UW-Stevens Point at Wausau/Marshfield

English 253: Introduction to Creative Writing

Spring 2021

credits: 3	**instructor:** Professor or Ms. Jill Stukenberg (Jill) *she, her, hers* Associate Professor of English UW-Stevens Point at Wausau
section: W01 **meets:** synchronously on zoom on T and TH 12:30 – 1:45 pm. Students are expected to attend all scheduled class meetings on zoom. On occasion, class may not meet for conferences or other activities. See the daily course schedule.	**Contact:** email: **jstukenb@uwsp.edu** Personal zoom meeting room (often used for conferences or office hours): https://uwsp.zoom.us/j/8831574589
exam period: Thursday, May 20 2:30 – 4:30 pm (no test, but final portfolio due)	**Jill's office hours:** MW 1-2 pm, TR 2-3 pm. Appointments encouraged—and with an appointment I can find other times to be available too.
prerequisite: Completion of Eng 98 with a C or higher or placement into or exemption from Eng 101 or 150.	For AAS degree: this course counts toward Critical and Creative Thinking, and for depth, when taken after Eng 150 or 202. For UWSP GEP: this course counts toward the Arts requirement.

for Spring 2021:
What is "synchronous online"?

Because of the ongoing spread of Covid-19 in our community, this class's mode for this semester will be synchronous online.

Synchronous Online means members of the class will meet online at the same time (using zoom) for our regular class meetings. This class doesn't use a lot of lecture. It's a class where students develop skills by practicing them, and learn through discussion, brainstorming, and reviewing with others. I do have another Intro to Creative Writing class that is "**a**synchronous online" (through the AAS Collaborative online program) which means there are no zoom meetings but pre-recorded materials and *more* discussion board work. If that's what you prefer, ask me more about that section. Otherwise, for your best experience in this class "synchronous online" class, students should:

- Plan to attend all scheduled synchronous online meetings.

- Turn on your camera and unmute during break-out room meetings. This really helps communication in small groups and is important for active learning and community building. (Contact the instructor to discuss issues—I might have some ideas that will help you!)
- The instructor will let you know when it's okay to turn your camera off, and preferable if you do mute your microphone—for example during brief (usually no more than 20 minutes) explanations or demonstrations from the instructor. (I also encourage students to leave cameras on. It helps me!)
- Students should expect to complete activities during class, sometimes for points: brainstorming, freewriting to prompts in a journal, adding to a google doc, annotating a reading collaboratively, taking quizzes or surveys, giving feedback comments to others on their drafts, practicing and sharing specific skills with others. *If you must miss a class, you'll need to use the daily schedule to see what you need to make up. Often, you may need to make replies to discussions, which other students did in class, either verbally or in writing.*
- Class recordings: I will record parts of class that include when I talk or give a demonstration, and these recordings will be available later through the zoom link in Canvas. I will not always record all class discussions, and work in break out rooms can't be recorded. Use the recordings as "back-up" when you must miss, or for review, not as your main mode of attending the class.
- In zoom meetings, I welcome student use of the group "chat" to communicate and engage! I will encourage you to connect with classmates in other ways too, even sharing social media contacts or platforms if you wish.
- I hope you will find that I am flexible and want the best for you. I am willing to make appointments when you need them (during or not during my office hours) and give extensions on major assignments or try to find workarounds if you have an emergency and miss a workshop deadline. (Though missing a workshop deadline, and so not getting a workshop group, often means a "less than" experience for the student.) I fully understand mental health concerns as an illness or emergency. I don't ask for details if you don't choose to give them, and I believe you when you tell me you had an illness or emergency. (Though sometimes for extended illness or emergency, dropping/withdrawing from the class is the best choice.)

If you have concerns about wi-fi or your computer or using your camera or microphone, contact me at the start of the semester so we can discuss. You can similarly contact me with concerns about backgrounds, or others in your background, but please know that I will gently advise you to try to find some kind of workspace, camera angle, or headset that will work for you at home, or to come to campus to connect from the library (wi-fi issues). Laptops can also be checked out from our campus. I'm okay if you're in bed, sitting up, if you're clothed. I'm okay with kids or babies on screen. We are working under unusual conditions. I am still aiming to provide you with the very best learning experience possible.

textbook and materials

- Sellers, Heather. *The Practice of Creative Writing: A Guide for Students, 3rd Ed.* Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2017.
- storage media for saving your work, such as a jump or flash drive. **Save all versions of all drafts and keep all work returned to you with comments by instructor and peers; a portfolio will be due at the end of the semester.**
- This course will make use of a Canvas site, Google docs, Word, your campus email, and possibly other platforms. All are free for students. Ask for help using them at any time.
- A computer and internet connection are needed. For synchronous meetings on zoom, a microphone and webcam are encouraged.

course description:

Training and practice for the beginning writer in various forms of poetry and fiction; class discussion of student work.

learning outcomes:

This course helps students meet multiple goals:

toward the AAS degree:

Critical and Creative Thinking (CCT) courses extend your ability to analyze issues and produce responses that are both systematic and innovative. The CCT requirement can be fulfilled with qualifying coursework in any discipline. If you are in CCT classes you can expect to:

- Identify and investigate problems;
- Execute analytical or creative tasks;
- Combine or synthesize existing ideas, images, or expertise in ways that result in a unique and identifiable product.

toward the UWSP general education program:

Arts attribute:
• 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.

instructor's specific learning outcomes:

Processes of Creative Writing

- Explore invention techniques and activities individually and collaboratively throughout the semester. These activities may include but are not limited to free writing, journal keeping, brainstorming, imaginative association, creativity exercises, generating multiple versions of a particular piece.
- Generate and revise with specific elements (such as image, line, juxtaposition) whether for exercises or longer pieces.
- Practice critical feedback techniques and activities for works-in-progress throughout the semester which may include but are not limited to large and/or small group workshop discussions, one-on-one partner exchanges, and written peer draft critiques.
- Show development in receiving and responding to feedback.
- Demonstrate (by the end of the semester) holistic revision of pieces of creative writing to rework aspects of drafts that shape overall development, such as character, setting, voice, theme, conflict, tone.
- Demonstrate editing not only for error correction but for "the best words in the best order" (Coleridge), that is, editing for precision, concision, care, and originality in style and syntax.
- Engage in writing that involves reflection and self-assessment of abilities and skills covered in learning outcomes, including their own creative choices.

Reading as a Creative Writer

- Identify, understand and use vocabulary of genre elements. These elements may include but are not limited to:
  - Fiction: characterization, plot, and conflict.
  - Poetry: imagery, musicality, and use of forms.
  - Drama: dialogue, plot, and stage directions.
  - Creative Nonfiction incorporates elements from other genres. (To some extent, all genres rely on "Show Don't Tell," the ability to generate specific examples and actions. close reading of authors' work)
- Engage in close reading of authors' works.
- Identify and explain authors' creative choices and analyze the effects of those choices on a published text.

grading: What are the types of assignments we'll do and how can creative writing be graded?

(see next page)

	What is it?	Who sees?	How submitted?	What is being graded? (skills, learning outcomes)	Portion of grade?
Exercises	Used to generate ideas and practice with skills. Taking a stab is way more important than doing these "right"!	Classmates (often in a small group only) and the instructor will see these.	Some are done on your own, ungraded; others submitted to Canvas. Often written during class meetings.	Practice invention and skills. Entries are not graded on content, but on effort/attempt.	15% (displayed as four points each)
Daily Assignments: Canvas discussion posts, workshop feedback, reflections, conferences	Practice close reading skills and analysis of assigned readings in Canvas discussion posts and in written feedback to others; reflect on feedback given to you.	Instructor and classmates see discussion board; small group seems workshop feedback; conferences with instructor are one-on-one, verbal	Canvas discussion board; or "peer review" for workshop submissions. Workshop feedback often given in class.	Your ability to read like a writer; understanding of terms and elements; ability to apply them in analysis of professional works; your developing ability to generate ideas and to give peers feedback.	35% (with activities here at various point levels: 6 for discussions, 10 for workshop feedback)
4 Workshops	Develop freewriting into drafts for workshop; requires reflective author's note	Your small group workshop members and instructor	Post to Canvas assignment thread before class.	Graded on: timely submission effort; use of techniques; overall risk/creativity; and author's note for self-analysis skills	20% course grade
Final Portfolio	Assemble best examples of in-class writing; including those that show revisions since last submissions and strong editing; 4-6 page final reflection letter	Instructor sees	Submitted to Canvas	Your ability to analyze in the reflective letter; your risk and use of processes to revise; and application of course techniques in "best pages" graded.	30%

Daily work grading, more detail:

I use a points system within the categories of exercises and daily work. In other grading categories—workshop grades, final portfolio—percentages I assign merely correlate to holistic letter grades and don't represent points missed or earned. : A = 95%; A- = 92%; B+ = 88%; B = 85%, etc. (This system does allow me to, very occasionally, acknowledge exceptional A+ work with a 97%, or 98%, or on the rarest occasions a 100%.)

rubrics

See rubrics in Canvas for a breakdown on how the different assignments are graded. You'll notice that in some cases late work can still receive up to half credit (if submitted within a week), though please note that is a bigger "ding" for a late workshop than for a late discussion post. (Late workshop submissions make it hard for the small group to workshop.)

grading scale:

A 93-100; A- 90-92; B+ 87-89, B 83-86, B- 80-82; C+ 77-79, C 73-76, C- 70 – 72; D+ 67-69; D 60 – 66; F 59 and below.

course policies and how to do well in this class:

- **Attending every scheduled class period/synchronous zoom meeting is expected.** On occasion, these meetings will be cancelled for online activities for students to complete or conferences or small group peer reviews.
- **Use the daily schedule** (under the syllabus tab) so you know what's due what day—and which days we may have alternate activities rather than meeting. You are responsible for coming to class prepared. The calendar in Canvas will also show due dates for assignments.
- **Absences:**
  What to do if you miss a class?

  - Send me an email. You are not required to explain private details, but at least let me know your plan to catch up.
  - To get caught up: 1) look at the daily schedule to see what we did, and what's due next, and 2) view the zoom recording from class. (Look under the zoom tab and click on the "eye" icon to reveal the code.) Recordings will help you understand upcoming activities and will give prompts for in-class journal writing or exercises, so you can make up those points. 3) View announcements posted on Canvas.

- **Late Work**
  Assignments:

  - Assignments due before a class period are designed that way so learning in class can build on that work. Assignments due "by the start of class time" are only worth half credit if completed late—unless prior arrangement was made or in the case of illness or absence. (Email me.)
  - All late assignments, including work done in class for points or assignments completed late for half credit, are due by the end of the module/unit.
  - A few assignments in each unit may be marked as "must do" before a submission window for an essay will open. These assignments give such an important foundation for the culminating workshop that students "must do" them before submitting the paper, even if it is too late to earn points.

  Workshop drafts:

  - **A late draft for workshop (peer review) means you miss the Canvas "swap" and so you may lose points for participating in the workshop and may miss getting a review. <u>Workshops are worth a lot of points in this class!</u>** If you have an emergency or illness, you can contact the instructor to see if there are other students who want to be in a late

group. (You *may* get lucky—but not always.) Or contact the instructor for other possible work arounds, which could include Writing Center visits.

Final Portfolios and "I" grades:

o <u>No late final portfolios can be accepted</u>. Final portfolios are due at the end of our scheduled final exam period, and so the official end of our class. In the case of illness or emergency for a student who was otherwise on track to pass the class, an "I" or "incomplete" grade may be possible, allowing a student to finish the class late. Contact the instructor in advance.

- **Extensions:** You may ask for an extension when something is due to the instructor. (Note this is hard for workshop submissions). Ask at least 24 hours in advance, and extensions usually give you two days' extra time, without penalty. (No extensions possible for the final portfolio.)
- **Revisions:** All semester long you'll get feedback from peers and the instructor and using feedback to make revisions will be part of the final portfolio grading.

extra help: Writing Center tutors are successful UWSP students who are available to discuss all types of writing at any stage of the drafting process, including brainstorming, conducting research, editing, or handling citations. Tutors work with experienced as well as struggling writers. One-time and regular appointments are available, free of charge to all students. Find the link for online appointments in our Canvas course.

plagiarism and academic integrity: Work in this class must be your own. Plagiarized works will receive zeroes, and the instructor may pursue additional penalties, including course failure. Additionally, students are responsible for their own discussion board posts, exercises, feedback, and all other writing that is theirs in the class. It should all be original to you and you should not collaborate unless collaboration is assigned. See the student handbook or ask if you have questions.

ADA:

Students desirous of specific accommodation as may fall under the Americans with Disabilities Act are encouraged to contact the disabilities resource center at UWSP main, or to enquire in the Solution Center.

Preferred Names:

Please let me know if you use a different name than the one listed on the roster, or in Canvas, or if you use a name on zoom that I might not be able to match with the one on my roster. I can give directions about how to request changes to names on class rosters and Canvas. Students can use Canvas settings to let classmates and professors know the pronouns they use. Please let me know if I ever mispronounce or misspell your name or use an incorrect pronoun. I will correct myself right away and be grateful that you told me.

tentative schedule

See Canvas for specific daily assignments, in addition to this plan for major assignments and general weekly topics.

Jan. 26 - 28	Intro to course, syllabus. Introduction freewriting.
Feb. 2 - 4	Introduction to reading creative works, genres.
Feb. 9 - 11	Reading continued, with discussion of image and line break. Intro to workshop.
Feb. 16 - 18	**Workshop 1.** Intro to pattern.
Feb. 23 - 25	Intro to forms, and close reading practice.

March 2 - 4	Discussion of formal styles and rhyme.
March 9 - 11	**Workshop 2.** Discussion of tension and dialogue.
March 16 - 18	Partners begin work on collaborative dialogue.
March 23 - 25	**No Class! Spring Break!**
March 30 – April 1	Collaborative dialogue work continues and character exploration.
April 6 - 8	Conferences with instructor, and scene writing.
April 13 - 15	**Workshop 3**.
April 20 - 22	Discussion of layering in braided essays, poem films, Instagram poems.
April 27 - 29	Student examples for workshop 4 workshopped.
May 4 - 6	**Workshop 4**.
May 11 - 13	Revising and writing final portfolio.

Final Exam period:
Final Portfolios due no later than May 20, 2021, 2:30 pm.