

Chaminade University

Writing That Heals: EN 480

Fall Term, 2025, August 25 - December 5

Prof. Jim Kraus, jkraus@chaminade.edu

Henry Hall 206J

Catalog Description

This interdisciplinary writing workshop explores poetry, fiction, and nonfiction as tools for self-reflection, resilience, and healing. Emphasizing voice, empathy, and craft, students write and revise original work in a supportive community, culminating in the creation of a collaborative chapbook. Ideal for students interested in psychology, the liberal arts, and writing as a path to personal and social transformation. 3 credits.

Course Description

This interdisciplinary creative writing course engages both lyric and narrative modes while also embracing the traditional genre of poetry, fiction, non-fiction and creative non-fiction. In this context, participants are encouraged to foster healing, empathy, and personal transformation. Blending literary practice with insights from psychology and human development, participants will write and revise their own original works in a supportive, reflective environment.

Rooted in the Marianist commitment to educate the whole person, the course emphasizes writing as a path toward self-knowledge, communal engagement, and resilience. Students will explore how writing can be a vehicle for justice, peace, and spiritual insight, especially in contexts of trauma, marginalization, or personal struggle.

The workshop culminates in the collaborative production of a chapbook intended to honor the diverse voices and experiences of the class.

Texts

Ace Bogess, *The Prisoners*. Brick Road Poetry Press. 2014. ISBN 978-0-9835304-7-3.

Donald A Carreira Ching, *Bloodwork and Other Stories*, Bamboo Ridge Press, 2025. ISBN: 978-1-943756-13-1 (This is a new book from a local publisher, so it won't take long to get them.)

Caits Meissner, ed., *The Sentences That Create Us*. Haymarket Books, 2022.

Gregory Orr, *The Poetry of Survival*, University of Georgia Press. 2002. ISBN: 978-0820324289.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Compose and revise original creative works that engage with personal and psychological themes.
- Apply poetic and narrative craft to explore issues of identity, growth, trauma, and healing.
- Demonstrate the capacity to respond empathetically and critically to the work of peers.
- Reflect on the role of writing in fostering resilience, spiritual insight, and emotional well-being.
- Collaborate in a community of writers rooted in Marianist values of inclusivity, family spirit, and service.
- Participate in the design and publication of a chapbook that reflects the collective work and mission of the course.

Regarding Marianist Values

- **Formation in Faith** – Participants encouraged to reflect on writing as spiritual and moral practice.
- **Quality Education** – Rigorous attention to literary craft, peer feedback, and revision.
- **Family Spirit** – Workshop structure cultivating empathy, safety, and belonging.
- **Service, Justice, and Peace** – Emphasis on writing as mode of healing, restorative justice and advocacy.
- **Adaptation and Change** – Participants engage writing as lifelong process of transformation and growth.

Course Requirements

- Weekly Writing Prompts & Reading Responses – 25%
- Workshop Participation & Peer Feedback – 25%
- Midterm Reflective Essay – 25%
- Final Portfolio (Revised Creative Work) – 25%

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1, August, 26 - 31

- Bogess, *The Prisoners*. pp. 3-6
- Ching, *Bloodwork and Other Stories*, "Search the Waters" and "Kane'ohe Town," pp. 11-22
- Meissner, *The Sentences That Create Us*, "Editor's Note, pp. xiii - xx; "Writing the Poem of the Moment," pp. 261 - 263
- Orr, *The Poetry of Survival*, "Introduction" and Chapter 1, pp. 1 - 23

Week 2, September 1 - 7

- Bogess, *The Prisoners*. pp. 7-13
- Ching, *Bloodwork and Other Stories*, "What We Forget," pp. 23-38
- Meissner, *The Sentences That Create Us*, pp. "On Poetry," pp. 2 - 15; "Writing the Poem of the Moment," pp. 261 - 263
- Orr, *The Poetry of Survival*, Ch. 2, pp. 24 - 36

Week 3, Sept. 8 - 14

- Bogess, *The Prisoners*. pp. 15-22
- Ching, *Bloodwork and Other Stories*, "Closing Costs," pp. 39 - 45
- Meissner, *The Sentences That Create Us*, "On Fiction," pp. 16 - 40
- Orr, *The Poetry of Survival*, Ch 3, pp. 37 - 50

Week 4, Sept. 15 - 21

- Bogess, *The Prisoners*, pp. 24-32
- Ching, *Bloodwork and Other Stories*, "Vigilant Acts," pp. 46-59
- Meissner, *The Sentences That Create Us*, "On Non-fiction Memoir," pp. 41 - 55
- Orr, *The Poetry of Survival*, Ch. 4, pp. 51 - 58

Week 5, Sept. 21 - 28

- Bogess, *The Prisoners*. pp. 35-41
- Ching, *Bloodwork and Other Stories*, "A Blur of Color and Sound," pp. 60 - 74
- Meissner, *The Sentences That Create Us*, "Crafting a Writer's Life in Prison," pp. 164 - 174
- Orr, *The Poetry of Survival*, Ch. 5, pp. 59 - 82

Week 6, Sept. 29 - October 5

- Bogess, *The Prisoners*. pp. 42-47
- Ching, *Bloodwork and Other Stories*, "Da Kine but Different," pp. 75-78
- Meissner, *The Sentences That Create Us*, "Every Story Needs Hope: Why You Should Write about Prison," pp. 201-204
- Orr, *The Poetry of Survival*, Ch. 6, pp. 83 - 92

Week 7, Oct. 6 - 12

- Bogess, *The Prisoners*. pp. 48-53
- Ching, *Bloodwork and Other Stories*, "What We Forget," pp. 23-38
- Meissner, *The Sentences That Create Us*, "Gift Culture," pp. 216-220
- Orr, *The Poetry of Survival*, Ch. 7, pp. 93 - 113

Week 8, Oct. 13 - 19

- Bogess, *The Prisoners*
- Ching, *Bloodwork and Other Stories*, "Other Options," pp. 93-100
- Meissner, *The Sentences That Create Us*, "'Prison Writer': A Meditation on Histories and the Sentences that Create Them," pp. 227-230
- Orr, *The Poetry of Survival*, Ch. 8, pp. 117 - 132

Week 9, Oct. 20 - 26

- Bogess, *The Prisoners*. pp. 62-70
- Ching, *Bloodwork and Other Stories*, "183," pp. 101-117
- Meissner, *The Sentences That Create Us*, "On Building Writing Community: Introduction," pp. 232-233
- Orr, *The Poetry of Survival*, Ch. 9, pp. 133 - 140

Week 10, Oct. 27 - November 2

- Bogess, *The Prisoners*. pp. 71-76
- Ching, *Bloodwork and Other Stories*, "The Odds," pp. 118-123
- Meissner, *The Sentences That Create Us*, "No Pen or Paper Required: The Art and Practice of Community Storytelling," pp. 245-251
- Orr, *The Poetry of Survival*, Ch. 10, pp. 141- 148

Week 11, Nov. 3 - 9

- Bogess, *The Prisoners*. pp. 77-80
- Ching, *Bloodwork and Other Stories*, "These Days," pp. 118-123
- Meissner, *The Sentences That Create Us*, "And Still I Write: Creative Expression for Self-Advocacy," pp. 195-200
- Orr, *The Poetry of Survival*, Ch. 11, pp. 149 - 158

Week 12, Nov. 10 - 16

- Bogess, *The Prisoners*. pp. 81-85
- Ching, *Bloodwork and Other Stories*, "Blood Work," pp. 134-151
- Meissner, *The Sentences That Create Us*, "Translating to the Page," pp. 254-256
- Orr, *The Poetry of Survival*, Ch. 12, pp. 159 - 170

Week 13, Nov. 17 - 23

- Bogess, *The Prisoners*. pp. 86-90
- Ching, *Bloodwork and Other Stories*, "Danger Close," pp. 152-160
- Meissner, *The Sentences That Create Us*, "Attention to Memory," pp. 264-267
- Orr, *The Poetry of Survival*, Ch. 13, pp. 171- 181

Week 14, Nov. 24 - 30

- Bogess, *The Prisoners*. pp. 91-94
- Ching, *Bloodwork and Other Stories*, "What Now?" pp. 161-165
- Meissner, *The Sentences That Create Us*, "The Inherent Magic of Objects," pp. 268-271
- Orr, *The Poetry of Survival*, Ch.14, pp.182 - 187

Week 15, December 1 - 5

- Bogess, *The Prisoners*. pp. 95-111
- Ching, *Bloodwork . . .*, "From the Notebooks . . .," "At Dawn," pp. 166 - 181.
- Meissner, *The Sentences That Create Us*, "Epilogue: A Writing zlife in Community--from Inside Out," pp. 288-291
- Orr, *The Poetry of Survival*, Ch. 15 - Appendix C, pp. 189 - 230

Notes:

- **Participation:** Regular participation in online discussion forums is required, although these online discussions are graded only on the basis of complete/incomplete; this is considered a part of the the "Participation and attendance" course requirement. These and other assignments are often done during regular class meetings.
- **Journal:** The course journal consists of free-form writing, sometimes in response to a specific prompt. A minimum of 300 words per week (approximately two pages) is required. Journals are considered the private workspaces of individual students; credit for completion of the journal requirement is based on mid-term and final journal reports.
- **Quizzes:** Quizzes may be given in class or online.
- **Writing Assignments, including Final Portfolio:** This course requires submission of four writing assignments of approximately 800 words each. Writing assignments are often "peer-reviewed by classmates before submission for grade.

Late Assignments

Accepting of late assignments is the discretion of the instructor. Students must contact their instructor prior to the due date if they wish to have an assignment considered for late submission.

Grading Scale for Essay Assignments

"A": Outstanding scholarship and an unusual degree of creative initiative. (90-100)

"B": Superior work done in a consistent and creative manner. (80-89)

"C": Average grade indicating competent grasp of assignment. (70-79)

"D": Inferior, late or missing work. (60-69)

"F": Failed adequately engage the course and its objectives. (below 60)

Passing grade for the course is "C".

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

- All material submitted in fulfillment of course requirements must be written by the registered student. 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.
- Use of "artificial intelligence," e.g. chatgpt and the like, is discouraged. If used, proper citation is required. In general, use of "AI" is contrary to the goals of this course.
- 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.

University Policy: Academic honesty is an essential aspect of all learning, scholarship, and research. It is one of the values regarded most highly by academic communities throughout the world. Violations of the principle of academic honesty are extremely serious and will not be tolerated.

Students are responsible for promoting academic honesty at Chaminade by not participating in any act of dishonesty and by reporting any incidence of academic dishonesty to an instructor or to a University official. Academic dishonesty may include theft of records or examinations, alteration of grades, and plagiarism, in addition to more obvious dishonesty.

Questions of academic dishonesty in a particular class are first reviewed by the instructor, who must make a report with recommendations to the Dean of the Academic Division. Punishment for academic dishonesty will be determined by the instructor and the Dean of Academic Division and may include an “F” grade for the work in question, an “F” grade for the course, suspension, or dismissal from the University.

For the most up to date information, please refer to the [Academic Honesty Policy](#) on the Chaminade University Catalog website.

Assessment of Student Work

With the goal of continuing to improve the quality of educational services offered to students, Chaminade University conducts assessments of student achievement of course, program, and institutional learning outcomes. Student work is used anonymously as the basis of these assessments, and the work you do in this course may be used in these assessment efforts.

Marianist and Native Hawaiian Values

Education is an integral value in both Marianist and Native Hawaiian culture. Both recognize the transformative effect of a well-rounded, value-centered education on society, particularly in seeking justice for the marginalized, the forgotten, and the oppressed. See below for a more expansive description of Marianist Core Beliefs that was adopted by the Chaminade Faculty some years ago.

Credit Hour Policy Time Allocation

Class Time / Note Taking / Discussion	35.5
Reading and Researching	40
Writing and Revising essays	40
Preparing Final Portfolio	5
Journal Writing	5
Preparing Forum Postings	5
Preparing Collaborative Group Project / Presentation	5
Total	135.5

Title IX and Nondiscrimination Statement

Chaminade University of Honolulu is committed to providing a learning, working and living environment that promotes the dignity of all people, inclusivity and mutual respect and is free of all forms of sex discrimination and gender-based violence, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. As a member of the University faculty, I am required to immediately report any incident of sex discrimination or gender-based violence to the campus Title IX Coordinator.

Nondiscrimination Policy & Notice of Nondiscrimination

Chaminade University of Honolulu does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX and its regulations, including in admission and employment. Inquiries about Title IX may be referred to the University's Title IX Coordinator, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or both and contact information may be found at the [Chaminade University Title IX Office Contact Information and Confidential Resources website](#). On-campus Confidential Resources may also be found here at [CAMPUS CONFIDENTIAL RESOURCES](#).

The University's Nondiscrimination Policy and Grievance Procedures can be located on the University webpage at: <https://chaminade.edu/compliance/title-ix-nondiscrimination-policies-procedures/>.

To report information about conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or make a complaint of sex discrimination under Title IX, please refer to the [Campus Incident Report form](#). Chaminade University of Honolulu prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates. The NOTICE of NONDISCRIMINATION can be found here: [Notice of Nondiscrimination](#).