Course Description:

In this course, we will be examining, writing, and critiquing both fiction and poetry in order to form a greater understanding of the writing process. Although the ultimate goal of this class is to improve your creative writing skills, this course will also allow you to become better readers, a trait that will carry over into other areas of study as well.

Required Texts:


*Note: An older edition of this anthology will not work, as the readings change each year when new writers are awarded prizes.*

Secondary Texts: These will consist of short stories, poems, or essays scanned by me and distributed in class.

Suggested Texts for This Class (or life in general): Dictionary, rhyming dictionary, or thesaurus. You can find these online, if you prefer.

Other Materials: USB or other storage device (don’t rely only on your computer), access to a printer, standard materials (pens, paper, etc.).

A Note on Printers: Printers are beasts from hell. You, as a responsible student and adult, are required to print copies of your work for class. Please know that the university printers can be finicky, so please plan accordingly. I will not be accepting excuses such as “I’m twenty minutes late because of printing problems.” It is your responsibility to print in advance.

Course Requirements:

This course involves reading, writing, and group discussion. In order for the class to function properly, you will be expected to show up on time with your homework completed. As a writing course, this class will rely heavily on writing poetry, fiction, and responses to any outside work that will be required over the course of the semester. Failure to complete homework will result not only in a lowered grade, a grumpy instructor, and an overall sense of stress, but will also fail to make you a better writer. That’s the secret. If you want to become a better creative writer, then you must do just that: Write.

- **Informal Exercises 10%** -- Informal exercises will consist of short responses (about a half to a page in length) to various readings, questions, and in-class activities.
- **Writing Exercises 10%** -- Writing Exercises will be assigned throughout the semester and will consist of poems, short scenes, etc. These will be often collected and commented on by be, and you
can expand them for the final project if you so choose. 10 or so of these will be assigned over the course of the semester.

- **Report on a Contemporary Author 10%** -- Near the beginning of the semester, you will be assigned a contemporary author. Then, over the course of the semester, you will research this author’s life and work, which will ultimately result in a 5-10 minute presentation on this person and a short write up about your discoveries.

- **Class Participation 20%** -- The class cannot work if you do not contribute to discussion, bring your work to workshop, or comment on the work of your peers. In order to keep class running smoothly and ensure that class is not run by two or three students only, I expect you to speak at least once per class. Just once. This excludes, of course, asking to go to the bathroom. You will turn in one typed copy of your comments to your classmate and one copy to me.

- **Final Portfolio 50%** -- At the end of the semester, you will turn in all of your creative work to me. After fiction and poetry workshop, when you have considered the initial responses of your peers and the instructor, you will be required to revise one story (about 1500 words) and two poems. These revised forms will be included in the portfolio for grading. This will be due the last day of class. **Grades will be determined based off of overall improvement, as well as whether or not it was obvious that work was put into these pieces over the course of the semester.**

Handy Chart Breakdown of Points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Total Points (Out of 1,000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informal Exercises</td>
<td>Half a page to a full page response to readings, workshops, or day to day activities.</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>Half a page of typed workshop comments, at least one verbal contribution per class, timely submissions to workshop.</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Exercises</td>
<td>Poems consisting of 10 to 20 lines or fiction scenes of 2 to 3 pages.</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation on Contemporary Author</td>
<td>5-10 minute presentation and short written report on assigned contemporary author.</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Portfolio</td>
<td>Everything you’ve written this semester, including one revised story and two revised poems. A short artist statement should be included to explain your revisions and also how you’ve grown as a writer as a result of this course.</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Workshop Method

THE GENERAL IDEA: The writing workshop proceeds simply: A student produces a manuscript, which is distributed to the members of the workshop in hard copy form. Note: Putting money on your debit dawg at the beginning of the semester is a must if you don’t have access to a printer at home. Cost for printing out two stories and two poems for 21 people (your classmates and me) can range from 20 to 30 dollars. Keep in mind that I selected a textbook that would be have minimal cost to you, and I will be provided a number of printed texts at my own cost, so think of the money you will spend on printing as a textbook fee. **Electronic copies will not be accepted.**

OUT OF CLASS: Students read the manuscript in private and make critiques of it that are conducive to its revision.

IN CLASS: During workshop, students present their ideas for the manuscript's improvement and revision. Each story or poem will have assigned a “first critic.” This student should prepare a 1 page, single spaced assessment of the piece’s strengths and weaknesses, and will present on his/her ideas for a few minutes at the beginning of the workshop. Then the rest of the group jumps in. We discuss constructively the merits and flaws of the manuscript under consideration, always with an eye toward providing the writer with ideas for the manuscript's improvement. The writer is silent throughout his/her workshop. The instructor will guide the course of conversation and contribute as necessary. All comments should be text-driven and must be supported by specific reference to the text. Refer liberally to your written critiques for topics of conversation. Be concise and clear. When the time for discussion is finished, critics will hand a copy of their written critiques to the writer. I would like to emphasize here that **20% of the points are reserved for participation, which means sitting silently during discussion WILL affect your final grade.** At the end of workshop, the writer may briefly ask the class any questions for clarification, then we will move on to the next student.

Short Statement of Principle

A creative writing workshop is the creation of all of its participants. It is a community of mutual responsibility: writers fulfilling the duty of producing original, lucid, interesting manuscripts; readers fulfilling the critical duty of taking each manuscript as seriously in the editing as the writer has taken in its creation. You will all in your turn fulfill both roles. Behave accordingly.

Class Attendance/Late Work

You have three unexcused absences (Note: If you are more than ten minutes late, this will count as an unexcused absence). For every following absence after the first three, your grade will be reduced by one letter grade. Please arrive on time. The workshop format demands that work be submitted punctually. No unexcused late submissions will be accepted.

Policy on “Incomplete”

An INC is assigned when, for reasons beyond their control, students engaged in passing work are unable to complete all class assignments. An INC must be changed to a completed grade within a time period designated by the instructor but not to exceed one semester from the close of the term in which the course was taken, or graduation, whichever occurs first. Should the student fail to complete the course within the time period designated, not to exceed one year, or graduation, whichever occurs first, the incomplete will be converted to a
grade of F and the grade will be computed in the student’s grade point average. Students should not reregister for courses in which an INC has been assigned with the intent of changing the INC grade. Re-registration will not prevent the INC from being changed to an F.

**SIUC Writing Center**

The Writing Center offers free tutoring services to all SIUC undergraduate and graduate students and faculty.

Morris Writing Center: 453-1231

**Disability Support**

Students who require accommodations for physical or learning disabilities should contact the Disability Support Services office (453-5738). The Disability Support Services office will provide Accommodations Agreements that students with differing needs may return to me.

**SIUC Email Policy**

Students are required to check their official email address provided by the University on a regular basis and to respond to messages in a timely manner. This email address will be an official mechanism for instructors to correspond with students. Students should familiarize themselves with the complete Official SIUC Student Email Policy by visiting the website at http://policies.siu.edu/policies/email.htm.

**Emergency Procedures**

SIUC is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our control, we ask that you become familiar with the SIUC Emergency Response Plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) program. Emergency response information is available on posters in every building on campus and in the Emergency Response Guideline pamphlet. It is also available on BERT’s website at www.bert.siu.edu and on the Department of Safety’s website www.dps.siu.edu.

Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting your location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency. The Building Emergency Response Team will provide assistance to your instructor in evacuating the building or sheltering within the facility.

**Policy on Accommodating Religious Observances of Students**

Students absent from classes because of observances of major religious holidays will be excused. Students must notify the instructor at least three regular class periods in advance of an absence from class for a religious holiday and must take the responsibility for making up work missed ahead of time. Students should familiarize themselves with the complete Policy on Accommodating Religious Observances of Students in the Undergraduate Catalog.

**Academic Honesty/Plagiarism**

See the Morris Library Guide on plagiarism (http://libguides.lib.siu.edu/plagiarism). As defined by the SIUC Student Conduct Code, acts of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to:
1. Plagiarizing or representing the work of another as one’s own work;

2. Preparing work for another that is to be used as that person’s own work;

3. Cheating by any method or means;

4. Knowingly or willfully falsifying or manufacturing scientific or educational data and representing the same to be the result of scientific or scholarly experiment or research;

5. Knowingly furnishing false information to a university official relative to academic matters;

6. Soliciting, aiding, abetting, concealing, or attempting acts of academic dishonesty.

**Saluki Cares**

The purpose of Saluki Cares is to develop, facilitate and coordinate a university-wide program of care and support for students in distress. By working closely with faculty, staff, students and their families, SIUC will continue to display a culture of care and demonstrate to our students and their families that they are an important part of the community. Contact Saluki Cares: Call 618-453-5714 or Email: siucares@siu.edu

**Important Dates**

Spring Break: March 7-15

Last day to drop course with W: April 5