

SSE 99

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Topic: Course Overview (1 of 1), Read 15 times

Conf: SYLLABUS

From: Chris McKinney (cmckinne@chaminade.edu)

Date: Thursday, June 24, 1999 01:50 AM

Summer 1999: Online
English 302 ⁹⁹ Fiction Writing
Instructor: Chris McKinney
e-mail: cmckinne@chaminade.edu
telephone: 836-0874

TEXTS:

1) Burke, Carol and Molly Best Tinsely, THE CREATIVE PROCESS

2) THE HEATH INTRODUCTION TO FICTION

This, above all, is a writing course. Everything that we do this semester will revolve around the nurturing of your creative skills. However, writing is not the only thing that we'll be doing. Because there is more to writing than simply putting ink on paper, we will spend much time reading and responding. The reasons are both simple and necessary: Since you will be composing short stories, you will need to have read short stories (can you build a house without ever seeing a house before?) We will also spend time workshoping student stories (reading and responding to your works) because we are here to help each other. So basically throughout this course, students are expected to be three things: writers, readers, and critics. All three are essential to the writing process.

WRITING:

You need to submit TWENTY PAGES of fiction to pass this course. This is firm. How and when you present your fiction, however, allows for some flexibility. First off, I don't really care how many stories it takes for you to get to twenty pages. You can write anywhere from ten two page stories to one twenty page story. You can write two ten page stories, three seven page stories, or four five page stories. It doesn't matter, as long as I get twenty pages of well-edited fiction. Also, there is only one deadline for your writing. All fiction must be posted publicly in this class by September 7, or you will not pass the course. This is firm. You have two months.

I do, however, emphatically encourage all of you to post stories before this date. I want to work with your stories with the class as soon as possible. So if you're writing shorter stories, and feel ready to present them to the class, do not hesitate. The sooner we get brave volunteers, the sooner we will be learning how to get better. Try not to be too self-conscious or timid about your work. EVERY story can get better.

READING:

It is imperative that you spend time reading portions of both books. THE HEATH INTRODUCTION TO FICTION contains short stories published from the nineteenth century to present time. Not only will it introduce you to some of the greatest short stories ever written, but it will also give you a sense of the history of this genre. Starting with Nathaniel Hawthorne, this book shows how the modern short story began and developed. Not only will this book give you a sense of history, but perhaps more importantly, it will show you very different and revolutionary fiction styles and techniques. In "Young Goodman Brown" we see Hawthorne's use of allegory. In Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" we see one of the forefathers of the horror genre. In Faulkner's "A Rose For Emily" a town tells the story. And in Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants" we see a short-short story that has a lot to say. Steal these techniques. Loot these literary graves. That's the purpose of this book in this class: it's a grab bag of free ideas.

The other book, *THE CREATIVE PROCESS*, talks specifically about technique. This book is also very important. It is instructional. It discusses certain things that every short story should DO and HAVE. Remember, without things like setting, characters, point-of-view, plot, conflict, symbolism, and theme, fiction is nothing. Portraying these things well is what breathes life into a story. This book discusses methods on how to do this. **READ THIS BOOK.** Although there will be no quizzes on the readings, there will be one final exam at the end of the semester. This test will be a short answer test based on the following readings:

THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Chapter 9
Chapter 3
Chapter 7
Chapter 6
Chapter 8
Chapter 12

THE HEATH INTRODUCTION TO FICTION

"Young Goodman Brown"
"The Fall of the House of Usher"
"The Yellow Wall-Paper"
"The Open Boat"
"The Lady With The Dog"
"A Rose For Emily"
"Hills Like White Elephants"
"The Jilting of Granny Weatherall"
"The Lottery"
"A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings"
"A Good Man Is Hard to Find"
"Sonny's Blues"
"Separating"
"City Lovers"
"Lust"
"White Dump"

Don't stress out. The test will have about twenty five questions which will be laughably simple if you do the reading.

CRITIQUING:

The final major component of this course is critiquing your fellow students' writings. As I mentioned before, each of you will have to post twenty pages of your fiction by September 7 (post under STUDENT SHORT STORIES conference). Also, as I mentioned before, I encourage you guys to get started as soon as possible. I want to see stories posted throughout the semester, not only on September 7. Seriously, I'll think better of your work ethic the sooner stories get in, and of course, me thinking better of your work ethic will have a positive effect on your grade. Also, this isn't really a "cramming" type of course. If you leave everything undone until the last minute, it will reflect in your work. So get started!

Now, when you finish a story and feel ready to post it, put it on display in the STUDENT SHORT STORIES conference. At that time, everyone, including me, will read the story and reply back with out comments. **REPLIES SHOULD BE SUBMITTED WITHIN A WEEK OF THE POST DATE.** In other words, you have a week to reply to student short stories. I'll be keeping track of that.

So now how to reply... This is the format I want you to use:

NAME OF AUTHOR
TITLE OF STORY

NAME OF CRITIC

- 1) What is the setting like in this story? Can you visualize place, time, and culture?
- 2) Who is the main character in this story? Do you find the main character believable? Is there something about the character that reminds you of someone you know or yourself? At the same time, does the character have unique qualities? If so, what are they?
- 3) What point-of-view is the story being told from? First person, second, or third? Could the story be told more effectively from a different point of view?
- 4) Is there conflict in the story? What is it? Is it external conflict, internal conflict, or both?
- 5) Does the writer use symbolism? If so, identify the symbols.
- 6) What are some of the story's themes?
- 7) Do you have any suggestions on how the story could be better?

These seven questions must be answered for each student story posted. Remember, encouragement and politeness is good, however, criticism is often more useful for a writer who is interested in making their story better. Don't be afraid to criticize. If you do not criticize or voice your concerns, your use to the writer is minimal.

For writers: When you read the criticisms, be thick-skinned about them. Try hard to not take offense. Some of the greatest writers in the world were criticized harshly at one time or another. Part of what made them great is that they still kept on writing. Besides, when you revise your story, it's completely up to you which pieces of advice you want to address. YOU ARE THE ARTIST. Ultimately it is you who decides what you want to have in your piece.

So there's the course overview in a rather large nutshell. You write, you read, you critique. Twenty pages, one final exam, and a critique on each student story. Pretty simple, right? **Contact me if you** have any questions, move on for more information on grading, course schedule, and plagiarism.

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Topic: Grading (1 of 1), Read 5 times

Conf: SYLLABUS

From: Chris McKinney (cmckinne@chaminade.edu)

Date: Thursday, June 24, 1999 01:52 AM

GRADING FOR ENGLISH 302:

As mentioned in the Course Overview, there are three elements of this course: WRITING, READING, AND CRITIQUING. All three constitute a certain percentage of your grade:

WRITING: Your twenty pages of fiction determine SIXTY PERCENT of your grade. Now, I'm not really expecting you guys to turn in fiction reminiscent of geniuses like, say, Flannery O'Connor or Ernest Hemingway, but I do expect it to be obvious that you put hard work into your writing. You'd be surprised how easy this is to determine. If you work hard and I get twenty pages that reflect that, you'll get an "A" for this portion of your grade. If twenty pages aren't posted by SEPTEMBER 7, you will fail the course.

READING: Your reading grade will be based solely on your final exam. If you do the reading, you'll find the exam quite simple. This test will be worth TWENTY PERCENT of your grade.

Sample question from THE HEATH INTRODUCTION TO FICTION: Who wrote "A Good Man is Hard to Find?"

Sample question from THE CREATIVE PROCESS: What usually works better in fiction, showing or telling?

Expect about twenty-five of these short answer questions on your final (info. on exam scheduling to come).

CRITIQUING: The final TWENTY PERCENT of your grade will be based on the replies you give to student stories in the STUDENT SHORT STORIES conference. I will be looking at your answers to the SEVEN QUESTIONS (see Course Overview for questions) that you will post for the class. Just make sure you read student stories carefully and answer the questions analytically and completely and you'll have no problems.

Traditionally, in creative writing courses, students usually receive an "A" or an "F" for the semester. There are rarely in-between grades (B,C,D). You either do the work, or you don't. I love to give A's and I hate to give F's. So just make sure that you get everything done. If you do, your grade will take care of itself. In the next posting under SYLLABUS, Course Schedule, you'll see at what pace you should be moving at through these next ten weeks. Try to follow it. It will be to your benefit.

Crunching the Numbers:

Writing- 60% Final Exam- 20% Posted replies to students' works- 20%

If you have any questions, do not hesitate in replying.

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Topic: Course Schedule (1 of 1), Read 5 times

Conf: SYLLABUS

From: Chris McKinney (cmckinne@chaminade.edu)

Date: Thursday, June 24, 1999 01:52 AM

Course Schedule for English 302:

Week One, July 6 to July 11:

- Familiarize yourself with WebBoard. Read everything I've posted so far. Introduce yourself under WELCOME, understand the course requirements, and asks questions if don't understand something.
- Attend the mandatory meeting on campus on Saturday, July 10 at 1 PM. YOU MUST BE PRESENT.
- Read Chapter 9 in THE CREATIVE PROCESS.

Week Two, July 12 to July 18:

- Read Chapter 3 in THE CREATIVE PROCESS. Read "Young Goodman Brown," "The Fall of the House of Usher," and "The Yellow Wall-Paper."

Week Three, July 19 to July 25:

- Read Chapter 7 in THE CREATIVE PROCESS. Read "The Open Boat" and "The Lady With The Dog."
- Start writing your own short story.

Week Four, July 26 to August 1:

- Read Chapter 6 in THE CREATIVE PROCESS. Read "A Rose For Emily" and "Hills Like White Elephants."
- Continue working on your own story.

Week Five, August 2 to August 8:

- Read Chapter 8 in THE CREATIVE PROCESS. Read "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall" and "The Lottery."
- Now would be a good time to post some fiction on the board. Submit a story.

Week Six, August 9 to August 15:

- Read Chapter 12 in THE CREATIVE PROCESS. Read "A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings" and "A Good Man is Hard To Find."
- Make sure you're working on, submitting, or responding to fiction.

Week Seven, August 16 to August 22:

- Read "Sonny's Blues" and "Separating."
- Submit, work, and reply.

Week Eight, August 23 to August 29:

- Read "City Lovers" and "White Dump."
- Submit, work, and reply.

Week Nine, August 30 to September 5:

- Read "Lust."
- Submit, work, and reply.

Week Ten, September 6 to September 12:

- D-Day is September 7. ALL FICTION MUST BE POSTED.
- Spend the week replying to stories posted. Remember, the more of you there are who wait until the last minute to post stories, the harder this week will be for all of us.

Week Eleven, FINALS WEEK:

-Final Exam (place and time not yet known).

Ultimately, as a fiction writer, you make your own schedule, but I recommend trying to stick to this one. Good Luck.

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Topic: Must Read: Plagiarism (1 of 1), Read 6 times

Conf: SYLLABUS

From: Chris McKinney (cmckinne@chaminade.edu)

Date: Thursday, June 24, 1999 01:53 AM

Plagiarism:

Okay guys, this is simple. SUBMITTING A PAPER THAT YOU DID NOT WRITE, RECYCLING PAPERS YOU HAVE WRITTEN FOR OTHER CLASSES, OR QUOTING OTHERS WITHOUT CITING THEM CONSTITUTES PLAGIARISM. PLAGIARISM WILL RESULT IN AN "F" FOR THE COURSE.

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