Workshop Group 1 Day 2
R Nov 1	Drama Workshop Group 2 Day 1
T Nov 6	Drama Workshop Group 2 Day 2
R Nov 8	Drama Workshop Group 3 Day 1
T Nov 13	Drama Workshop Group 3 Day 2 *drama projects due for all students not work shopping drama
R Nov 15	Drama Wrap Up HW: read drama supplements (E-learning)

T Nov 20	Screenwriting and Adaptation Storyboarding Considerations for Writing for the Camera
R Nov 22	Thanksgiving—NO CLASS
T Nov 27	Writer's Market Contests, literary magazines, and other possibilities for future publication How to write a query letter
R Nov 29	Advice from published writers Sample letters Alternative formats in creative writing
T Dec 4	Mandatory Conferences Revise drafts for portfolio
R Dec 6	Mandatory Conferences Revise drafts for portfolio
Final Exam Day	Portfolio Due Hard copies of all drafts due in an organized folder

University Policies

Student Conduct and Discipline

The University of Texas System and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the UTD publication, A to Z Guide, which is provided to all registered students each academic year.

UTD administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the Rules and Regulations, Board of Regents, The University of Texas System, Part 1, Chapter VI, Section 3, and in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities of the university's Handbook of Operating Procedures. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SU 1.602, 972/883-6391).

A student at the university neither loses the rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents' Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to

discipline for violating the standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

Academic Integrity

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work.

Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, statements, acts or omissions related to applications for enrollment or the award of a degree, and/or the submission as one's own work or material that is not one's own. As a general rule, scholastic dishonesty involves one of the following acts: cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic records. Students suspected of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism (see general catalog for details). This course will use the resources of turnitin.com, which searches the web for possible plagiarism and is over 90% effective.

Email Use

UTD recognizes the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. The university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student's UTD email address and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. This allows the university to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of all individual corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. UTD furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The Department of Information Resources at UTD provides a method for students to have their UTD mail forwarded to other accounts.

Withdrawal from Class

The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, I cannot drop or withdraw any student. You must do the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of **F** in a course if you choose not to attend the class once you are enrolled.

Student Grievance Procedures

Procedures for student grievances are found in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities, of the university's Handbook of Operating Procedures.

In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding grades, evaluations, or other fulfillments of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the instructor, supervisor, administrator, or committee with whom the grievance originates (hereafter called “the respondent”). Individual faculty members retain primary responsibility for assigning grades and evaluations. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the grievance must be submitted in writing to the respondent with a copy of the respondent's School Dean. If the matter is not resolved by the written response provided by the respondent, the student may submit a written appeal to the School Dean. If the grievance is not resolved by the School Dean's decision, the student may make a written appeal to the Dean of Graduate or Undergraduate Education, and the dean will appoint and convene an Academic Appeals Panel. The decision of the Academic Appeals Panel is final. The results of the academic appeals process will be distributed to all involved parties.

Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations.

Incomplete Grades

Incomplete grades will be granted only for work unavoidably missed at the semester's end and only if 70% of the course work has been completed. An incomplete grade must be resolved within eight (8) weeks from the first day of the subsequent long semester. If the required work to complete the course and to remove the incomplete grade is not submitted by the specified deadline, the incomplete grade is changed automatically to a grade of **F**.

*There should be no incompletes for the 5-week summer session except in cases where the last essay/week cannot be completed due to extreme circumstances

Disability Services

The goal of Disability Services is to provide students with disabilities educational opportunities equal to those of their non-disabled peers. Disability Services is located in room 1.610 in the Student Union. Office hours are Monday and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The contact information for the Office of Disability Services is:

The University of Texas at Dallas, SU 22
PO Box 830688
Richardson, Texas 75083-0688
(972) 883-2098 (voice or TTY)

Essentially, the law requires that colleges and universities make those reasonable adjustments necessary to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability. For example, it may be necessary to remove classroom prohibitions against tape recorders or animals

(in the case of dog guides) for students who are blind. Occasionally an assignment requirement may be substituted (for example, a research paper versus an oral presentation for a student who is hearing impaired). Classes enrolled students with mobility impairments may have to be rescheduled in accessible facilities. The college or university may need to provide special services such as registration, note-taking, or mobility assistance.

It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her professors of the need for such an accommodation. Disability Services provides students with letters to present to faculty members to verify that the student has a disability and needs accommodations. Individuals requiring special accommodation should contact the professor after class or during office hours.

Religious Holy Days

UTD will excuse a student from class or other required activities for the travel to and observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20, Tax Code, Texas Code Annotated.

The student is encouraged to notify the instructor or activity sponsor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment. The student, so excused, will be allowed to take the exam or complete the assignment within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment.

If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence [i.e., for the purpose of observing a religious holy day] or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the chief executive officer of the institution, or his or her designee. The chief executive officer or designee must take into account the legislative intent of TEC 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the chief executive officer or designee.

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

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name (print): _____

UT Dallas e-mail address: _____