

ENG120: INTRODUCTION TO CREATIVE WRITING

Instructor: JodiAnn Stevenson

Email: jodiannstevenson@delta.edu this is the best way to reach me!

Phone: (989) 686-9159 this is Sue Deford's number, the administrative assistant for the English division. If you have an emergency and for some reason can not email me, call her and she will get in touch with me.

Office: S015

Office Hours: I will be available at Brewtopia – a cafe in Bay City at 810 Saginaw St. – on Wednesday mornings 9-11am. Stop by anytime during these hours. I can also make an appointment for most other times during the week.

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to writing poetry and fiction. As such, we will be studying poetry and fiction and how both are made. We will also be writing a great deal of both and reading a great deal of both. Throughout this course, you will be keeping a Blog (an online writing journal). The course will culminate in a public “publishing” of a polished version of your Blog.

Course Outcomes & Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

Outcome 1: Generate original work in several genres.

Objectives

- A. Write personal essays, fiction, drama and poetry.
- B. Develop skills with the basics of each genre.

Outcome 2: Revise and edit original work

Objectives

- A. Rewrite work in an effort to improve it.
- B. Demonstrate an understanding of revision.

Outcome 3: Interact productively with instructor and peers for the purpose of developing writing skills.

Objectives

- A. Give and receive verbal and written responses to student work.
- B. Demonstrate an open attitude toward feedback.

Outcome 4: Learn by reading contemporary or classic writers

- A. Demonstrate ability to understand a contemporary or classic writer's craft and style in each genre.

Course Materials:

You are required to buy and read the following book:

Mooring Against the Tide: Writing Fiction & Poetry by Jeff Knorr and Tim Schell (this is your “textbook”),

Course Requirements:

Reading

You will be assigned one or two poems or stories from your textbook to read each week for which you will complete a discussion board online in Educator.

You will be assigned a chapter or two from your textbook each week for which you will complete chapter responses in Educator.

Writing

You will be required to keep a blog, or an online writing journal, throughout class. For the first 5 weeks, you will have specific writing activities to accomplish in this blog. You may add additional work whenever you'd like. The idea is to write as much as possible each week.

“Finished” Poetry & Fiction

You will hand in 2 “finished” poems and 2 “finished” stories throughout this class. You will be given specific assignments for these pieces.

You will complete a final polished blog entry that includes at least 7 (including revisions of all 4 “finished” pieces you've given me and your workshop piece) finished pieces and a 1-2 page introduction exploring your growth as a writer this semester. You are required to make your blog public at this point.

Workshop

You will be required to share your work with the rest of the class and receive feedback on your work from your classmates twice this semester (once with a poem and once with a story). These workshops will take place in the Discussion Board on Educator.

Grade Distribution:

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Reading Discussion (15 points each x 5) | 75 points |
| Chapter Responses (15 points each x 6) | 90 points |
| Weekly blog entries (50 points each x 5) | 250 points |
| Finished Pieces (50 points each x 4) | 200 points |
| Final Polished Blog | 250 points |
| <u>Workshop (50 points each x 2)</u> | <u>100 points</u> |
| Total Points Possible | 965 points |

Grading Scale:

- A = 93-100%
- A- = 90-92.4%
- B+ = 88-89.4%
- B = 82-87.4%
- B- = 80-81.4%
- C+ = 78-79.4%
- C = 72-77.4%
- C- = 70-71.4%
- D+ = 68-69.4%
- D = 60-67.4%
- Below 60% is Failing = E

Gradebuilder:

You can figure out your own grade for this class anytime you want. The way to figure out your grade is to add up the number of points you have received so far in the semester and divide this number by the total number of points possible so far in the semester.

You may view your assignment grades online, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on Educator. Just go to “Assessments” then click on

“Grades”. Keeping track of how you're doing in class is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY – and is incredibly easy with Educator.

Usually, Educator will actually even give you your current grade – so you don't even have to do any math. However, Educator will not give you the correct overall grade until all of your grades have been entered for each assignment. There may be times when your “current grade” looks much lower than it should because I haven't had time to enter grades yet. If this is the case, do the calculations yourself with the above formula.

Following an assignment due date, your grades will be posted online in the gradebook. **None of your grades will automatically appear.** I will have to grade and then manually enter all of your grades so don't expect to receive them right away. Also, these grades that I have to manually enter will usually be reported as “0” until I enter them – this is just how Educator works, I can't change it. Don't be alarmed by this – as long as your assignment shows as being “submitted,” you will receive a score soon. I will do my best to get grades recorded within one week of the due date but from time to time, it might take a bit longer.

If you hand work in early, which you are encouraged to do, understand that I may not even look at that work until the due date so, the earlier you hand in your work, the longer you'll probably be waiting for your grade. (It still works out better for you to hand your work in early because it'll be done.)

As I mentioned above, by clicking on the "Assessments" button, and then by choosing the "Grades" link, you will be able to see your scores and current grade in the class. Towards the bottom of the gradebook you will see these percentages:

Total Percentage: 46.03%

Current Percentage: 95.31%

The "Total Percentage" includes ALL assignments, and is NOT your current grade in the class. The "Current Percentage" is the number that indicates how you are performing right now in the course so it is this one that you want to pay attention to. But, this “current percentage” is only correct if I have graded all assignments to date.

General Overview of Class Layout:

The Course Calendar below will help you stay on target with due dates throughout the semester.

Your first stop each week will be the week's packet. There are 8 packets: 7 weekly packets and one introductory packet. As your course calendar indicates, you will complete the work in your introductory packet in the first 2 days of class.

Each packet will include a tasksheet. This tasksheet is the first thing that will appear when you click on each packet. Each tasksheet will give you a list of every task that you need to complete within that week and the due dates for each of those tasks.

Each packet will also contain all of the links to all of the assignments (or tasks) that you need to complete within that week.

While you are working through your assignments, you will probably have questions. The place for general questions, that others in the class might benefit from hearing answers to, is "The Cafe" which is a discussion board on Educator. The place for specific questions, related to just your own work and grades, is in a private email to me.

Strategies for Success:

1. It takes time, discipline, motivation, commitment, organization (and probably a few other characteristics that I can't currently think of) to be successful in an online (especially a seven week) course.
2. You will be very dependent on technology in this class. Therefore, it is wise to prepare for disaster. If you are prepared when a disaster strikes, the inconvenience will be minimal.
3. BACK-UP, BACK-UP, BACK-UP -- Anyone who has spent time working on computers knows that they crash. So, back-up your material frequently by saving. I highly recommend saving all of your writing (especially Discussion Board postings and responses) in Word

and then copying and pasting them into the appropriate pages when you're done. I've lost more than a handful of paragraphs by just clicking the wrong button or my computer freezing mid-paragraph.

4. Have a crash plan -- know where there is another computer with a reliable internet connection available (as suggested in the course materials) in case yours dies.

5. BE EARLY. BE EARLY. BE EARLY. Taking quizzes early, posting discussion boards early, and sending in assignments early means you won't have to lose points for late work. Late is late, period. Remember, every faculty member has been to college, we know the excuses!

6. In order to succeed in this class, class participation is a must. You CANNOT make up discussion board points. The due dates are known well in advance so that you can avoid any misses.

7. Be neat, be thorough, be careful with all of your work.

8. Despite what you may think, teaching someone does not ensure learning. I can't teach you what you don't want to learn. You learn. No one can learn for you. This feels particularly true in an online course. I've heard many students complain that they feel they are teaching themselves in an online course and in a way, because you don't have constant face-to-face interaction and reminders, you are. I am doing all that I can to make this as interactive an experience as possible but the bottom line is, you will get out of this class what YOU put into it. Most of the information you get from this course will be gleaned from READING – either online in the documents I write for you or link for you or in your textbooks. Read carefully, critically and thoughtfully and you will learn what you are willing to learn. So, be willing to learn!

Other Stuff:

The Cafe:

As mentioned above in the “General Overview of Course Layout,” I have added a Discussion Board called “The Cafe.” This is the first place you should go with any general questions about the assignments, material, course policies, etc.... This will be an open area for discussion. The Cafe will be open all semester. The reason you want to post questions here is that almost always when you have a question someone else has the same question but is too shy to ask it or hasn’t thought to ask it. When you post a question, everyone can benefit from reading the answer. You may also help each other if you know the answers – but I will monitor to make sure everyone is on the right track. If you have a very specific question related to just YOUR own work, grade, etc... that is obviously something you’d deal with in a private email to me.

Communication with me:

As I explain at the top of this syllabus, email is the best way to reach me. I check email at least once every day. I usually check email in the morning but not always. You should not expect to hear from me in less than 24 hours of sending me an email – during the week. Often, I will respond much quicker than this but I can't guarantee that. Do not be surprised if it takes me slightly longer than 24 hours to get back to you on occasion. If you write me during the weekend (after 6pm on Friday), it may take longer than 24 hours for me to respond. In other words, just because this class is online, do not expect to be able to reach me 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week. Your educator site is ALWAYS available to you. I am also very much available to you – just not every moment of every day. I will always respond to you. But, you should not email me then sit by your computer and wait for me to respond. If some complication arises from our inability to get in touch with one another immediately, we will work that out – don't worry.

I do not say any of this to make you feel like it will be “difficult” to reach me. I say this because I’ve had several students in the past who think because they are taking this class on a computer that I, myself, am a computer. I am not a computer. I am a living, breathing person with 2 small children and a family and a life – just like you are living, breathing people with lives. I am dedicated to you and it is important to me to respond as quickly as I can to all of your needs – I

just don't want you to worry if I don't respond IMMEDIATELY, the way that I could if I were only some machine.

Work Time Expectations:

You are expected to spend as much time online in our educator site as you would in the classroom. Because this is an online class, all of the discussion and activities that you would be engaging in if it were a face-to-face class are replaced by a variety of online activities. You should expect to spend the 2 hours that you would normally be in this class online. In addition, most college instructors and administrators agree that you should be spending about 2x the hours of any given class on homework. You should not be surprised then if it takes you an additional 4 hours a week to complete the work you have to do for this course. If you are struggling in class, the hours you should expect to commit to this class increase. Alternatively, it is probably possible to complete the work for this course in less than 6 hours / week but if it takes you 6 hours, you shouldn't be surprised.

UNDERSTAND: The writing that you receive from me in this class via email, this syllabus, and weekly packets is the same as all of the spoken direction and teaching you would be receiving from me in a face-to-face class. "Reading carefully" in this class is the same as "Listening carefully" in a face-to-face class. You can not simply "skim" my emails, this syllabus and weekly packets and expect to understand everything in this class. If you were in a face-to-face class and slept in the back of the room all the time and only listened to a quarter of what I said out loud, you would also not be able to understand everything in the class. If you are not reading EVERYTHING carefully in this class, you are not paying attention.

Late Work:

You may not hand in work late for credit. Once an activity in Educator has passed the due date, it will no longer be "active" which means you won't be able to access it. ANY other work handed in late will receive no points. Because this is an online class and our work takes the place of the work we would be doing in a face-to-face class, it needs to be done in a timely manner for you to keep up with the material. Once again, please pay attention: I WILL NOT ACCEPT

ANY LATE WORK FOR CREDIT. Go ahead and get your work done early – at least then you know for sure it won't be late.

Academic Dishonesty:

Handing someone else's work in with your name on it or Plagiarizing will cause you to fail that assignment. If you try this genuinely heinous, annoying, not-to-mention illegal act a second time in my class, you will fail the entire course. Plagiarism also could be grounds for expulsion from the college.

Appropriate Behavior:

Maturity and respect for others are necessary traits for your success in this class. I will delete any interaction on the discussion board or in workshops that is inappropriate – and you will not receive credit for any assignment where this inappropriate interaction took place. Also, I expect this respect and maturity to extend to the material that we will cover in this class. You are taking a WRITING class. I expect that you understand you are going to have to read and write quite a bit of material that you may not have just picked up to read for pleasure on your own. Your personal opinion about the reading you are expected to do is inconsequential to your ability to learn from the readings. Comments like, “this is stupid,” “I hate this”, “why do we have to read this junk” or any variation on these themes are inappropriate and will be considered disrespectful behavior. College students are expected to behave like adults, so please do.

Disabilities:

Delta College is committed to equal opportunity in education for all students, including those with documented physical or learning disabilities. If you have a disability and will be requiring assistance, please contact me and Mike Cooper in Disability Support Services, located in the Counseling and Multicultural Office in D-102, as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations.

Course Calendar:

***This gives you an overview of the entire semester. More detail about all of these assignments can be found in the Weekly Tasks folder on our PBWiki site.**

MAT= Mooring Against the Tide

| | READ: | DUE: |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Introductions: | Introductions Packet, Syllabus | Introductions DB, Set up Blog |
| Week One | Week One Packet; MAT Ch 1-3; MAT: Dickinson poem on page 130 and Whitman poem on page 131 | Blog Entry (BE1) Chapter Response 1 (CR1) Discussion Board 1 (DB1) Poem #1 Due |
| Week Two | Week Two Packet, MAT Ch 4, 6 & 7 MAT: Frank poem on page 134 and Thompson poem on page 134 | BE2 CR2 DB2 Poem #2 Due Post Workshop Poem on Workshop 1 Discussion Board |
| Week Three | Week Three Packet; MAT Ch 11 & 12/ Ch 14 & 15 MAT: Garcia poem on page 142 and Humes poem on page 145 | BE3 CR3 DB3 Respond to Workshop Poems on Workshop 1 Discussion Board |
| Week Four | Week Four Packet; MAT Ch 16, 17 & 18 MAT: Marquez story on page 370 & Carver story on page 333 | BE4 CR4 DB4 Story #1 Due Post Workshop Story on Workshop 2 Discussion Board |
| Week Five: | Week Five Packet; MAT Ch 19, 20 & 24 | BE5 CR5 DB5 |

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| | MAT: Bambara story on page 376 & Robison story on page 383 | Story #2 Due Respond to Workshop Stories on Workshop 2 Discussion Board |
| Week Six | Week Six Packet MAT Ch 10 & 23 | Write Introductions & Work on Final Polished, Publishable Blog |
| Week Seven | Week Seven Packet | Final Blog Due Course Evaluations |