

# CREATIVE WRITING I

English 3312.001 / FALL 2023

FACULTY: Dr. Anett Jessop  
SCHEDULE: M/W 4:00pm -5:20pm  
ROOM: CAS 208  
OFFICE: CAS 248  
OFFICE HOURS: M 8:45-9:45pm; T 3:30-4:30pm; W 3:00-4:00pm & by appointment  
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## COURSE DESCRIPTION & GOALS

**Welcome!** This course is a creative writing laboratory which will take its inspiration from a selection of literary works. We will read, discuss, write about, and be inspired by a variety of literary genres—short fiction, poetry, and drama. The course is designed to introduce you to the creative process and the craft by which our readings were produced. You—evolving reader and writer—will explore with ‘left’ and ‘right’ brain abilities by both analyzing and creating. This class will afford you the opportunity to identify and articulate literary strategies in weekly written responses to readings as well as to generate creative variations of our readings, to be revised and collected in a chapbook, accompanied by an *ars poetica* (a statement of your relationship to creativity and expression) at the semester’s end.

Pedagogically, I am committed to your appreciation and enriched understanding of the aesthetic and cultural contexts for the body of literature that we read as well as to your further development as sophisticated readers, critical thinkers, and budding creative writers. When we “read like a writer,” we interrogate the writer’s meanings, methods, and craft in the context of the literary traditions to which s/he may be conforming or rebelling against.

My goals for you in this class are the following:

- ▶ Students will engage—in both written, oral, and online formats—in close readings of complex literary texts and, as a result, will hone skills in nuanced analysis, cogent writing, and thoughtful discussion and debate;
- ▶ Students will explore imaginative literary strategies through the creation of original works and will gain increased understanding of the creative process.

## TEXT & SUPPLIES

Mays, Kelly. *The Norton Introduction to Literature*. Portable 11<sup>th</sup> ed. ISBN: 978-0-393-92339-1

## POLICIES & PROTOCOLS

▶ **PREPARATION & PARTICIPATION:** My teaching methods emphasize individual preparation, group discussion and collaborative learning. Class members will be expected to share insights and to encourage others to do so. This course is reading-, discussion-, and writing-intensive and students will engage in various writing assignments—both graded and ungraded—as a means to making discoveries and articulating insights about the literary and theoretical texts we read. Participation is crucial to your success in this class, which operates on the basis of a thoughtful interaction between teacher and student and among students.

Everyone is expected to attend all classes, arrive on time, turn off cellphones and laptops (unless you are working from a digital text) and store them in backpacks. **Attention to the cellphone instead of class and peers will be counted as an absence.** You will often work (following covid protocols) in small groups and

are always expected to participate in discussions of the assignments. Please bring your textbook to class as we will often be reading from it during class time. (Attendance may be modified as health and safety require.)

I will allow for **three** in-class absences, excused or unexcused, during the semester, after which your attendance grade will be compromised. I will keep track of late arrivals and these will also affect your grade. (A late arrival is defined as more than ten minutes after the beginning of the class time slot.) If you are late, assume you have been marked absent until you talk to me. If you are ill or have an emergency, please email me in order to turn in homework and to pick up the next assignment.

**Covid Precautions:** We will adapt to best health practices across the semester. If you are unwell, please stay home and send me an email regarding your absence. You will not be penalized for caution.

▶ **COMMUNICATION POLICY:** Emails will be answered within 24 hours during the school week and occur between 9am and 8pm. Feedback on written assignments will be within 2 weeks of submission.

▶ **COMMUNICATION & COLLEAGIALITY:** We are all responsible for creating a creative writing workshop that is both intellectually rigorous and respectful. We commit to doing so in a way that values diverse perspectives and experiences and encourages productive reflection and interaction. Above all, be respectful (even when you strongly disagree) and be conscious of the ways that our identities position us in the classroom. All postings on the discussion board must meet academic and professional standards. Abuses in the forms of bullying and/or discriminatory comments on gender, sex, race, or ethnicity are not allowed and will be reported if the instructor's intervention does not see immediate changes in behavior.

▶ **DISCUSSION FORUM POLICY:** Chapter summaries, creative writing, prompts, questions, and responses on the discussion board are to enable students to brainstorm about the readings and assignments. The postings on the discussion board must be focused on the assigned topic. All technical problems associated with Canvas, the Internet, or library databases, including passwords and user IDs, should be directed to the respective departments. The course instructor cannot answer technical questions.

▶ **HOMEWORK & PAPER FORMAT:** All written assignments should be typed, double-spaced, use normal margins and readable font. Paper headings should include your name, date, course title, and professor's name. Each page should include page number and your last name. Use MLA documentation to cite sources and include a Works Cited page. **A final word count for the analytical essays should appear following the concluding paragraph: e.g., [415 words].**

▶ **DUE DATE POLICY:** Assignments must be submitted through Canvas on or before the due dates unless a hard copy is explicitly requested—*Feel free to upload in the event that you have a printer issue or are unable to make it to class period.* Work turned in late without a compelling reason will be lowered one-third of a grade per day. You might also want to bring a hard copy of your work to class in order to share it more easily with colleagues.

**DUE DATES are noted in the Course Schedule.**

## **| ASSIGNMENTS**

▶ **Reading Like a Writer Responses:** There will be two weekly response-writing assignments due across the semester—**one analytical and one creative:**

- **Analytic Response:** In a minimum of 300 words (**not to include headers and titles**), respond to that week's anthology chapter, generally, and the particular work indicated on the calendar, specifically, with your observations, associations, and analysis. When "Reading like a Writer" we ask: What is the writer doing here; believing; intending; rejecting? In clear and grammatically-correct sentences, describe the work's core concepts, imagery, narrative voice, poetic or generic form (as relevant). You might offer several questions and/or connections to assist our class in discussion and reflection. The Analytical Responses will be graded on a **1 to 4-point scale**, with 4 being exceptional in terms of critical and literary insight, prose clarity, and grammatical correctness. The

final grade for the Analytical Response writing will be cumulative—I am looking for improvement in your critical thinking and refinement in your writing across the semester.

● **Creative Response:** Compose a “creative variation” on a writer’s work or in response to the chapter’s subjects—of any length, format, style you choose. You are free to include graphic elements and/or other mixed media designs. Creative Variation Responses will be credited as completed when turned in. Both your colleagues and professor will offer responses to your work. The process will assist you in the development of the final creative manuscript.

▶ **DISCUSSION LEADERSHIP:** Across the semester, each student will be responsible for initiating one or two weekly discussions of the assigned readings through the posting of a brief summary of our chapter in the anthology and an excerpt from their Analytical Response to the creative work assigned. Posts should be a minimum of 300 words. Feel free to ask questions and make connections to other readings and discussions during the semester.

**CLASS RESPONSE:** Each class member is responsible for a thoughtful response to each discussion leader’s posting, which should be 75+ words in length. Once you’ve posted for the week, feel free to respond more briefly to colleagues’ comments.

▶ **FINAL PROJECT:** At semester’s end, you will submit for a grade a collection of creative writing, accompanied by an *Ars Poetica*. Detailed instructions will be distributed during the term. During the last week of the semester, we will also hold a **Reading | Slam** to celebrate your work.

## | GRADES & FINAL EVALUATION

Course grades will be based on the weighted average grades and according to the following percentages. The final grade will include my assessment of your overall contribution and progress in the class:

20%	<b>Attendance &amp; in-Class Contributions to fellow writers</b>
10%	<b>Discussion Leadership &amp; Response Postings</b>
25%	<b>Reading As Writers Responses (Analytic)</b>
25%	<b>Reading As Writers Responses (Creative Variations)</b>
20%	<b>Final Project</b>

### ANALYTICAL WRITING RUBRIC

**Excellent (A/4)** papers have clear theses and soundly organized arguments that reflect detailed, nuanced understanding of the text. They are precisely and concisely written and have few if any mechanical problems—even minor ones. They weave quotations into their arguments smoothly and forcefully. A vital, graceful voice animates such essays; they say something compelling in a compelling way.

**Good (B/3)** papers have clear theses and are thoughtfully and reasonably organized. They may be marred by a few infelicities (inappropriateness) of style, but they will have no major mechanical problems—and not many minor ones either. These are solid, disciplined papers that make a definite point in a logical, coherent manner to a definite audience.

**Satisfactory (C/2)** papers have a thesis supported by evidence. The writing is clean and properly proofed, but not always compelling; it may be marred by some minor mechanical problems and one or two major ones (like fragments or run-ons). While their arguments may not be particularly cogent, these papers do say something interesting, and they say it in a comprehensible and responsible way.

**Poor (D/1)** papers, while giving evidence of effort on the part of the writer, lack a thesis, have major mechanical problems, poor organization, betray serious misreadings of the text, and show little sense of subject or audience.

**Failing (F/0)** papers have weaknesses even graver than those indicated for poor papers. They usually betray a lack of effort on the part of the writer. Any evidence of plagiarism (intentional or otherwise) will result in a failing grade—and referral to the Academic Conduct Committee.

**DO YOU RECOGNIZE THESE AMERICAN WRITERS?**



**Allen Ginsberg**

**Emily Dickinson**

**Ernest Hemingway**

**Langston Hughes**

**Anne Sexton**

**Walt Whitman**

**Sylvia Plath**

**Alice Walker**