

*Reality leaves a lot to the imagination.*

—John Lennon—

# Intro to Creative Writing: Poetry/Fiction

## Spring 2020

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point  
ENGL 253, Section 2  
T/R 3:35-4:45 CCC 206

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### Course Description

This course will explore the ways in which language—sharpened, focused, and refined to the quality of art—helps us navigate the vagaries of the human condition. Reading and writing intensively, we hope to uncover the strengths and limitations of poetry and fiction. We will critique classic examples of each form, take what we learn, and experiment in our own writing. Students will be expected to complete at least one 5-8 page short story and 7 poems. Roughly half the semester will be devoted to each form. We will share our work in class and regularly open it up to a peer critique. Students must be willing to test their imaginations and improve their work through revision. By semester's end, you'll be expected to turn in a portfolio of revised work. Laziness will not be tolerated: attendance and participation are mandatory.

### UWSP Learning Outcomes – Investigation Level-Arts

Students will:

- Describe, analyze or critique creative works utilizing knowledge of relevant aesthetic criteria or stylistic forms.

Do at least ONE of the following

- Identify and explain the relationship between particular traditions or genres of creative expression and their social, historical or cultural contexts.
- Demonstrate an understanding of creative expression by producing or performing a creative work.

## Required Materials:

- One Notebook for notes and in class writing assignments
- Mary Oliver, *A Poetry Handbook*.
- Instructor will provide other handouts.

## Participation

Students will be required to participate in each class. This means asking questions, challenging the texts and encouraging your peers. The participation requirement will not be met if the student sits quietly through discussion and workshop and fails to engage the material. Students are also expected to complete all of the weekly reading. Expect pop quizzes based on the material.

## Attendance Policy

This course depends on your attendance and participation. *Unexcused absences* will not be tolerated. After **TWO** unexcused absences your final grade may be lowered a half-letter for every absence thereafter. **FOUR** unexcused absences may result in you being unenrolled from the course. *Three tardies will count as one absence.*

\*Do not email me to ask what we covered in a class you missed. Use your student contacts.

If you must miss class for an excusable reason you are obligated to notify me by email before class is scheduled to begin. I define an excused absence as a class missed due to illness, mandatory religious obligations, certain University activities, or unavoidable circumstances.

## Respect

You are expected to respect your peers. Personal attacks will not be tolerated. Make sure your critiques are geared toward the materials at hand. Learning how to give polite, constructive criticism will improve your own writing more than you can imagine.

## Recording Policy

Students may not make audio, video, or photographic recordings of lectures or other class activities without written permission from the instructor. Anyone violating this policy will be asked to turn off the device being used. Refusal to comply with the policy will result in the student being asked to leave the classroom, and possibly being reported to the Dean of Students.

## Workshop

Everyone is expected to put their short story up for workshop. This is a chance to hear what other people have to say about the text. Sit back, take notes and watch how people have reacted to your work. This immediate feedback is invaluable and gives you the opportunity to assess the successes and shortcomings of what you've hoped to achieve.

All stories must be emailed to the classlist ONE CLASS PERIOD before they are supposed to be workshopped. For example, if your story is up on a Tuesday, your story is due the Thursday before. If your story is due on a Thursday, your story will be due the Tuesday before. Students are expected to print off a copy, read the story twice, make helpful notes in the margins, and compose a one-page critique letter. These letters are to be at least a page in length. Half the letter should address things the story does well. The other half should offer helpful suggestions on how the piece might be improved in revision. Disrespectful remarks, whether spoken in class or written on someone's story, may be cause for dismissal.

## Grading

Grades will be based on the following:

Participation:		50%
Major Assignments:	5-8 page short story	15%
	7 poems	15%
	Portfolio of revised work	20%

(The portfolio should include revisions of 3 poems and your story)

## Assignment Format

All assignments must be typed on white paper **double-spaced**, in **12 pt. Times New Roman**. **One inch margins all around**. I can spot doctored assignments from a mile.

At the top of each assignment you should type:

Name

Date your story is to be workshopped

Eng 253 Section 2

Snowbarger

## Cell Phones & Other Electronic Devices

Please silence/turn off these items at the beginning of class and leave them stored. If devices become a distraction you will first be warned; continued distractions will *not* be discussed but may result in significant loss of Participation Points (50% of your final grade).

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism is taking credit for work that is not your own. There will be serious consequences if I find that you have stolen other people's work and turned it in as your own. You are also expected to turn in new work. Recycling old work is also considered plagiarism. (See the University's stance on plagiarism below).

## Rights and Responsibilities

UWSP values a safe, honest, respectful, and inviting learning environment. In order to ensure that each student has the opportunity to succeed, we have developed a set of expectations for all students and instructors. This set of expectations is known as the *Rights and Responsibilities* document, and it is intended to help establish a positive living and learning environment at UWSP. Click here for more information:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Pages/rightsandresponsibilities.aspx>

Academic integrity is central to the mission of higher education in general and UWSP in particular. Academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) is taken very seriously. Don't do it! The minimum penalty for a violation of academic integrity is a failure (zero) for the assignment. For more information, see the UWSP "Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures" section of the *Rights and Responsibilities* document, Chapter 14, which can be accessed here:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/SRR-2010/rightsChap14.pdf>

## Learning Inclusive Environment

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law requiring educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information about UWSP's policies, check here:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADA/rightsADAPolicyInfo.pdf>

If you have a disability and require classroom and/or exam accommodations, please register with the Disability and Assistive Technology Center and then contact me at the beginning of the course. I am happy to help in any way that I can. For more information, please visit the Disability and Assistive Technology Center, located on the 6th floor of the Learning Resource Center (the Library). You can also find more information here: <http://www4.uwsp.edu/special/disability/>

## Concerns

If you have any concerns as the course progresses, I strongly encourage you to meet with me outside of class. Appointments can be made at any time. I will rearrange my schedule to accommodate you as best as I am able.