

Fall 2015

ENGL 2160

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Recommended Citation

Hembree, Carolyn, "ENGL 2160" (2015). *University of New Orleans Syllabi*. Paper 446.
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"Write as if you were dying"
—Annie Dillard

Required Texts and Materials:

Starkey, David. *Creative Writing: Four Genres in Brief*. 2nd ed. ISBN: 1457611562
Large 3-ring binder, loose leaf, pen
Writer's notebook to be carried with you at *all* times (yes, there too)
Dictionary

Course Description:

This course provides students the opportunity to receive constructive feedback on their creative writing and participate in the critiques of peer work. Weekly workshops of student writing, as well as discussions of the assigned reading, will help beginners create and revise poems and prose.

An introductory writing course is a wonderful place to begin examining the various boundaries we erect between poetry, fiction, nonfiction, criticism, etc. In this class we will begin to understand how permeable those borders are so that as you develop as writers, you can access creative options available in multiple genres. To this end, we will focus on particular elements of creative writing that are essential to writing in any genre. We will explore description, detail, dialogue, imagery, tension, lyricism, etc. We will learn to navigate and read the world as writers, to realize the world as text, to understand that everything around us has the capacity to spawn creative work.

This course will be primarily a writing course. However, we will read various examples of prose and poetry in order to discuss craft and technique. We will develop an extensive literary vocabulary to facilitate our discussion of writing. We will use writing exercises to prompt in-class and out-of-class writing, and by the end of the semester, each student will have produced a substantial amount of creative writing.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Define and employ the terms used to discuss and analyze creative writing
- Receive and utilize feedback given in a supportive environment
- Acquire the critical skills necessary to improve your work on your own
- Select and revise a mini manuscript of poems and prose
- Compose a detailed analysis of your writing

Course Requirements:

Writing for Workshop. Your creative pieces will respond to specific writing prompts. **I will not accept handwritten exercises.** Include your name, the number of the exercise, and the date in the upper right hand corner. **If you would like for me to make copies of your workshop piece, turn it in to my office (LA 379) by 8 AM on the due date. Otherwise, make enough copies for the class, yourself, and me.** If you are not present for your scheduled workshop, you will lose your turn in the workshop rotation and participation points.

Notes on Workshop Pieces. Like most workshop classes, we will strive to supply specific feedback rather than more general, evaluative statements. I will frequently review peer feedback on the student writing. Please respond with relevant marginalia and a 5-7-sentence endnote.

Helicat Catalog. You will keep this messy inventory of locutions, dreams, movie titles, song lyrics, images, street names, gods, flowers, and so on in your writer's notebook. You will use an item from this inventory for each creative writing assignment.

Informal Writing Assignments. In-class Assignments and homework should include a heading as described for your creative writing and be typed or handwritten in ink. Bring loose-leaf and a pen to class.

Reading Review. You are required to attend and briefly "review" one professional reading from the list that I provide.

Final Portfolio and Aesthetic Statement. Your final portfolio will contain poems and prose that you have written for this class (drafts as well as **extensive revisions**). So keep a copy of all work that you turn in! Your aesthetic statement should discuss your influences and artistic development. Assignment sheet to follow.

Course Policies:

Safe Space. Please make our classroom a vital and respectful space. Come prepared. **Turn off your phone:** it can wait. Be timely. Listen.

Attendance. If you are not present to answer roll call, you will be marked tardy. Two tardies count as one absence. You are permitted to miss 3 class sessions. I will lower your final grade ½ letter for each subsequent absence.

Required Texts/Supplies. Please acquire the required texts (book, binder, paper, pen, dictionary). Bring them all to class every day.

Assignment Format. Please include your name, the date, and the assignment ("Response 1") on all class work. Provide a hard copy for my review: I do not accept emailed assignments. Always include page numbers for paraphrases and quotes. Please keep a copy of all work that I return to you.

Late Work. **I will not accept late assignments.** Any work not turned in during the class period that it is due will receive a 0. **Never email assignments to me.** One informal assignment grade may be made up with a bonus assignment. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to find out (from a classmate or me) what you missed: notes, homework, handouts, workshop pieces, etc. If you know you will be absent in the future, it is your responsibility to turn in assignments early.

Guidelines for Workshop Interaction. We will follow the workshop parameters on page 4. Always be prepared to talk about the pieces that are up for workshop that week.

Advocate System. As an advocate, it is your duty to begin the workshop discussion for your assigned fellow writer. You should briefly state what the piece is about; explain how it did or did not respond to the exercise; compare/contrast the piece with others we've read; and describe some feature we've been working on.

Grades. My evaluation of your creative writing will consider application of writerly strategies, **evidence of substantial revision**, and originality in thought and technique. Feel free to speak with me at any time about your grade and/or progress in this course.

Point Values.

Participation	20%
advocate duties	
preparation for class (having required texts)	
workshop discussion	
attentiveness	
promptness, regular attendance	
Homework, Classwork	25%
reader response assignments	
reading assignments	
quizzes	
group work	
notes on workshop pieces	

Aesthetic Statement (see Assignment sheet)	25%
2000-level analysis (style and content)	
inclusion of contemporary influences	
discussion of pieces written in class	
draft	
Portfolio and Weekly Creative Writing	30%
weekly writing (on time, responding to exercise)	
application of techniques <i>throughout the semester</i>	
significant and, at times, daring revisions	
consideration of my notes and workshop notes	

Academic integrity. Academic integrity is fundamental to the process of learning and evaluating academic performance. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. Refer to the Student Code of Conduct for further information. The Code is available online at <http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu>.

Accommodations. It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services as well as their instructors to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. For more information, please go to <http://www.ods.uno.edu>.

Office Hours. I am always happy to speak with students during my office hours. Please feel free to discuss any concerns you may have regarding the class, your grade, Assignments, or my notes. If my office hours conflict with your schedule, please speak with me. We'll work something out.

Workshop Guidelines.

1. Writers should come to class with a spirit of humility and an eagerness to improve their writing. It is neither your job to defend your writing nor "explain" it to us. If your piece is so unbearably good that you don't need feedback, please do not bring it to workshop. One purpose of workshop is to learn how others (who have no idea of your intentions) read your writing sample.
2. The writer should listen attentively and **write down helpful notes**. If you do not take notes, you will not receive credit for the workshop. This is a time for the writer to be seen and not heard. At the end of our discussion, you will be given the opportunity to ask the workshop questions, not school us on the actual meaning of your piece.
3. Readers should come to class prepared (with written comments) or they will receive a 0 for the day.
4. Comments should be **descriptive** rather than evaluative. As a reader, your job is to describe the piece's imagery, voice, tone, rhythm, character, dialogue, setting, etc. It is not, however, your job to decide if a piece is "good" or "bad." Be prepared to support your claims with examples from the piece.
5. After we've described the work and found some common ground as readers, we'll make suggestions to the writer. Be specific and sensitive. Rather than saying, "Stanza 2 is vague," or "I just don't like this kind of writing," you could say, "By further describing the boat in stanza 2, you might better develop the water motif at the end of the poem."
6. Of course, our discussion will consider the writer's intentions, but please avoid making personal comments about the poet. Even if you know "James" on an intimate level, please do not refer to his personal beliefs or practices. Rather, we'll talk about the speaker's actions, language, or beliefs.
7. It is considered insulting and greedy to not participate in workshop but benefit as a writer from the process. Additionally, your grade will suffer if you don't comment orally on the writing of your peers. If you feel nervous or intimidated, please offer up a simple question. (Sometimes these are most helpful to the writer anyhow.)
8. If you ever want to discuss a workshop session with me, please don't hesitate. I will be happy to chat about your experience as a reader or a writer. I am in a workshop myself, so I understand how difficult the process can be.

15 weeks

Assignments may change. Homework is underlined and listed by the day it is due.

CW: *Creative Writing: Four Genres in Brief*

- [Th] August 20** Class Introduction
- [T] August 25** CW 1-24 (Intro, Revision, Writing Poetry)
Response 1
In class writing exercise (Picture)
- [Th] August 27** CW 24-54 (Writing Poetry) and handout
Small group analysis
Advocates assigned
- [T] September 1** CW 68-97 (Kick-Starts, anthology) and handout
Poem using Kick-Start 6, 9, 10, 11, or 12 (p. 69-70) + 1 Hellcat Catalog find
In class revision exercise
- [Th] September 3** Workshop Poem
- [T] September 8** Workshop cont'd
- [Th] September 10** Workshop cont'd
- [T] September 15** CW 55-68 and handout (Poetic Forms)
Sonnet recitation
Response 2
Sign up for conferences
- [Th] September 17** Formal Poem
Workshop Formal Poem
- [T] September 22** Revision Handout
Revised Poem
- [Th] September 24** Class cancelled for conferences
- [T] September 29** CW 98-141 (Writing the Short-Short Story)
Response 3
In class writing
- [Th] October 1** Barton story + questions
Guest Writer
Rick Barton
- [T] October 6** CW 141-169 (Getting Started, Kick-Starts, Anthology)
Short-Short Story using 2 Kick-Starts (p. 142-144) + 1 Hellcat Catalog find

	In-class writing, small group analysis, revision exercise
[Th] October 8	Workshop Short-Short Story
[T] October 13	Workshop cont'd
[Th] October 15	MIDSEMESTER BREAK
[T] October 20	Workshop cont'd
[Th] October 22	<u>Fiction revision handout</u> <u>Revised Short-Short Fiction</u>
[T] October 27	<u>CW 170-209 (Writing Short Creative Nonfiction)</u> <u>Response 4</u> In-class writing Discuss aesthetic statements
[Th] October 29 Guest Writer Dahlia El-Shafei	<u>Guest Essay plus Questions</u>
[T] November 3	<u>CW 210-232 (Kick-Starts, anthology)</u> <u>Short Nonfiction using Kick-Start 1, 2, 5, 6, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 22, or 23 (p. 210-213) + 1 Hellcat Catalog find</u>
[Th] November 5	Workshop Short Nonfiction
[T] November 10	<u>Aesthetic Statement Drafts</u> Workshop
[Th] November 12	Workshop
[T] November 17	<u>Revised Short Nonfiction (with revision questions)</u>
[Th] November 19	<u>+1 Poem, Short-Short Fiction, or Short Nonfiction</u> Small group workshop
[T] November 24	Small group workshop
[T] December 1	Pair and small group revision workshop
[Th] December 3	<u>Portfolio and Aesthetic Statement</u>
[T] December 8 10 a.m. - noon REQUIRED	Portfolios returned, final grades distributed