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SE99

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English 302⁹⁰

Creative Writing: Fiction

Required Texts:

The Creative Process (1993 Edition), Carol Burke and Molly Best Tinsley

The Heath Introduction to Fiction (Fifth Edition), Ed. John J. Clayton

Course Description:

Students in this course will read and write fiction as well as read essays about fiction. They will develop their abilities to critically read and write their own works as well as critically read, discuss, and write about the work of others.

Course Requirements:

Because this course is conducted online, regular electronic communication is important. Students are expected to check their e-mail on a daily basis. Those who do not do so may fall behind in the course, which will most likely affect their grades.

Each student will write a total of two stories, revise one of the stories, review a book, participate in class discussions on the WebBoard, do some short writing assignments to be posted to the WebBoard, comment thoughtfully upon the writing of the other students in the course, and read the one revised story in a short presentation to be held at the final class meeting. In addition, students will be assigned readings from the textbooks and from an instructor "handout" (e-mailed to each student). Detailed descriptions of each of these requirements follow. All deadlines appear in the [course outline](#) below.

- *Stories:* Students choose what to write about. Most important are that the characters be clearly drawn, words be chosen carefully, and that abstractions ("great," "beautiful," "depressed," etc.) be avoided in favor of the concrete (image, sense). Remember that unless characters are clear and convincing their words and actions will not be understandable to the readers. Also keep in mind that if you choose to write about a true event you still have to convince the reader of your

story--through your use of details and clear characterization--that such an event could actually happen. Simply because something actually happened is no reason for the reader to believe that it could happen in your story. Stories may be of varying lengths. The rough draft of each story should be e-mailed to the instructor and all students in the course by the deadlines specified in the course outline.

- *Final Story*: Students will substantively revise one of the two stories. The instructor's and other students' comments will give some guidance in the revision process.
- *Book Review*: Each student will write a short review of a book (350 to 500 words). Students should choose books they have read recently or are in the process of reading. The review should tell the audience how the reviewer (the student) felt about the book (liked/disliked/both/ambivalent) and why. In order to explain "why," students may discuss characters, summarize portions of the book, quote specific passages or do anything else necessary to make their points clear. The student, by making his/her assessment of the book clear will essentially be making a recommendation to the reader of the review: definitely read this book, read this book, don't bother, avoid this book. A review is very different from a book report, which is a summary of a book. The book review should be posted to the WebBoard by the deadline specified in the course outline.
- *WebBoard Postings*: The WebBoard is a conferencing system whose purpose is to encourage dialogue about the material covered in the course. Discussions take place online, but not necessarily in real time. In fact, in most cases, students will post their thoughts about the readings and at a later date read other students' responses to the same readings and, perhaps, comments on other students' postings. In order to participate, students must, while online, log into their internet browser. Type in the URL for the instructor's WebBoard page: <http://acad.chaminade.edu:8080/~7>. Read the instructor's posted comments/questions and respond to them as well as add any additional thoughts on the topics. More thorough instructions regarding the use of the WebBoard will be provided at the first class meeting.
- *Comments upon Student Writing*: As noted under *Stories*, above, students must e-mail copies of their stories to all class members as well as to the instructor by the deadlines. See the instructions for commenting on others' stories on the page labeled "Guidelines for Student Critiques." The critiques are e-mailed to others in the course rather than posted to the WebBoard.
- *Reading at Final Class Meeting*: The date, time and location of the final meeting will be announced by the instructor. At the final class meeting each student will have ten minutes to read aloud the one revised story he/she chose as his/her Final Story assignment. In addition the student must explain the major revisions made to the story and be prepared to answer questions. Further information on this is available on the Guidelines for Student Presentations webpage.
- *Readings*: Most of the readings are found in the two textbooks. Some additional readings will be provided by the instructor.

Grading:

- Story Drafts 10% (5% each x 2 stories=10%)
- Final Story 25%
- Book Review 10%
- Comments on Others' Stories 20%
- WebBoard Postings 25%
- Final Reading 10%

Course Outline with Readings and Other Assignments:

In addition to the readings below you may, if you wish, browse through the course outline for English 402 and read any of the assignments that interest you.

Week 1 (4/5-10)

- Read The Creative Process (CP), Chapter 12; "Creative Writing 101" by Raymond Carver (handout)
- **Sat., 4/10:** first class meeting; come prepared to ask questions about the course, discuss the readings and learn about the WebBoard

Week 2 (4/11-17)

- Read CP, Chapters 2 & 3
- **Sat., 4/17:** WebBoard postings for weeks 1 and 2 due

Week 3 (4/18-24)

- Read Heath, "The Lesson" by Toni Cade Bambara, pp. 644-50 and "Lust" by Susan Minot, pp. 804-11
- **Sat., 4/24:** book review due

Week 4 (4/25-5/1)

- Read CP, Chapters 7 & 9
- **Sat., 5/1:** WebBoard postings for weeks 3 and 4 due

Week 5 (5/2-8)

- Read Heath, "Hills Like White Elephants" by Ernest Hemingway, 436-40; "Push It" by Annie Dillard
- **Sat., 5/8:** WebBoard posting for week 5 due

Week 6 (5/9-15)

- **Sat., 5/15:** story 1 due

Week 7 (5/16-22)

- **Wed., 5/19:** comments on story 1 due

Week 8 (5/23-29)

- **Sat., 5/29:** story 2 due

Week 9 (5/30-6/5)

- **Wed., 6/2:** comments on story 2 due

Week 10 (6/6-12)

- **Sat., 6/12:** final story due; final course meeting (student presentations; see description in syllabus for details), Chaminade campus (exact time and room number to be announced)