

Creative Reading & Writing

COURSE DESCRIPTION

When we write poetry, fiction, and personal essays, we search our own memories and imagine other people's lives to create works that not only communicate truths to the reader, but also change ourselves. In *Creative Reading and Writing* we will start with the basics of written expression by reading texts and completing exercises that build some of the 'core strengths' of writing: sound, setting, character, and dialogue. Then we will move through three genres – essay, fiction, and poetry – spending a week on each. We will start each week by examining pieces that exemplify the possibilities of the form, reading together closely, discussing, and writing response papers. Then we will try our hands at writing in that week's genre and presenting the results in an atmosphere of openness and encouragement. At the end of the term, students will submit a portfolio of critical and creative work from their chosen genre, and present a formal reading. Students will be graded equally on their critical work, creative work, and class participation.

TEACHING METHODS

Students will read a number of texts in advance of class each week. Classroom session will feature lectures, group discussions, presentations of analytical and creative assignments, and peer review exercises.

EXPECTATIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Students will be expected to read class materials on time, participate in discussions, complete written assignments in and out of the classroom, work analytically and creatively, and present their work to the group. There will be a response paper as well as creative work presented to the class every week. At the end of the term, students will submit an analytical and creative piece for grading.

TEXTBOOKS

Enrolled students will be notified of an anthology to purchase before the session. All other readings will be provided electronically.

I'd also recommend a grammar text such as this one: http://www.amazon.com/Style-Lessons-Clarity-Grace-Edition/dp/0321898680/ref=pd_cp_b_0

TENTATIVE OUTLINE

Week 1: Building Blocks

We will read and discuss poems and passages of prose, and complete a number of in-class writing assignments. Students will work spontaneously and creatively both in class and in short assignments to be completed at home. The activities of Week 1 will introduce students to the building blocks of creative writing, and also prepare them for the type of work they will be expected to complete over the course.

Week 2: Essay

We will read and analyze two types of essays: memoir and profile. Students will conduct interviews, write about their memories, and describe people they know. We will also discuss the type of essays expected in the university application process. Students will end the week by presenting a personal essay that could be used in the college application process.

Week 3: Fiction

We will conduct close readings of two short stories and students will write detailed responses to them. Then we will conduct collaborative writing and editing exercises. Students will write scenes of fiction, and present them to the group.

Week 4: Poetry

Our final week will begin with analysis of different types of poems, looking at rhyme and rhythm, and listening for the musicality in language. Students will write and perform poems. We will end with a discussion of the genres we have covered. Students will edit work collaboratively then present their chosen portfolio pieces to the group.

The goal of the course is that students will be improve their capability to analyze literature and express themselves in writing. Beyond that, students may improve their ability to write college application essays and speak compellingly before a group.

