

Chaminade University

EN 302 / 402, Fiction Writing

Fall Day Semester, 2013

Instructor: James Kraus, jkraus@chaminade.edu

Henry Hall, Room 206-D
Ph. 808-735-4877

Mail: 3140 Waiialae Ave., Honolulu, HI 96816, Henry Hall 206-d.

Office Hours: Tuesday, 9:00 - 10 a.m., 1 - 3 p.m.; Wednesday, 11 a.m. - noon, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. Other times by appointment.

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

Course Pre-requisite: EN 102, Expository Writing

Technical Requirements: Must successfully open account on course web site. 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.

- EN 302/402 web site
 - We will not use eCollege for this course.
 - Go to the following url:
 - <http://edwebs.eduspoke.com/course/view.php?id=152>
 - If you have taken a course via the Edwebs/Moodle system before, you will be able to use the same login.
 - If you are new to the Edwebs system, you will have to set up an account for yourself as part of your initial login.
 - If you don't receive a confirmation email within half an hour or so, send me a message, and I will set up or confirm your account manually through my interface.
 - After you receive confirmation of your account, you will need an enrolment key to sign in to the course.
 - Contact instructor for “Enrolment Key” if needed.

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 fiction 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 short stories
- An increased knowledge of the key terms and concepts associated with the writing of short fiction
- An increased awareness of the key short stories considered to be a part of the fiction writer's basic knowledge
- Knowledge of the "rules" of fiction writing

This course fulfills the following English Program learning objectives:

- a proficiency in writing 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

- Steven Koch, *The Modern Library's Writer's Workshop: A Guide to the Craft of Fiction*, Random House, 2003. Order from Amazon. [Click here.](#)
- Kristiana, Kahakauwila, *This is Paradise*. Available at Chaminade Bookstore.
- Raymond Carver
 - ["A Small Good Thing."](#)
 - ["Cathedral"](#)
- Virginia Woolf
 - ["An Unwritten Novel"](#)
 - ["Kew Gardens"](#)
- Frank Conroy
 - ["Please Don't Take My Sunshine Away"](#)
- See online course outline for additional titles.

Requirements

Participation (approximately 20%)
Stories and Analytical Essay (approximately 40%)
Course Journal (10%)
Miscellaneous Assignments (approximately 20%)
Final Exam (approximately 10%)

Participation

Regular, timely and topical participation in online forums is necessary for success in this course.

Stories and Analytical Essay

A portfolio of stories (or a single story) totaling approximately 3000 words (for EN 402, 5000 words) along with an analytical essay of 900 words (for EN 402, 1200 words) is due at the end of the term. All portfolio stories must have been written and revised during the current term.

Course Journal

Students are required to keep a reading journal, either in conventional pen and ink notebooks or on their computers. Journals should contain free-form, creative responses to required readings, and responses to writing prompts.

The requirement for the journal is a minimum of 30 pages for the term. Students must submit a journal report at the end of the term. Journals may also be checked individually during the 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

The final exam consists of one or more essay questions. A study guide will be distributed during the week prior to the exam. The exam is timed.

Self-assessment and Final Grade

The final grade for the course will be determined in part by the student's self-assessment and grade estimate, which will be submitted at the end of the course.

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.

Students are also required to save backup files of all work submitted for this course.

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

Weeks 1 and 2 -- 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); Kahakauwila, "This is Paradise" (9 - 46)
- Forums: Introductions, Fictional Haiku, Kahakauwila

Week 3 -- 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 4 -- 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 5 -- 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 6 -- 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 7 -- 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."

Weeks 8 and 9 -- 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

Weeks 10 and 11 -- 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."

Weeks 12 and 13 -- 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

Weeks 14 and 15 -- 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.)