

Course Syllabus

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Course Description

Creative Writing is a special Internet-based course designed to help you explore the art of writing stories, either stories that are fictional or stories based on real experiences. You will be required to complete six fiction-writing exercises. You will write either one completely fictional short story, one story based on autobiography, or one story based on an oral history you have collected. In addition you will complete an exercise aimed specifically at each competence for which you have enrolled. Last, you will write a Final Essay in which you reflect on your learning and experience in the course. Throughout all of this activity, you will be expected to share your own efforts, and read and comment on the work of others in the class. The writing we do in this course is public writing and requires an audience. You will become that audience for each other.

Unlike other college writing courses, there are no class meetings. During this course, you and the instructor will use Internet tools like e-mail, the Annotations Environment and the online discussion forum to exchange assignments, work collaboratively, have class "discussions" and conduct workshop sessions sharing and critiquing the work produced in the course.

Course Goals

This course will enable you to:

- Differentiate between narrative and exposition (telling and showing)
- Apply the fundamentals of fiction writing- including elements of plot, character and setting
- Exercise the options involved in selecting a narrative point of view
- Apply narrative techniques to shape and create a story that is either wholly fictional, comes from your own life, or derives from the experiences of others
- Work to revise, rewrite, edit, and proofread your own work and help others with this crucial process
- Participate in online discussions and other forms of sharing the work generated by members of the class
- Explore those resources of the World Wide Web that are of interest to creative writers
- Reflect on your experience and production in the course and assess your own learning.

Course Resources

Textbooks – required

Bernays, Anne and Pamela Painter. *What If?* 2nd ed. New York: Harper Collins College Publishers, 2004.

Textbooks – optional

Minot, Stephen. *Three Genres*. 7th ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2003.

Ruszkiewicz, et. al. *SF Writer*. 2nd ed. New York: Longman, 2002.
(or – other Handbook of English.)

Web Resources

Click on "Web Resources" in the lefthand navigation bar of your online course to access a listing of current web links and resources.

Course Competences

This course presents you with the option of working on one or two of the following competences related to our central creative writing activity.

A-2-A	Can create an original work of art, explore its relationship to artistic form and reflect on the creative process
A-1-C	Can analyze artistic or textual works in terms of form, content and style
H-3-B	Can explain how two or more of the factors of race, ethnicity, nationality, socio-economic status, age, gender, sexual orientation or religion interact to shape oneself or others
H-1-X	Can explain how individuals, families or small communities of individuals perceive their lives in relation to the history and times in which they have lived
A-5	Can define and analyze a creative process.

If you select either H-3-B or H-1-X, this choice will influence the sort of story you write in Module 3.

If you choose A-1-C, then you should be especially active in the workshop sessions of our course, providing analysis, comments, and guidance to your peers.

If you choose A-5, then you will be doing some research and reading on the topic of "creativity."

Everyone will be involved in creating "an original work of art" (A-2-A) to some extent. More precise guidelines for your individual work can be developed in the Course Q & A forum and in private email consultation with the instructor.

Course Structure

This course consists of five modules which are described in detail on the following pages. Each module is broken into units. Several units contain online discussion topics and indicate the time period in the course when these discussions will take place. During these discussions, you will have the opportunity to exchange ideas with your virtual classmates about work in-progress. There is a Final Essay at the end of the course (Module #5). The criteria used to obtain a letter grade are described in the Course Grading Criteria section found below. You can check your grade at any time by e-mailing the instructor.

To view the course schedule, click on the [Schedule](#) link on the left-hand navigation bar. This page contains the most recently updated listing of the topics and assignments due for each week of the course.

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Assessment

Course Grading Criteria

Module #1 - 30 points total

Unit #1 – Assignment: using e-mail

- Send the instructor an e-mail message = 5 points
- Attach a document file to the e-mail note = 5 points

Unit #2 – Assignment: using the Discussion Forum = 10 points

- Find the Discussion Forum and leave a posting (3 to 5 paragraphs) there introducing yourself to the class.

Unit #3 – Assignment: Using the Annotations Environment = 10 points

- Find the Annotations Environment
- Log in
- Leave “marginal” comments on the document there.

Module #2 – Warm-Up Exercises – 300 points total

Unit #1 – Bringing Abstract Ideas to Life = 50 points

- Complete the exercise
- Post it to the appropriate discussion forum
- Read and comment on the work of three or more classmates.

Unit #2 – Person, Place, & Song = 50 points

- Complete the exercise
- Post it to the appropriate discussion forum
- Read and comment on the work of three or more classmates.

Unit #3 – Oh! That Sort of Person = 50 points

- Complete the exercise
- Post it to the appropriate discussion forum
- Read and comment on the work of three or more classmates.

Unit #4 – Creating a Character’s Background = 50 points

- Complete the exercise

- Post it to the appropriate discussion forum
- Read and comment on the work of three or more classmates.

Unit #5 – From Situation to Plot = 50 points

- Complete the exercise
- Post it to the appropriate discussion forum
- Read and comment on the work of three or more classmates.

Unit #6 – A Verbal Dance = 50 points

- Complete the exercise
- Post it to the appropriate discussion forum
- Read and comment on the work of three or more classmates.

Module #3 – A Major Work of Fiction

- Draft (200 points), comment (50 points), revision (100 points) – 350 points total
- Select ONE of the following.
 - Choice #1 – A Work of “Pure” Fiction
 - Choice #2 – A Work of Autobiographical Fiction
 - Choice #3 – A Fiction Based on Oral History
- Step #1 -- Create the story = 200 points (two weeks). Submit the story as a formatted attached document file in the Assignments area of the course website Please leave two blank lines between paragraphs.
- Step #2 – The instructor will post the story in the Annotations Environment. You are to read and comment on at least seven of the stories posted there, and participate in the “discussion” = 50 points (2 weeks)
- Step #3 – Revise the story you wrote, incorporate comments, and advice as appropriate = 100 points (1 week)

Appropriate length for this assignment is 2000 to 6000 words

Module #4 – Competence Specific Exercise – 75 points each

Select an exercise for each competence you are attempting, complete it, post a copy in the appropriate discussion forum, and submit a copy in the Assignments area of the course website. You may design your own exercise, but it must have advanced approval from the instructor. All exercises should involve some reading and writing for each competence you have undertaken in the course = 75 points each (150 possible)

Module #5 – Final Reflective Essay – 200 points total

An Essay Reflecting on your learning in the course = 200 points

- Write an essay in which you reflect on what you have learned as a writer and how you have changed. Throughout the essay you should use specific examples -- actual quotes-- from your work.
- You must address the terms of the competence which you are undertaking. For example, if you are attempting H-3-B you will need to "explain how two or more of the factors of race, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, age, gender, sexual orientation or religion interact to shape oneself or others." The work you did in Module 4 will be helpful here.
- Discuss your workshop experiences, both as a writer and a commentator.
- Conclude with some thoughts about what you have learned in the course and what you need to learn next to continue your development as a writer and a person.

Course Grading Scale

955 to 1030 Possible Points

Grades will be based on the following percentages.

- A = 100-90%
- B = 80-89%
- C = 70-79%
- D = 60-69%
- F = 0-59%

Pass/Fail Option: Students taking the course for Pass/Fail must have a minimum of 70% to pass and must complete all the assignments.

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Policies

Academic Integrity

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/homehandbook.html> for further details.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a major form of academic dishonesty involving the presentation of the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following:

- The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's.
- Copying of any source in whole or part with only minor changes in wording or syntax, even with acknowledgement.
- Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment that has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency.
- The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgement.

Plagiarism, like other forms of academic dishonesty, is always a serious matter. If an instructor finds that a student has plagiarized, the appropriate penalty is at the instructor's discretion.

Disability Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with disabilities on an individualized and flexible basis. The Office of Students with Disabilities (OSD) determines appropriate accommodations through consultation with the student. For certain learning disabilities and/or attention deficit disorders, the Productive Learning Strategies Program (PLuS) determines the appropriate accommodations. See the instructor for more information or call OSD at 773-325-7290 (phone) or 773-325-7295 (TTY); or call PLuS at 773-325-1677.

Incomplete Grades

The intent of the Incomplete grade is to allow students extra time to complete their final assignments. This need arises because, in the closing weeks of the course, they have an event of significant magnitude that adversely affects their ability to complete the course, e.g. serious illness, death in the family, overseas deployment, or natural disaster.

You must request an incomplete grade in writing two weeks before the end of the quarter. Incomplete grades will be considered only after you have satisfactorily completed at least 75 percent of the coursework, and you have an event of “Katrina” magnitude that prevents you from completing your course. Do not assume that you will qualify for an incomplete. Students who are failing the course at the point where they request an incomplete will not receive one, nor will they be granted after the end of the quarter. Incomplete grades are given at the discretion of the instructor.

If you do receive permission from the instructor to take an incomplete in the course, you will be required to complete a contract with the instructor, specifying how you will finish the missing work within the next two quarters (excluding summer). Incompletes not finished by the end of the second quarter (excluding summer) will automatically become an F grade on your transcript.

Instructors may not change incomplete grades after the end of the grace period without the permission of a college-based Exceptions Committee.

NOTE: In the case of a student who has applied for graduation and who has been approved for an Incomplete in his or her final term, the incomplete must be resolved within the four week grace period before final degree certification.

Protection of Human Subjects

For more information see: <http://research.depaul.edu/>

Demonstrating the acquisition of competences in this course can involve “interactions”—interviewing and or observing other people—discussing those interviews or observations with other class members and writing them up in one or more final report(s).

As such, these activities qualify as “research” with “human subjects” and are subject to University and Federal guidelines. Because it takes place in the context of this course, your research is exempt from approval by the School for New Learning’s Local Review Board only under the following conditions:

1. The information you collect is EXCLUSIVELY for the purpose of classroom discussion and will NOT be used after the term is over. If there is any possibility that you will EVER use it in further research or for publication, you must obtain approval from the Local Review Board before you begin.
2. You assess and ensure that no “harm”—physical, mental, or social—does or could result from either your interviews and/or observations or your discussion and/or reports.
3. The privacy and confidentiality of those that you interview or observe must be protected. Unless you receive specific permission, in writing, from the person(s) you interview or observe, please change their names, and make sure that their identity cannot be readily ascertained from the information you provide.
 - a. If you want to use real names and relationships, they must sign an “informed consent” document. For information on creating an “informed consent document” see, for example, <http://www.research.umn.edu/consent/>

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Course Expectations

Time Management and Attendance

SNL's online courses are **not** self-paced and require a regular time commitment EACH week throughout the quarter.

You are required to log in to your course at least **FOUR** times a week so that you can participate in the ongoing course discussions.

Online courses are no less time consuming than "face to face" courses. You will have to dedicate some time every day or at least every second day to your studies. A typical four credit hour "face to face" course at SNL involves three hours of classroom meeting per week, plus at least three to six hours of study and homework per week.

This course will require at least the same time commitment, but your learning activities will be spread out through the week. If you have any problems with your technology, or if you need to improve your reading or writing skills, it may take even longer.

The instructor should be notified if your life events do not allow you to participate in the course and the online discussions for more than one week. This is particularly important when there are group discussions or you are working as part of a team.

If you find yourself getting behind, please contact your course instructor immediately.

Your Instructor's Role

Your instructor's role in this course is that of a discussion facilitator and learning advisor. It is not their responsibility to make sure you log in regularly and submit your assignments. As instructor, s/he will read all postings to the general discussion forum on a daily basis but may not choose to respond to each posting. You will receive feedback to assignments.

The instructor may choose to designate "office hours" when s/he will be online and available and will immediately respond to questions. Depending on the instructor, this response may be by e-mail, instant messenger or telephone. Otherwise, you will generally receive a response to emailed or posted queries within 48 hours.

Your Role as a Student

As an online student, you will be taking a proactive approach to your learning. As the course instructor's role is that of a learning guide, your role is that of the leader in your own learning.

You will be managing your own time so that you can complete the readings, activities and assignments for the course, and you will also be expected to take a more active role in peer learning.

Credits

This course was designed and produced by Mr. Tom Sullivan and staff at the Center for Distance Education of the School for New Learning of DePaul University.

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