Eng 263: Introduction to Creative Writing
Dr. Terry Martin
Fall 2015

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Office Hours: Mondays 1:00-3:00
(and by appointment)

Required Texts
Heather Sellers
Bedford/St. Martins 2013

A writer’s notebook/journal, with section dividers and removable pages

Course Description
Welcome to English 263. In this introductory class, you will explore various genres of creative writing as both readers and writers—by reading and discussing creative nonfiction, short stories, and poems written by professional writers and by writing your own. You’ll approach texts with a writer’s eye, discuss them from a craft perspective, and practice some of the techniques you discover.

This class will help you develop strategies for inventing, drafting, critiquing, and revising your own creative work, and provide you with the critical expertise and technical language to help you better critique your and others’ work-in-progress. Sessions will alternate between class discussion, in-class writing exercises and activities, and workshop sessions. During class discussion, you will be expected to explore and exchange ideas about writing, selected readings, and issues raised in class. During workshop sessions, you will be expected to share drafts of your writing, and to respond to other students’ drafts.

Because creative writing is an art form, doing it well takes lots of practice. As with sports or music, creative writing requires working and reworking to accomplish something you can be proud of, something that astonishes you, something that you can’t believe you wrote. The idea in this class is to begin to move from writing to express feelings to writing literature to shape and reflect meaningful human experience—to shift from focusing on the self to focusing on the reader. This move from personal expression to powerful creative writing as art can be exciting, vigorous, and rewarding. The effort is worth it. Trust me: if you work hard, by the end of the quarter, you will have discovered some favorite new writers you didn’t know and you’ll have written some new pieces that you’re proud of.

Course Goals
I have identified my specific course goals for you below. I realize that you may have others of your own to add to the list. I hope that you will let me know what they are; perhaps I can assist you in meeting them. English 263 will provide you with the opportunity to:

1.) Become familiar with a sampling of good creative nonfiction, short stories, and poems—some early and some recent, representing a variety of cultural perspectives.
2.) Read, analyze, and discuss various genres in order to discover the moves writers make to draw readers in, hold their attention, and transport them to other worlds.
3.) Evaluate specific works as examples of, modifications of, or challenges to genre conventions.
4.) Explore these works through small and large group discussion in order to develop your understanding of the ways language makes us know, think, feel, and act.
5.) Write formal and informal responses to creative nonfiction, short stories, and poems that demonstrate engagement, reflective thought, effective inquiry, perception of patterns in language features, and responsible interpretation.
6.) Complete practice writing exercises and assignments in order to produce generative seed material and learn how to mine that material for text/images that live and breathe.
7.) Compose and revise a creative nonfiction essay, exhibiting an awareness of audience and knowledge of genre conventions.
8.) Write and revise a short story, exhibiting an awareness of audience and knowledge of genre conventions.
9.) Compose and revise poems in a variety of forms, exhibiting an awareness of audience and knowledge of genre conventions.
10.) Revise and edit your own work for clarity and coherence.
11.) Critique the work of others in constructive, effective ways.
12.) Complete, organize, and turn in your writer’s notebook/portfolio, according to instructions.
13.) Demonstrate academic integrity in all written projects.
14.) Contribute to a positive, constructive, professional classroom environment.

What Will Be Expected of You

1.) Come to class on time. Late arrivals disrupt the class, and will hurt your grade. If you are late, assume you’ve been marked absent unless you talk to me after class.

2) Arrive prepared. Bring your book, a pen, your reading/writing journals, and completed assigned work with you to class every day. On days we do peer editing, bring the assigned number of copies of your completed draft.

3) Read the assigned chapters in our text and the assigned creative nonfiction essays, short stories, and poems.

4) Complete all daily writing assignments on time.

5) Actively participate in all class activities. Since this is a discussion and activity class, it’s essential that you keep up with your reading and writing, attend class, contribute to discussions, and participate in activities.

6) Compile and submit a writer’s notebook/portfolio of all of the writing you do in this class (including in-class writing exercises, your responses to assigned readings, numbered and labeled drafts of your new work, written responses to public readings in the Lion Rock Visiting Writers Series, revised pieces for final evaluation, etc.) according to instructions.

7) Participate in small group discussions where you formulate interpretive questions about various genres of creative writing and respond to them. From time to time, you may be responsible for leading the discussion on a particular piece.

8) Write and submit a revised creative nonfiction essay, a revised short story, and several poems.

9) Participate in peer editing/response groups in which you critique the work of others in constructive, effective ways and receive feedback on your own work.

10) Attend two live readings from the Lion Visiting Writers Series and write responses. (Dates & times to be announced). You will be asked to provide proof of attendance by attaching a ticket stub or program to your written responses to these readings.

11) Submit writer’s notebook/portfolio— on time, organized, clearly labeled, complete, and professional, according to instructions.

Manuscript Format and Workshop Copies
All writing assignments must be typed. Include your name on all your assignments and PROOFREAD your work. If an assignment is filled with typos and grammatical errors, the evaluation will go down considerably. Please staple the manuscript in the upper left corner and number your pages. Poetry should be single-spaced; fiction and nonfiction should be double-spaced. Use 12-point font and 1-inch margins. When copies are required for workshop exercises, students should make enough copies for everyone in their workshop group including themselves, and a copy for me.
Grading
Quizzes 10%
Revised Creative Nonfiction Essay 25%
Revised Short Story 25%
Participation/Professionalism 10%
Reading/writing notebook/portfolio 30%
(Daily exercises, assignments, responses to readings/viewings, etc.) 100%

Attendance
Show up for class. It's important that you be here. You can miss up to three class days with no explanations; after 3 absences your final grade will drop one full letter grade for each day missed. If you miss 6 or more sessions, for whatever reason, you will not receive credit for the class.

Participation/Professionalism
Arrive on time, and come prepared. Bring your book, pen and paper, and completed assignments to class every day. On days we do peer editing, bring the assigned number of copies of your completed draft. Since this is a discussion and activity class, it's essential that you keep up with your reading and writing, attend class, contribute to discussions, and participate in activities.

Original Work, Written for This Class, This Term
All the creative writing that you turn in for English 263 must be written by you, and must be written specifically for this course. You may not submit any work that was substantively begun before our class began.

Late Work
All papers must be submitted in class on the date they are due. Papers turned in after this will be marked down one letter grade for each day late. Reading/writing notebook/portfolios for the class will not be accepted late.

Classroom Conduct
I abide by University policies concerning appropriate classroom conduct, academic dishonesty, plagiarism, incompletes, etc. Please review these sections in your CWU catalogue if you are unfamiliar with them. (Note: The use of someone else's work without citation is plagiarism. It's unethical. Don't do it, for it will result in a failing grade).

Incompletes
Incompletes are given only for catastrophic events or severe extended illness. They are not an acceptable solution for poor time management. While I understand that occasionally there are unforeseen events and circumstances beyond your control, I believe you can, and should, finish this class in the quarter you take it.

Diversity
In my classroom, diversity is welcomed and celebrated. I will not tolerate any forms of prejudice or discrimination, including those based on age, color, disability, gender, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status. We are here to learn in a climate of civility and mutual respect.

Disability-Related Accommodations
Central Washington University is committed to creating a learning environment that meets the needs of its diverse student body. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning, discuss your concerns with the instructor. Students with disabilities should contact Student Disability Services to discuss a range of options to removing barriers in the course, including accommodations. Student Disability Services is located in Bouillon 140. Call (509) 963-1202 or email ds@cwu.edu for more information.

"A writer is not so much someone who has something to say as he is someone who has found a process that will bring about new things he would not have thought of if he had not started to say them."

William Stafford