

FICTION WORKSHOP: English 7602/8602 -001

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Catalogue Description

ENGL 7602 - Fiction Workshop

Emphasis on the examination and the discussion of fiction written by students. May be repeated 10 times for a maximum of 30 credit hours. PREREQUISITE: Permission of instructor.

3.000 Credit Hours

3.000 Lecture hours

Overview

Students' original fiction is the primary focus of attention in the course. Students write and submit stories for class discussion. The primary role of these discussions is to aid the writer in the development and improvement of the work. Examples of published fiction will be examined.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to write a short story, novella, or novel, using the techniques of realistic fiction.
2. Students will demonstrate knowledge of a critical vocabulary of literature and the craft of fiction writing. This knowledge will be shown during class discussions 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 30 pages of original fiction, edited, not first drafts. Manuscripts should be presented in one or two sections, minimum 10 pages each. Written critiques are required. Critiques are due the day a story is discussed.

Each student is required to participate in a scheduled conference with the instructor.

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

- Quality of written work (originality, coherence, style, and other factors. All work must be new, not submitted in any other class or project, either past or current. Realism, either contemporary or historic, is required. Genre fiction (i.e. romance, sci-fi, fantasy, children's lit, etc) will not count toward page requirement. Standard English is required; exceptions for dialogue. Stories should be finished. If a submission is part of a novel,

find a stopping point for a section that you want to be workshopped. If you're working on a novel, let me know in advance. (67%)

- Contributions to class discussions and written comments on classmates' work. Provide specific remarks on how the elements of fiction writing 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. Type all comments. Give a copy to me and a copy to the student whose story is being discussed. (33%)

Check your University email account for information that may be posted about the course.

Discussions of Student Work

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

Try to avoid becoming defensive about your work or irritated by discussion of your own fiction or that of others. Strive for professional distance toward your work. After a discussion, consider what was said. Which suggestions should you 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 truth in it? Praise is sweet and appealing, but revision promotes growth. To achieve breakthroughs, be receptive to information from all kinds of sources.

Attendance policy

Missing more than 2 sessions of this once-a-week class will result in a grade no higher than C. That does not mean you are allowed two absences. It means absences are considered on a case-by-case basis. If you're 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. 3 tardies = one absence.

Required Texts: You are expected to have the book(s) by the time assignments are made.

Author John Gardner
Title: *The Art of Fiction*
Publisher: Random House, Inc
ISBN: 0679734031
Anthology of stories, TBA
Selected handouts

Recommended Texts

Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft, by Janet Burroway (any edition)
The Elements of Style, by Strunk & White (any edition)

MFA students are required to attend River City Writers Series events.

Schedule (subject to change)

Note: Individual conferences will be scheduled.

[Accommodations will be made for documented special needs.](#)

Student Disability Services 678-2880

110 Wilder Tower

<http://saweb.memphis.edu/sds/g-iff.htm>

Student Health Center 678-2287

<http://saweb.memphis.edu/health/>

Counseling Center 678-2068

211 Wilder Tower

<http://www.memphis.edu/cpcc/>

Due Date Worksheet: Choose two, one before Spring Break and another after. Submit at least 10 pages of double-spaced work each time. If you owe pages at semester's end, turn them in by the last day of class. On your due dates, bring enough copies for all class members, plus two for me (one goes in your file, the other comes back to you with my comments). Your story will be discussed at the next class meeting or thereafter.

Important: Unless you 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. It makes for a less organized workshop than the practice of bringing paper copies to class and putting them in people's hands.

Likewise, if you email your stories instead of providing hard copies, and if you fail to 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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