

Instructor: Dr. Ray Lacina

Office/Phone: S-9 (in the basement Fine Arts)/989-686-9389

E-mail: raymondlacina@delta.edu

Office Hours:

I'm regularly available online during the Spring, and am happy to set up an on-campus or telephone meeting.

OVERVIEW

This course is about writing, and all of the stuff that goes into writing – reading, thinking, challenging ourselves to look at the world through new eyes. We're focusing on writing short fiction – but don't think that the skills and techniques that you'll use to craft compelling fiction can only be applied to writing short stories. Generating ideas, reading critically and rewriting – especially rewriting – are skills you'll find useful in any writing situation.

We will explore the craft of telling a story, but we'll also read short stories to see how professional writers do what they do. We'll also practice specific techniques using the exercises in *What if?*. Finally, we'll read and discuss each others' short stories in writing workshops.

LEARNING ONLINE

By deciding to take this course on-line you have chosen to participate in a new kind of learning. Instead of listening to me lecturing in a traditional classroom setting, you will actively engage your subject through reading, reflection and writing. I will be there throughout the course to offer suggestions, answer questions and provide guidance, and you should call, write or e-mail me whenever you need help.

You will, however, take the over much of the initiative in your learning. You'll decide when to do your work and when to drop by and participate in group discussions. You'll also be able to look ahead to upcoming assignments and lectures. That said, assignments and journal entries do have fixed due dates. While you can generate your essays according to your own schedule, they must be submitted on time.

The result will be a much deeper involvement with the work you're doing, and, it is expected, a much deeper understanding of your subject once you've completed this course. Throughout you will rely on this course guide to direct your studies, and will complete several essays in order to deepen your analysis of the literature you're reading (and to give the professor something with which to evaluate you).

How to succeed:

In order to do well in an online course, you've got to keep on top of things. For this course, this means:

- Check into the course regularly -- in the Spring, this really means daily. Pay

close attention to the announcements -- I'll post summaries of what's expected each week in a weekly announcement, usually to be posted over the weekend. During the week I'll post changes and additional reminders.

- Expect to work throughout the week. There's no way to succeed trying to cram work in over the weekend! If there's a discussion due (which there will be) or a group exercise, you'll need to make your initial posts early in the week, and group exercises will need to be coordinated early on. **If you can't work during the week, or don't have regular, easy access to the Internet, you might reconsider taking this as an online, Spring semester course.** It won't take long to get behind in a 7 week course!
- Take an active part in all discussions and group activities.
- Read instructions carefully, and immediately ask if you have any questions. I've got a Help!!! board open for course questions. If you've got a question about your own grade or work, feel free to e-mail, call or set up a time to drop by my office.
- Be proactive. If you're feeling at all lost or confused, contact me right away!

IMPORTANT NOTE ON E-MAIL; Although Educator will let you send an e-mail, it isn't set up to receive e-mail messages. You must use your Delta Webmail account to contact me! I'll also send group e-mails there -- so check it daily!

COURSE POLICIES

Participation: Your participation in our discussions is your "attendance" for this class -- which means you've got to show up each week and take part. Your initial post needs to be substantive -- at least a few well-thought-out paragraphs which, if appropriate, make references to any assigned readings. This post needs to be made early enough in the week that others have time to read and respond. You'll also usually be expected to post at least two follow-up responses to other students -- again, substantive. "Me too" doesn't count!

Late work: Late work will drop one grade for each day it is late.

Plagiarism: Representing someone else's work as your own is a serious offense and will result in an "E" for the assignment, and may result in a failing grade for the course. We will be discussing plagiarism at length in class, so no excuses will be accepted.

Gateway Criteria: All story drafts must:
Be typed/word-processed.

1. Use Times New Roman or Arial 12 point font.
2. Use default margins (1" left and right, 1.25" top and bottom).

Required Text

What If? Writing Exercises for Fiction Writers, Bernays and Painter, 2nd Edition.

Grading (note -- the amount of weekly work may vary, depending on our progress through the term)

Discussion/Workshops: 30 pts./Week x 7 = 210pts.

Exercises: 30 pts./Week x 7 = 210 pts.

Rough draft: 80 pts.

Final Story: 500 pts.

Total points: 1000

You can keep track of your current grade by clicking on "Assessments" and "Grades" in Educator.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Keep in mind this is a very general schedule, designed to give you a heads up on major due dates and reading -- each week's tasksheet will give more detailed deadlines for that week's work! Also keep in mind that this is a tentative schedule -- I reserve the right to tinker! Any changes will be posted to the Announcements and in the current week's tasksheet.

| Week | Work Due | Week ends on: |
|--------|--|---------------|
| Week 1 | Introductions; Week 1 Writing Exercises | 5/17 |
| Week 2 | "Shiloh"; Week 2 Writing Exercises Short Story Idea 1 Due | 5/24 |
| Week 3 | Story Idea 2 Due; Week 3 Writing Exercises | 5/31 |
| Week 4 | Story Draft Due; "Cathedral"; Week 4 Writing Exercises | 6/7 |
| Week 5 | "Gryphon"; Week 5 Writing Exercises | 6/14 |
| Week 6 | Story Workshop | 6/21 |
| Week 7 | Short Story Due | 6/29 |