

Chaminade University

EN 302, Fiction Writing

Fall Semester, 2017

Instructor: James Kraus, jkraus@chaminade.edu

Henry Hall, Room 206-D

Ph. 808-735-4877

- **Note:** This online course uses a site called “Edwebs Moodle,” rather than Canvas. Students interested in taking the course should email the instructor for an enrollment key after creating an account on this system.
- **Course url:** <https://courses1.edwebs.com/course/view.php?id=16> (To open new account, click on “Create new account.”)
- **Mail:** 3140 Waialae Ave., Honolulu, HI 96816, Henry Hall 206-d
- **Office Hours:** Monday 12:30 – 2:30 p.m., Tuesday, 1 – 2 p.m., Friday, 11:30 – 12:30 p.m.
- **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. 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.

Course Description

This course in fiction writing examines the techniques of the short story and provides practice in narrative writing generally. The course provides opportunity for students to explore their motives for writing and to experiment with their writing styles. Students 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 knowledge of the key short stories considered to be a part of the fiction writer's basic background
- 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. Purchase from Chaminade Bookstore. Or order from Amazon or iTunes (as eText for smartphone or tablet), or publisher web site:
<http://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/94583/the-modern-library-writers-workshop-by-stephen-koch/>
- Kristiana Kahakauwila, *This is Paradise*. PDF files available via course web site. Or order from Amazon or publisher web site:
<http://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/220156/this-is-paradise-by-kristiana-kahakauwila/>
- Raymond Carver
 - ["A Small Good Thing,"](#)
 - ["Cathedral"](#)
- Steven Crane, "The Open Boat"
- Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wall Paper"
- Brete Harte, "Outcasts of Poker Flat"
- James Joyce, "Araby"
- Edgar Allen Poe, "The Black Cat," "The Purloined Letter"
- John Sayles, "Matewan." (film)
- Mark Twain, "How to Tell a Story"
- 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 and an analytical essay of 900 words are due before the end of the term. All portfolio stories must have been written and revised during the current term.

Course Journal

Preferably in conventional pen and ink notebooks, journals should contain free-form, creative responses to required readings, responses to writing prompts, as well as drafts and sketches of stories-in-progress.

The requirement for the journal is a minimum of 30 pages for the term (assuming typical page contains about 150 words). Students must submit journal report at end of term. Journals may also be checked individually during the term.

Quizzes, Workshops and Miscellaneous Assignments

Online quizzes may be assigned during the term. Quizzes are intended to pace the student through the course's required readings and to provide an index of student's comprehension of course content. Submission of quizzes is required and are graded automatically. Other 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.

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.

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 by way of following MLA documentation style. 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 and Chapter 1; Kahakauwila, "This is Paradise"
- Forums: Introductions, Fictional Haiku, Kahakauwila

Week 3 -- Workshop -- Collaboration and Critique

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"
- Story draft due to Workshop 1 interface
- Forum: Post edited journal entry to "Journal 1"; iStory 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 -- Character, Plot and Conflict

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"; iStory 2

Week 6 – Story Structure and the Sources of Creativity

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 – Point-of-View

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"
- 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"
- [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"
- 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" and "Postscript: Writing on the Craft"

- **Final Portfolio Due**
- **Final Exam**