



Introduction to Creative Writing Syllabus

“If you don't have time to read, you don't have the time (or the tools) to write.” –Stephen King

Course Information:

CRN: 40033

Course Title: Creative Writing I

Class Meeting Times: T/R 4:00-5:15 pm

Credit Hours: 3.0

Section: ENG 221-125

Term/Year: Spring 2019

Class Location: N201A

Contact Hours: 45

Faculty Contact Information:

Name: Professor Skaggs

E-mail: Cindy.Skaggs@ppcc.edu

Phone: 719-502-3621

Required Text:

Given PPCC's emphasis on Open Educational Resources (OER), the majority of readings will be openly available resources; however, over the course of the semester I will include readings and discussions from books that should become part of your writer's toolkit.

Prerequisites:

Students must have passed ENG 121 with a grade of C or higher. Students are responsible for ensuring they have registered for the correct course.

Course Description:

Teaches techniques for creative writing and explores imaginative uses of language through creative genres (fiction, poetry, literary nonfiction) with emphasis on the student's own unique style and preferred subject matter.

COLORADO STANDARD COMPETENCIES:

- I. Examine the structure of creative writing genres
- II. Analyze style
- III. Critiques creative writing
- IV. Experiment in techniques of creative writing
- V. Apply the writing process to achieve a polished final work

TOPICAL OUTLINE:

- I. Introduction
- II. Fiction
- III. Poetry
- IV. Literary nonfiction

For the ENG221/222 Master Course Syllabus and additional state Guarantee Transfer components, go to <https://www.pgcc.edu/mcs/eng>. It is also available in the course shell.

Course Policies:

Time requirement: Students should spend a minimum of 2 hours outside of class for every hour in class on coursework, which for this class is at least 6 additional hours each week (varies by student).

Professor Skaggs' goals for this course:

1. To teach creative writing skills
2. To help students generate new work
3. To expose students to new writing forms and a diversity of creative voices

Students should:

1. Engage in weekly work, discussions, and arrive to class prepared.
2. Check the course online Announcements.
3. Submit all work on time.

Formatting & Submitting Assignments

- All assignments must be in **manuscript** format (MS Word (.docx) or .pdf), and posted to D2L using the assignment Dropbox.
- **Assignments may not be submitted via email.**
- You may *not* make up discussions or in-class writings that are part of daily class work.

This is a writing and reading intensive course: We will read every week. In *On Writing*, Stephen King asserts that reading “is the creative center of a writer’s life.” As a writer, we read to “travel across the human experience, to save ourselves from our own limits, to extend the range of what we can know and understand and feel and love” (Sellers 37).

Your Writing is Public

Every piece of writing you do for this course is exposed to fellow readers and writers through the critique and workshop process. Part of becoming a good writer is learning to appreciate the ideas and criticisms of others. Remember that you will be expected to share your writing, so **avoid writing about events and sentiments that are uncomfortable sharing with our writing community**. Select your topics responsibly and bear in mind the possible effect your words may have on others.

Criticism Civility

One portion of your participation grade involves your ability to give and receive constructive criticism. I expect you to

- participate in reading and critiquing the work of others;
- critique with grace and kindness, even if you don’t like the piece;
- accept the suggestions with grace, even if you don't like the criticisms;
- treat everyone with civility and respect.

Workshops

Workshops are *about the text*; locating the strengths and weaknesses and finding ways to make the work stronger. Be critical but be constructive. As a workshop participant, you must:

- read the drafts for workshop;
- write feedback, positive and critical, on the manuscript(s);
- and have suggestions in mind for class discussion.
- Expect to be called upon.

Finally, some thoughts on what workshop is *not*:

- workshops are not about egos;
- workshops are not about being defensive;
- workshops are not about hurling insults.

Plagiarism:

This is my pet peeve, so don't go there. All work must be original work. For creative writers, plagiarism is particularly egregious. **Plagiarism is cheating, and the grade it earns is zero.**

Returned Papers

Graded papers will be returned with a one-week minimum and three-week maximum.

Description of Assignments:

Module Writing Prompts: Individual writing prompts, typically four per module, that encompasses your genre specific writing prompts. Graded pass/fail.

Module Reading Responses: Individual reading responses, one per module, that encompasses the genre reading and your response to it. Graded pass/fail.

Writing Projects: Within each module, there is a larger assignment that encompasses the best of your writing for that module.

Workshop Responses: Students participate in the course workshops and write reflections on the workshop process from the perspective of giving/receiving critiques.

Writing Portfolio: At the end of the semester, after workshopping, revising, and editing your writing prompts, projects, and in-class writings, you will choose your top pieces to include in the final portfolio. You will also be required to publicly read one of these pieces.

Writing Community EVENT: Developing a writing community is a vital part of living as a creative writer. As such, students must attend at least one writing EVENT from a list of several options, and write a reflection on the reading, workshop, or class.

Grading Distribution and Criteria

Writing Prompts (12 @ 25 points)	300 pts
Module Reading Responses (3 @ 25 points)	75 pts
Workshop Responses (2 @ 25 points)	50 pts
Public Reading (1 @ 25 points)	25 pts
Writing Community EVENT Reflection	50 pts
Writing Projects (4 @ 75 Points)	300 pts
<u>Writing Portfolio</u>	<u>200 pts</u>
Total	1000 pts *

Scale

90-100%	A
80-89.9%	B
70-79.9%	C
60-69.9	D
< 59.9%	F

Course Schedule*

► *Note: Items in **bold** are assignments that will be turned in to D2L Dropbox*

- Most class sessions include guided writing prompts, so arrive on time with materials you need to write (laptop, phone, notebook, pen/pencil, your lucky writing charms, etc.).
- You may use earbuds or a headset while working on writing prompts (as long as the volume does not disrupt the class).
- Assigned readings, videos, and prompts are available in the course shell.

Week 1: Read Like a Writer

Course, Instructor, and Student Introductions

Read: “Read like a writer (RWL)” by Mike Bunn

Read: “Shitty first draft” by Anne Lamott

Watch: Annotation video (on your own)

Watch: “Poetry in Maximum Security Prison” (in class)

DO: Course expectations and social compact (in class)

Week 2, 3, 4: Poetry

Read: “Words that Paint; Colors that Speak” (from *The Mind's Eye: A Guide to Writing Poetry*) by Kevin Clark

Lecture: “Imagery”

Read: Poetry module readings (see course shell)

DO: Poetry reading response

Watch: “An Origin Story” (in class)

DO: Origin stories prompt

DO: Scaffolding prompt

DO: Imitation prompt

DO: Nicholas Samaras prompt

DO: Writing Project #1: Poetry

Week 5, 6, 7: Creative Nonfiction (CNF)

Read: “The Woolf and the Moth” (from *Crafting the Personal Essay*)
by Dinty W. Moore

Lecture: “Order from Chaos”

Watch: “Hardwired for Story” (on your own)

Read: “A Braided Heart” by Brenda Miller

Read: CNF module readings (see course shell)

DO: CNF reading response

DO: Metaphor prompt

DO: Braided essay prompt

DO: Object prompt
DO: Second person (POV) prompt
DO: Writing Project #2: CNF

Week 8, 9, 10, 11: Fiction

Read: “Does It Really Matter” (from *Plot versus Character*) by Jeff Gerke
Lecture: Assorted fiction lectures on characterization, plotting, pacing, etc.
Watch: *Star Wars* episode 4 and/or *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*
Read: “The Things They Carried” by Tim O’Brien
Read: Fiction module readings (see course shell)

DO: Fiction reading response
DO: Class character prompt
DO: Turning point prompt
DO: Secret fear prompt
DO: Flash fiction prompt
DO: Writing Project #3: Fiction

Week 12-14: Revision: Workshop, Portfolio, & Campus Reading

Read: Chapter 9 “Revision” by Sellers
DO: Plotting Project
DO: EVENT response
DO: Workshop response
DO: Poetry and Prose campus reading

Week 15: The Business of Writing

DO: Final Portfolio

*Course schedule subject to change based on the needs of the class/instructor to include additional readings, minor worksheets / assignments, and additional reflections. In addition, course readings may change to include the work of any visiting writers.