**ENGLISH 213| Spring 2017**

CREATIVE WRITING

Tuesdays/Thursdays, 12:30-1:50 pm HH 215

**Instructor:** Elizabeth Horneber

**Email:** Elizabeth.horneber@blc.edu

**Office:** HH 225

**Office hours:** Thursdays 3pm-5 and by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**Through regular writing to generate ideas and practice techniques, students fathom the creative process as they are led from exploring personal experience to transforming such experience into artful fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction. Prerequisite: ENGL110.**

This course is an introduction to *public* creative writing in poetry, creative nonfiction, and fiction as a way to develop different ways of seeing and understanding human experience.

Good writing is no accident, nor is it a result of lightning bolt inspiration. It is deliberate and planned. Writers toil and sweat and then go online to avoid toiling and sweating, and then toil and sweat some more. If they’re lucky, they might produce a few good pages. In this class we will investigate how to write those pages by reading published work and breaking it down in terms of content, form, authorial intent, and reader response. In light of those discussions, we’ll write our own creative work using a variety of prompts and invention and revision strategies and then critique the results in workshops. We will generate a lot of raw material, revise some of that material, and get familiar with some of the basic strategies for reading, discussing, and critiquing others’ writing.

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

* Students are able to adjust their use of spoken and written language to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
* Students are able to comprehend and create written texts.
* Students exhibit a foundational knowledge of literary terminology.

**TEXTS AND MATERIALS**

* *The Poet’s Companion*, Addonizio and Laux
* Various readings on MyBLC
* A notebook or laptop to bring to class for in-class writing exercises

**COURSEWORK AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Discussions**: This is a discussion/participation based course. So participate. Discuss. When looking at art, people often have different and varying responses. Much of what we learn will be from each other.

**Writing**: There will be out-of-class writing due to be turned in on MyBLC. You should also expect to do some writing in almost every class. Bring a notebook. If you sleep/text/talk through in-class writing time, your participation grade will suffer.

**Required Texts:** These will include a number of readings on MyBLC. **You are expected to print these** so you can refer to the texts during discussion. Keep up with the readings. Be ready to talk about them. The success of class activities depends on this. One of the best ways to become a better writer is to read—to examine compelling writing and figure out *how did they do that?* Reading will show you what is possible. It will show you how to apply craft. Looking closely at others’ work will make you better equipped to critique your own and your peers’ writing.

**Genre**: The texts and models we will read are drawn from the contemporary literary scene. That is, they are read, discussed, and seen as significant by current creative writing programs, literary journals, and other literary institutions. In other words, we probably won’t be reading vampire fiction or *Lord of the Rings*. That doesn’t mean we can’t get weird in our writing. Weird is good. But “world-building” is not our chief goal in writing for this class—especially not at the expense of some “human” center. Similarly, read with an open mind and realize that even if you don’t agree with the worldview, content, or aesthetics of a given poem/essay/story, that doesn’t mean there is nothing to be learned in terms of *craft* and *writing choices.*

**Workshop:** Workshops are widely accepted as an effective means of teaching creative writing. Workshops are a place to bring works-in-progress to be presented to your peers. Please respect your instructor and peers and submit work that is free of typos and grammatical issues. Input to your work will be provided through guided discussion, as well as written comments. In turn, you will be responsible for reading the work of your classmates and providing thoughtful, constructive feedback to them. You will submit your feedback in two ways: 1) printed and handed to the writer, 2) in a Coursework folder on MyBLC. It will be graded for thoughtfulness and thoroughness. In order to have your work read and workshopped by the class, you will be responsible for bringing printed copies of your work to distribute to your workshop group.

**Final Portfolio:** This will be turned in at the end of the semester and will consist of polished work generated throughout the semester. You will submit two poems, one creative nonfiction essay, and one fiction piece, as well as an additional piece in a genre of your choice. You will also write a reflection paper for each genre in which you explain and justify the revision choices you made and reflect on your growth in the genre throughout this class. Polished writing is the result of multiple rounds of writing and rewriting. *Save all of the drafting materials you develop for each assignment.* These materials might include brainstorming exercises, notes or outlines, early drafts with my feedback, and final drafts. You will need to turn these in for any pieces you include in your final portfolio so I can see the choices you made throughout the writing/revision process as well as your commitment to improvement.

**Broadside Project**: You will select a writer and study their craft, identifying common choices made by that writer. You will then write a piece that attempts to model that writer and use similar craft choices. You may receive feedback on this piece if you request it. Finally, you’ll create a broadside for your poem, combining image and text in an artful, meaningful way. You’ll display this to the full class, and turn in a justification essay that illustrates your study and your choices.

**Quizzes**: will happen without warning. If you’re prepared for class and have done the reading, they will be easy.

**Attendance**: Attend class regularly. Each time you miss class, you miss participation points (you can’t participate if you’re not there). Some classes involve more participation points than others. Additionally, more than three absences, for any reason, will result in your final grade being lowered. More than five will make it essentially impossible for you to pass. (Being late on more than two occasions will count as an absence.)

**Late policy:** I will not accept late assignments. Assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class on their specified due dates. This includes assignments due on MyBLC. Technical difficulties is not an excuse. When in doubt, email me your work.

**Cell phones**: Using your cell phone in class is not cool. If you are using it to access a reading or participate in a class activity, ok. But if your phone goes off or if you use it to text your friend (“i’m sooooo tired lol”) or scroll through facebook or use it for anything unrelated to class, you’ll lose participation points. I see you.

**Email**: I check mine all the time, and I expect you to do the same.

**Plagiarism:** Don’t do it. Plagiarism will be cause for failing assignments, the class and/or potentially being reported to Higher Ups.

**Extra credit:** Attend a Good Thunder Reading Series event (craft talk or reading) at MSU and write a 1-2 page reflection on the event, what you learned, what you enjoyed, etc. Full schedule found here: http://english.mnsu.edu/gt/

**GRADING**

Your final grade will weigh the various components of the course in the following manner:

* 25% Participation

*Attendance, engagement, participating in discussions, completing in-class writing, meeting deadlines, quizzes.*

* 2% Formal Poem Project
* 18% Workshop Critiques

*Graded on the quality and thoughtfulness of feedback to peers’ drafts*

* 10% Broadside Project and Justification

*Graded based on completeness of all components, the quality of your justification, the use of image to enhance the experience of your writing, and the harmony between your finished piece and its model.*

* 15% Outside Class Writing Exercises

*Graded for completion (Turned in on MyBLC)*

* 30% Final Portfolio

*Graded for level of achievement, demonstrated revision and polish, and the quality and thoughtfulness of reflection essays.*

(On MyBLC, these grades will be reflected in points. There will be 1000 total points in the class. This means your portfolio is worth 300 points, your broadside project 100, etc.)

Grading Scale

93-100 A

90-92 A-

87-89 B+

83-86 B

80-82 B-

77-79 C+

\*73-76 C

70-72 C-

60-69 D

59 and below F

**I reserve the right to revise the syllabus and/or course schedule as necessary throughout the semester.**

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Dates | Reading due | Writing due | Other due |
| Week 1—Poetry | | | |
| Jan 10  Intro to the Course |  |  |  |
| Jan 12  Images | PC (Poet’s Companion): “Writing and Knowing”  “Images” | Choose an exercise from **each** chapter. Spend 30 minutes on each.  Turn in on MyBLC. |  |
| Week 2—Poetry | | | |
| Jan 17  Metaphor | PC: “Poetry of Place”  “Simile and Metaphor” | Choose an exercise from each chapter. Spend 30 minutes on each.  Turn in on MyBLC |  |
| Jan 19  Controlling images  Persona Poems | PC: “The Family: Inspiration and Obstacle” | Choose an exercise from the chapter.  Turn in on MyBLC |  |
| Week 3—Poetry | | | |
| Jan 24  Voice/Style  Odes | PC: “Voice and Style” | Choose an exercise from the chapter.  Turn in on MyBLC |  |
| Jan 26  Lines/Rhythm/Tension  Form  Intro to Formal Poetry Assignment | PC: “Repetition, Rhythm, and Blues”  “The Music of the Line” | Choose an exercise from each chapter. Spend 30 minutes on each.  Turn in on MyBLC |  |
| Week 4—Poetry | | | |
| Jan 31  Witnessing/mock workshop | PC: “Witnessing”  MyBLC: Forche “The Colonel” | Choose an exercise from the chapter. 30 Minutes.  Turn in on MyBLC |  |
| Feb 2  Cold Read/Workshop: Odes |  |  | Workshop odes due |
| Week 5—Poetry | | | |
| Feb 7 | PC: “The Energy of Revision” |  | (3) Formal Poem Presentations |
| Feb 9  NO CLASS |  |  |  |
| Week 6—Poetry | | | |
| Feb 14  Found Poems  Intro to Broadside Assignment |  |  | (4) Formal Poem Presentations  Workshop Poems due |
| Feb 16  WORKSHOPS |  |  | Critiques due |
| Week 7—CNF | | | |
| Feb 21  Prose Poetry | Finney: “Resurrection of the Errand Girl”  Diaz: “The Last Mojave Indian Barbie” |  |  |
| Feb 23  What is CNF?  Detail/Reflection | Torres “On Being Remek”  Kelly Sundburg “It Will Look Like a Sunset” | Spend 30 minutes on prompt (MyBLC)  OR  Expand/Revise a prompt from class.  Turn in on MyBLC |  |
| Week 8—CNF | | | |
| Feb 28  Speculation | Miller “Ordinary Shoes”  Berger “Fernando and Marisela” | Spend 30 minutes on prompt (MyBLC)  OR  Expand/Revise a prompt from class.  Turn in on MyBLC | Bring 2 personal photos to class |
| March 2  Form | Moore “Son of Mr. Green Jeans”  Livingston “The Ghetto Girls’ Guide to Dating and Romance” | Spend 30 minutes on prompt (MyBLC)  OR  Expand/Revise a prompt from class.  Turn in on MyBLC |  |
| Week 9—CNF | | | |
| March 7  NO CLASS  Spring Break |  |  |  |
| March 9  NO CLASS  Spring Break |  |  |  |
| Week 10—CNF | | | |
| March 14  NO CLASS  Advising Day |  |  |  |
| March 16  Research/Associative thinking | Alicia Catt “Notes from the Great Pidgeon Race Disaster”  Will Baker “My Children Explain the Big Issues” | Spend 30 minutes on prompt (MyBLC)  OR  Expand/Revise a prompt from class.  Turn in on MyBLC |  |
| Week 11—CNF | | | |
| March 21  TBD |  |  |  |
| March 23  Cold Read/Workshop: Prose poems |  |  | Workshop Prose Poems due  Workshop CNF essays due |
| Week 12—CNF/Fiction | | | |
| March 28  WORKSHOPS |  |  | Critiques due |
| March 30  Story: Character, Desire, Obstacle  Flash Fiction | “Jealous Husband Returns in Form of Parrot”  Chaon “That’s Him! That’s the Guy!”  Saunders “Sticks” | Submit 30 minutes of writing to MyBLC  (See MyBLC if you need a prompt to get going) |  |
| Week 13—Fiction | | | |
| April 4  Characterization/Revelation of true character  Dramatic Monologue | O’Brien “Enemies”, “Stockings”  Weber “Sleeping” | Submit 30 minutes of writing to MyBLC  (See MyBLC if you need a prompt to get going) |  |
| April 6  POV | Wolff “Bullet to the Brain”  Davis “Mildred and the Oboe”  Kincaid “Girl”  Herbert “You Think You Can Stop Me” | Submit 30 minutes of writing to MyBLC  (Do more work on a story or start a new one) |  |
| Week 14—Fiction | | | |
| April 11  Structure | Saunders “The End of FIRPO in the World”  Shea “Jumper Down” | Submit 30 minutes of writing to MyBLC  (Do more work on a story or start a new one) |  |
| April 13  NO CLASS  Easter Break |  |  |  |
| Week 15—Fiction | | | |
| April 18  Scene/Summary/Dialogue | Hemingway “Hills Like White Elephants” | Submit 30 minutes of writing to MyBLC  (Do more work on a story or start a new one) |  |
| April 20  Setting/world | Cisneros “The Monkey Garden”  Carter “East on Houston”  Minor “The Question of Where We Begin” |  |  |
| Week 16—Fiction | | | |
| April 25 |  |  | Lit journal reading/mini-presentation |
| April 27  TBD |  |  | Workshop stories due |
| Week 17—Fiction | | | |
| May 2  WORKSHOPS |  |  | Critiques due |
| May 4  Read around/Broadsides |  |  | Broadsides due |
| FINALS—Portfolios due | | | |