

**Chaminade University
EN 302, Fiction Writing
Spring Evening Term, 2013
Instructor, James Kraus**

Note: This course uses a site called “Edwebs Moodle,” rather than eCollege. Students interested in taking the course should email the instructor for an enrollment key after creating an account on this system.

Course url: <http://www.edwebs.activemoodle.com/course/view.php?id=135> (To open new account, click on “Create new account.”)

Instructor contact information: jkraus@chaminade.edu, ph. 808-735-4877
Mail: 3140 Waiialae Ave., Honolulu, HI 96816, Henry Hall 206-d.

Humanities Division Front Desk: ph. 808-735-4827

Course Pre-requisite: EN 102, Expository Writing

Technical Requirements: Must have successfully opened account on course web site. (This should ideally be done before officially registering for the course.) Email instructor for enrolment key. Also, must be able to view “Films on Demand” via Chaminade Library Web site. To test this, go to the following to this url <http://www.chaminade.edu/library/> then click on the “Films” tab and enter “The Story of English” in the search field. If logging on from off-campus, you will need your Chaminade ID and password.

The course web site is mobile-accessible; however, access via personal computer or tablet (iPad or equivalent) is required for full participation in the course.

Technical Support: Contact instructor first with all technical problems.

Proctored final exam is required.

Course Description

This course in fiction writing examines the techniques of the short story and provides practice in writing short fictional prose. The course provides opportunity for students to explore their motives for writing and to experiment with their writing styles. Participants in this online course keep journals and post responses to a sequence of writing prompts generally involving short sketches and observations.

Although considerable background reading is required from texts linked to the course web site, a significant part of the course is focused on peer-review workshops that place student writing at the center of discussion. Two major stories will be “workshopped” and revised for submission later in the course.

The objectives of this course address the writing of short from the point of view of the author. By the end of the course the student should have:

- An increased understanding of what motivates people to write fiction
- An increased knowledge of key terminology associated with the writing of fiction
- Knowledge of the “rules” of fiction writing
- An increased awareness of the key stories considered to be a part of any fiction writer's basic knowledge
- A clear understanding of the two ways of developing fictional plots

- An increased knowledge of fictional points of view
- A general knowledge of the market for commercial fiction

This course fulfills the following English Program learning objectives:

- a proficiency in writing through an analytical literary research paper.
- a proficiency in creative writing through an original production of poetry, fiction, or non-fiction.
- the ability to define various literary critical approaches and apply them to given texts.

Texts

Required texts are available free via the course website and Chaminade's Sullivan Library. A selection of preliminary texts follows; others may be added as the course progresses.

- Steven Koch, *The Modern Library's Writer's Workshop: A Guide to the Craft of Fiction*, Random House, 2003. Available free via Chaminade's Sullivan Library eBrary service:
- Margaret Atwood
 - "My Life as a Bat"
 - "Happy Endings"
- Raymond Carver
 - "A Small Good Thing,"
 - "Cathedral"
- Frank Conroy
 - "Please Don't Take My Sunshine Away"
- Nathan Englander
 - "What We Talk about when We Talk about Ann Frank"
- William Faulkner
 - "A Rose for Emily"
- Brete Harte
 - "The Outcasts of Poker Flat"
- Sarah Orne Jewett
 - "The White Heron"
- Edgar Allan Poe
 - "The Cask of Amontillado"
 - "The Purloined Letter"
- Virginia Woolf
 - "An Unwritten Novel"
 - "Kew Gardens"

References

- [Chaminade University Catalog](#)
- [Sullivan Library, Chaminade University](#)
- [Guide to Grammar and Writing](#), from Capital Cities Community-Technical College in Hartford, Connecticut. (Used with permission.)

Requirements

Participation (approximately 20%)

Stories and Analytical Essay (approximately 40%)

Miscellaneous Assignments (approximately 20%)

Final Exam (approximately 20%)

Participation

Discussions: Students are required to post at least two responses to each discussion question or prompt. The first posting must be a direct response to the question itself; follow-up postings should consist of substantive responses to other students' postings. Students should keep in mind that the best responses often culminate in further topical questions.

Timeliness: Students are required to complete course requirements as scheduled on the course web site. Exceptions will be considered if instructor is notified in advance of due date. Instructor reserves the right to penalize students for late work. Students must keep in mind that logging on to the course web site regularly and completing assignments in a timely way constitutes participation.

Stories and Analytical Essay

A portfolio of stories (or a single story) totaling approximately 3000 words along with an analytical essay of 900 words is due at the end of the term. All portfolio stories must have been written, workshopped and revised during the current term.

Quizzes, Workshops and Miscellaneous Assignments

Online quizzes are due throughout the term. They are intended to pace the student through the course's required readings and to provide a useful index of the student's comprehension of course content. Quizzes are administered via WebCT. Submission of quizzes is required; they are automatically graded and should be seen as preparation for the objective section of the final exam, as described below. Miscellaneous assignments may from time to time be added to the course study guide.

Final Exam

A proctored final exam is required. Arrangements for the final exam must be made in consultation with the instructor via the course interface set up for this purpose. In general, the options for taking the final are:

- Via ProctorU. See <<http://www.ProctorU.com>> for more information. An additional charge of approximately \$20-\$25 will apply;
- Face-to-face, coordinated by Chaminade's AEOP office. Reservations are made via Chaminade's eCollege site;
- Individual proctoring may be arranged via the AEOP Office with the instructor's approval.

The final exam consists of four essay questions which will be distributed during the week prior to the exam. The exam is "closed book."

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

All material submitted in fulfillment of course requirements must be written by the registered student during the term.

Work written for other courses is unacceptable in this one. There may be limited exceptions. Approval by the instructor early in the term is required.

While students are strongly encouraged to consult sources outside the required reading of the course, they are also responsible for clearly stating the nature of their sources. Statements of "common knowledge" are generally exempt from this scholarly requirement.

Plagiarism is defined as the presentation of someone else's ideas as your own. Plagiarism in this course will result in a grade of "0" for the assignment and possible failure for the course.

If the instructor suspects plagiarism, the burden of proof of the originality of the writing lies with the student. Evidence of originality would include copies of early drafts of the writing, research and interview notes, as well as the ability to discuss the themes of the writing with the instructor. Students should consider their instructor's vigilance in such matters a normal part of the academic process and should be prepared to present evidence of originality if requested.

Students are strongly advised to save files of early drafts of essays, along with outlines, research notes and other supporting documentation, as the instructor may at any time require that they be presented.

More Things to Keep in Mind

Students must explore navigation of course web site and post questions immediately to the forum set up for this purpose. Students must also check email and the course message system regularly (i.e. ideally, four or five days a week) for announcements. Practice good "netiquette." Read the online book *Netiquette* <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/book/index.html> for details. Students should also keep their profile current, including a photo that could be used to help verify your identity. Unless clearly attributed otherwise, all writings submitted to the course web site must be the original work of the registered student.

Tentative Course Outline -- *Check the course web site frequently for updates. Future weeks of the course outline are subject to revision during the semester by your instructor. If you want to work through course materials ahead of schedule, be sure to check with your instructor first.*

Week 1 -- Beginnings

Journal: Describe your ideal writing scene -- a fictional place in which your best writing emerges.

- **Log in to website for this course**
- **Read Koch, Introduction (pp. xiii - xviii) and Chapter 1 (pp. 4 - 29)**
- **Forums: Introductions, Fictional Haiku**

Week 2 -- Writing and Collaboration

Journal: Write a spontaneous story start that begins with a real-life conflict derived from a difference in cultural values. Begin with the real-life situation, then let your imagination take over.

- **Read Koch, "The Writing Life" (pp. 30 - 55) Story draft due to Workshop 1 interface**
- **Forum: Post edited journal entry to "Journal 1."**

Week 3 -- Organic vs Structured Approaches

Journal: Pick a story from those you have read so far this term, then write a short sketch consisting of two characters arguing about some aspect of the story (or its consequences). Do not use the same character name/s as in the story you read. And -- important!: Your sketch should "stand alone" -- i.e. be clear to readers who have not read the story you started from.

- Read Koch, "Shaping the Story" (pp. 56 - 83)
- Poe, "The Purloined Letter"
- The Story Pyramid
 - Starting with the approach described in "The Story Pyramid" practice on various ways of diagramming two stories: one you have read and one of your own that you are working on.
- Forum: Post edited journal entry to "Journal 2."

Week 4 -- Protagonist and Antagonist

Journal: Write a one-paragraph summary (maximum 10 sentences) of a story (any length) that you might consider writing.

- Read Koch, "Making Characters Live" (pp. 57 - 111)
- Story draft due to Workshop 2 interface
- Poe, "The Black Cat"
- Forum: Post edited journal entry to "Journal 3."

Week 5 -- Setting

Journal: Write a sketch describing one of the most difficult experiences of your childhood.

- Story draft due to Workshop 2 interface
- Stephen Crane, "The Open Boat"
- Virginia Woolf, "Kew Gardens"

Week 6 -- Environmental Concerns

Journal: Visit a public garden and record the sights and sounds you encounter there.

- Film: *Matewan*, directed by John Sayles
- Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wall Paper"
- Forum: Post edited journal entry to "Journal 4."

Week 7 -- Stylistic Matters

Journal: Write a fictional character sketch that begins with a reflection on a physical traits of one of your parents.

- Read Koch, "Inventing Your Style" (pp. 112 - 134)
- Story draft due to Workshop 3 interface

Week 8 -- Psychological Concerns

Journal: Early in the morning, before eating or brushing your teeth, freewrite from a minimum of 20 minutes.

- Read Koch, "The Story of the Self: Fact, Fiction and the Autobiographical Muse" (pp. 135 - 156)
- Brete Harte, "Outcasts of Poker Flat"
- Forum Discussion: Post edited journal entry to "Journal 5."

Week 9-- Vision and Revision

Journal: Pick a story you have read this term and write a brief explanation of how you would tell it from a different point-of-view.

- Read Koch, "Working and Reworking Early Drafts and the Techniques of Revision" (pp. 157 - 178)
- Story draft due to Workshop 4 interface
- James Joyce, "Araby"
- Begin Portfolio Essay

Week 10 -- Closure

Journal: Write a sketch describing a still life, like a dinner table setting or a desk top.

- Read Koch, "Finishing" (pp. 179 - 201) and "Postscript: Writing on the Craft" (pp. 202 - 214)
- Final Portfolio Due
- Final Exam (Monday, December 5, 3 - 5 p.m.)