

English 4603-001: FICTION WORKSHOP

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Catalogue Description

ENGL 4603 - Fiction Workshop

Nature of short story and longer forms of fiction, critical approaches to fiction, and practical experience in writing and revising text. May be repeated for maximum of 6 hours credit with permission of instructor.

PREREQUISITE: ENGL 3607.

3.000 Credit Hours

3.000 Lecture hours

Extended Course Description

Students write and submit stories for class discussion. The role of these discussions is to aid the writer in the development and improvement of the work during the revision process. Examples of published fiction will be examined and discussed with attention to the techniques and materials used in fiction writing.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to write a short story using the techniques of realistic fiction.
2. Students will demonstrate knowledge of a critical vocabulary when discussing published stories and classmates' stories, and in written critiques.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to accept constructive criticism and to revise in accordance with editorial suggestions.

Requirements

A previous fiction writing course, and/or permission from the instructor, is necessary to enroll. Students already enrolled in the creative writing program do not need a permit.

Required: a minimum of 18 pages of original fiction, edited, not first draft -- two stories, minimum 9 pages each. Stories should be complete, not in-progress, unless you are writing a novel. Short exercises may be assigned. Written critiques of other students' work are required.

Students are responsible for supplying paper copies of their stories to all members of the class, at least one week in advance of the discussion. Bring enough for each member of the class, plus 2 for the instructor (1 to be returned to you, 1 for the file). On paper, on time, not via email.

Plus/minus grading may be used. Final grade depends on:

Original stories 60% .All work must be new, not submitted in any other class or project, either past or current. Realism, either contemporary or historic, is your goal. Genre fiction (i.e. romance, sci-fi, fantasy, children=s lit, etc.-- each of which has value and

requires specialized study) will not count toward page requirement. Quality counts. Standard English is required; exceptions for dialogue.

Participation 30% Contributions to class discussions and written comments on classmates= work. Provide specific remarks on how the elements of fiction are represented in a story, with particular attention to characterization, use of subject matter, conflict, plot, dialogue, setting, scene, narration, tone, and point of view. Critiques of classmates= stories should be at least a half page single-spaced, or one page, double-spaced.

Quiz average 10%

Discussions of Work

“Honest criticism is hard to take, particularly from a relative, a friend, an acquaintance, or a stranger.” -- Franklin Jones

Avoid becoming defensive about your work or irritated by discussion of your own fiction or that of others. It's important to develop a professional, critical distance. This course seeks to promote objectivity. If you feel upset after a discussion, come see me. Strong feelings indicate that you care, but remember, your goals are productivity, improvement, and discovering your voice and your material. After a discussion of your work, take time to consider what was said. There will be suggestions that you can employ in revision or in future work. Always thank your classmates. The better a writer you become, the more you'll be able to receive feedback with equanimity. If you feel stung by a comment, ask yourself, was there a grain of truth in it? Praise is appealing, but critical suggestions and your acting on them promote growth as a writer. Learning how to write better is not a 1-2-3 process. It's complicated and clumsy. To achieve breakthroughs, be receptive to information from all kinds of sources.

Required Texts. You are expected to secure access to these books by the time assignments are made.

TBA

Recommended

The Elements of Style, by Strunk & White

Attendance policy

Missing more than 2 sessions will result in a grade no higher than C. These are not allotted absences. You will be marked excused if you are ill and notify the instructor.

If a student is unprepared for class and makes less than a B in participation, grade will be no higher than C, regardless of quality of written work. Late work will be penalized.

Three tardies = one absence.

Note: Check your memphis.edu email account throughout the semester. Important course information might be posted to these accounts.

Student Disability Services <http://saweb.memphis.edu/sds/g-iff.htm>
Accommodations will be made for documented special needs.

Schedule (subject to change) TBA

On your due dates, bring enough copies for all members of the class, plus one for me, plus a copy for your file. Your story will be discussed at the next class meeting.

Important: If you fail to give the class at least a week to read your story, you may forfeit your chance to have the story discussed. Do not develop the habit of emailing stories, especially not at the last minute. Email is unreliable, and the use of it to disseminate stories seems to foster procrastination. It makes for a less organized workshop than the practice of bringing paper copies to class and actually putting them in people's hands.

If you email your stories instead of providing hard copies, and if you don't provide copies at least a week in advance, your grade may be negatively affected, and I can't promise the same level of response to late stories as to those that are submitted on time, and on paper.

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