

ENG 254., CREATIV WRIT FICTN

Creative Writing: FICTION ENG. 254

This course focuses exclusively on the short story genre, though many of our concerns would apply to other fiction formats. Students will write three short stories in the course of the semester, one short (2-3 pages) and two longer (8-12 pages; typed and double-spaced). In addition, there are a number of short exercises on such elements as metaphor, character description, dialogue, symbolic setting, and such choices as names and titles.

Students also have a major responsibility as readers of each other's fictions. Several class sessions are devoted to group reading and comment on their work. Thus the student is expected to build a general awareness of how fiction works from both a reader's and a writer's perspective.

The course does not include a final exam. The students accumulate a portfolio of their work during the semester which is submitted in the last week. Their grade for the class is largely dependent on the quality of their writing, plus their fulfillment of their responsibilities as members of the class. Attendance and vocal participation are crucial in this regard.

My office number is s-7, in the basement of the Fine Arts Bldg. I'll be there a half hour before class, and I can usually meet with you after class at your request. My office phone is 686-9169, and you can leave a message if you don't catch me in. The best time to call is during office hours. My Email address is jfaugust@alpha.delta.edu.

There are two times you should definitely call. If you miss class, you should call soon to get the information you need for the next session, though be aware this is sometimes hard for me to provide. Also, if you're working on an assignment and you have a question about what it is you're supposed to be doing, call for clarification.

Evaluating your writing.....

There are three standards I use to evaluate the quality of your writing in this class:

- 1) I require a good basic command of English. This includes such considerations as sentence control, good grammar, spelling, and punctuation. You need to be able to write English before you can write a successful story. Your carefulness is often an issue here, and I expect you to submit careful work.
- 2) I'm looking for good storytelling, as we define it in the course of the semester. Does your story contain conflict, climax, and conclusion? Are you able to retain focus on a major character? Is there good balance between dialogue and description? Can you use metaphorical language? Can you avoid trite phrases? Can you set up realistic dialogue successfully? These, and others, are all storytelling concerns.
- 3) It's important that your writing fulfill the assignment. Does your story contain a magic element? Have you limited your cast to 2-3 characters? Did you include at least one metaphorical expression in the course of the story? You need to adhere to the requirements of the assignment, as in any class.

Of course, it also helps if your story is interesting, moving, meaningful, imaginative, compelling, thought-provoking, and memorable. These are ultimate goals, however, and striving for the qualities listed above will help you achieve them.

Getting in touch:

My office number is S-7, in the basement of the Fine Arts Building. My office phone is 686-9169; please leave a message if you don't catch me in. In a pinch you can sometimes reach me through my secretary, 686-9159. My e-mail address is jfaugust@delta.edu.

There are two times you should definitely call. If you miss class, you should call soon to get the information you need for the next session. Also, if you're confused on an assignment, you should call for clarification. In addition, I appreciate you letting me know if you'll be unable to attend class.