**English 253: Introduction to Creative Writing, Sec. 3/Spring 2019**

**Dr. Patricia Gott**

Office: 318CCC **Email: pgott@uwsp.edu** Office Phone: 715-346-4347

Office Hours:

--Tuesdays: 3:30-4:15

--Wednesdays: Electronic Office Hour from 1-2 (I’m online then)

--Thursdays 11:30-12:15

--Other times by appointment mutually agreeable to both of us

*\*\*Make sure you check your campus email daily, as I regularly send out announcements via email. I do check phone messages, but not as frequently as email.*

**Class emails:**

**Section 3: ENG253.03 40144**

**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, two-three short flash pieces and 5-7 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. Despite the size of the class, everyone should expect to be fully engaged with the material and attentive to their classmates: 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 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

-One pocket folder for collection and of work and presentation of portfolios at the end of class.

**Required texts:**

**--Starkey, David.** Creative Writing: An Introduction to Poetry and Fiction. Bedford, 2014.  **AVAILABLE: TEXT RENTAL**

--*Micro Fiction: An Anthology of Really Short Stories.* Ed. Jerome Stern. Norton: 1996. **AVAILABLE: PURCHASE TEXT.**

--Selected texts available on D2L or online (see syllabus)

--Poetry Packets to be distributed and/or emailed

Cell phone/Laptop policy (PLEASE READ AND COMMIT TO MEMORY!): Use of cell phones, unless for a specific class purpose, IS PROHIBITED. I will deduct points from your final grade if I observe you texting during class. I would prefer that you write up your exercises in a notebook or on notebook paper so you can share your writing in class with others and get written comments on it. See me if you need an exception to this to use a laptop computer.

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.

**Grade Range:** As far as the grade range, a C represents average but satisfactory development of the above criteria, a B represents above average development, and an A representing superior development and effort towards the criteria above. Work that represents below average development will receive a D. D work suggests that a writer is not involved in his or her writing and is unaware of the contexts, format, and stylistic choices that affect that writing.Work that is not submitted will receive an F**. Note: Incompletes can be given only in the case of a medical emergency**. We will discuss the grading rubric in more detail later.

**SCALE:** A = 94-100 % A- = 90-93% B+ = 87-89%

B = 83-86% B- = 80-82% C+ = 77-79%C = 73-76% C- =70-72% D+ = 67-69%

D = 63-66% D- = 60-62% F = 0-59%

**Attendance Policy:** Students are required to attend all class meetings—this is part of your participation grade. **Final course grades may be lowered by one-third letter grade for each absence over two** (i.e., B to a B- with 4 misses, a B to a C+ with five). I make no distinction between excused and unexcused absences except for religious holidays or officially organized and documented UWSP events. In the case of religious holidays and college events, you must notify me in writing one class period in advance of an absence and complete the required work ahead of time. PLEASE NOTE: **I DO NOT NEED TO KNOW WHY YOU ARE OR WILL BE ABSENT—UNLESS YOU ARE DEALING WITH A SEVERE AND/OR CONTAGIOUS ILLNESS THAT NECESSITATES YOU MISSING MORE THAN A CLASS OR TWO\*\*** in which case you should email me about this. You are also responsible for acquiring any handouts or assignments you miss. I cannot reteach the class you have missed for you.

**\*\*If you are missing a lot of class because of health issues or for some other reason, it is always a good idea to contact me and all your professors BEFORE YOUR ABSENCES PILE UP in order to determine whether an accommodation can be made.**

**Participation:**

This course will involve a blend of lecture, workshop, and discussion. It is important that all students come prepared to participate in class activities and complete all the reading. For workshops, this includes reading and marking stories for the workshop sessions. Discussions are particularly important in creative writing classes, and students are expected to offer their opinions as both readers and writers. Good participation involves thoughtful responses to the assigned readings and a willingness to share written work (formal and informal). The participation requirement will not be met if you sit quietly through discussion and workshop and fail to engage the material. Sometimes, a probing, thought-provoking question can be more useful than an assertion. The essence of discussion is play, trying out new ideas and seeing how they “work.” Art is dynamic, and one line of thinking—even if it seems “wrong” or incomplete—will always lead to something new and potentially beautiful. Art without risk is so often mired down in conventionality; thinking without risk (or, put another way, without play) leads to stagnation.

**Grading:**

Grades will be based on the following:

In Class Written and Verbal Participation: 40%

Major Assignments: ONE 6-10 page short story

=or TWO \*3 page short shorts 15%

\*4-5 poems 15%

Portfolio of revised work 30%

100%

\*Collected as we go

(The portfolio should include revisions of at least 5 poems and the story/stories.)

NOTE: No letter grades will be assigned to any of the stories/poems written during the term; instead, students will receive feedback on drafts of their work, with the expectation that some will be revised and turned in as the final portfolio, which will be graded. All stories and poems must be completed and handed in by the last week of the class.

**Assignment Format**: **ALL OUT OF CLASS** assignments must be typed on white paper **double-spaced**, in **12 pt. Times New Roman or Calibri. Use one-inch margins all around**.

At the top of each assignment you should type:

Your name

(FOR WORKSHOP PORTION) Date your story is to be workshopped

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**Workshop:** (ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WILL BE PROVIDED AS WE GET CLOSER TO THAT PORTION OF THE CLASS):

Everyone is expected to put their short story up for workshop; this is part of your participation grade. 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 class list (253, Section 3) a FULL 48 HOURS before they are supposed to be workshopped. For example, if your story is up on Wednesday, Week 6, your story is due by Monday, Week 6 at 5 pm. Readers (everyone in class) are encouraged to print off a copy, read the story twice, make helpful notes in the margins (or on a separate sheet of paper), and present their findings to the class.**

**Late Assignment Policy:** All work is due the day indicated on the syllabus. Unless I indicate otherwise, late papers will be docked a letter grade if they are not handed in the class period they are due. I will not accept late assignments one week beyond the due date except in the case of a documented illness or family emergency. **Please do not email me your papers unless you have made arrangements with me to do so. In most cases, I only accept emailed papers in extreme emergencies, and you will need to contact me for my approval of this.**

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is taking credit for work that is not your own. There will be serious consequences if I find that you have stolen another people’s work and turned it in as your own.

**Double-dipping: I assume that all work that you turn in during the term is original and current**. Creative work written in high school, or for another class, should not be submitted here (unless you clear it with me first). Work that has already been published on the Internet should not be submitted for class. I want you to write your very best work; it is important that this work draws from your fullest experiences as a student, writer, and aesthetic being. If I discover that work submitted for this class was written for another class, I will penalize the final course grade.

**Academic Freedom Policy:**

Generally speaking, this course has a no censorship policy for both the writing you submit, and the comments peers make on that work. I will not censor because of sexual content, elements of violence, religious or political perspectives. (However, writing on topics that are illegal, dangerous and/or present a violation of safety IS NOT ALLOWED. (ex. child pornography or terroristic threats IS OFF LIMITS as is harassment of others via your writing). This policy also applies for materials submitted for sessions. Students are expected to respond to the writings of others with judiciousness, deliberation, and fairness. However, honesty is expected in all critiques; if a story contains sexism, homophobia, or intolerance, then readers are responsible for pointing out potentially unsavory aspects of a work.

**Students with learning differences** may want to visit UWSP’s Office of Disability Services (6th floor ALB Hall x 3365) to work with that office.

**English 253 Spring 2019 Writing Assignment and Reading List (\*)**

## VERY IMPORTANT: Make sure you complete the assigned reading (including your peers’ work in the workshop section) for each class period BEFORE you come to class. Also bring the specific text(s) to each class that includes that day’s reading. Some readings might also be available for our class on the D2L page. Finally, more readings\* may be added, so the syllabus is subject to modification.

## \*\*In this case, I’ll email them to you and pass out a paper copy in class*.*

Week One/Jan 23: Introduction to the class and one another/First in-class writing assignment and Introduction to poetry/RitaDove Spill piece/Poetry You Tubes

Week Two/Jan. 30: How poetry works---Poetry exercises to begin. Line breaks, etc.

READ: Starkey: 20-29; Poems in Starkey: O’Meara, Peacock, Smith 94-97, 98/Bring in poems distributed Week 1

Read also: “The Owl Light: A Poem Series” by Deborah Fass

<https://www.terrain.org/2018/poetry/deborah-fass/>

“Formal Apology to the Bees I Caught in Jars”

<https://www.terrain.org/2017/poetry/kristina-martino/>

Week Three/Feb. 6: Poetry exercises continued, List poems/**Bring in a poem you’re partial to** (search at either poets.org, poemhunter and poetryfoundation.org)/READ from Starkey: 30-53, and poems pages 74-76, 82-84, 88-91 (Addonzio, Alexander, Alexie, Ali, Boss, Hahn, Harjo, Hill, Hillman, Jackson, Justice, Kenyon, Kinnell)

Week Four/Feb. 13: READ: Starkey 70-73, 101 (Vando/Shape poem)

PLACES: **Bring in a photo or a postcard of a scene to write about and Hand in a poem you’ve been working on** READ: Read 3 refinery poems by Georgia Pearle, “Open Letter to America” by Ian Ramsey, I, Too” by Langston Hughes, and “The Cambridge Ladies” by ee cummings. Links:

<https://www.terrain.org/2018/poetry/georgia-pearle/>

<https://www.terrain.org/2017/poetry/letter-to-america-ramsey/>

<https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/i-too>

https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47245/the-cambridge-ladies-who-live-in-furnished-souls

Week Five/Feb. 20: **Bring in 2 smallish objects to describe and write about** /Wisconsin Death trip photo exercise in class/Read from MicroFictions: “Cough” 26, “Daydreams,” 28, “Your Fears are Justified” 36

Week Six/Feb. 27: **First drafts of three poems due**/Introduction to short shorts/

MicroFictions: “Changing the Channel” 44 , “Chickens” 95 (more TBA)

Read from Starkey: Raymond Carver’s“Popular Mechanics” 168 and John Cheever’s “Reunion” 175 (Starkey) Conflict ex.

Week Seven: Mar. 6/**Possible Guest Speaker**/Introduction to the short story--Read Starkey 104-144/Read Aimee Bender’s “Loser” Starkey 59 and Heinrich Boll’s “Action Will Be Taken” https://anarchistwithoutcontent.wordpress.com/2010/05/02/action-will-be-taken-an-action-packed-story-by-heinrich-boll/

Week Eight/Mar 13: Short story continued/Read Bloom’s “Hold Tight” (ER) and fromStarkey: Ursula Hegi’s “Doves” 184 and Tobias Wolf’s “A White Bible” 218

Dialogue exercise

Week Nine/March 20: **NO CLASS**—SPRING BREAK—HAVE a SAFE and RELAXING BREAK!!!

Week Ten/ March 27: **Two new poems due**/ Read O’Connor’s “Good Country People” (ER) and “Shiloh” (Available: http://english204-dcc.blogspot.com/2011/05/shiloh.html

Workshops of your stories begins/Order will be determined before this date

Week Eleven/April 3: Workshop of short stories continues/Read Oates’s “Where are You Going, Where Have You Been?” PDF available here: http://www.cusd200.org/cms/lib7/IL01001538/Centricity/Domain/361/oates\_going.pdf

Week Twelve/April 10: Workshopping continues/Stories to be added

Week Thirteen/April 17: Workshopping continues

Week Fourteen/April 24: Workshopping continues

Week Fifteen/May 1: Part I: Workshopping wrap up?/Class reading of poem or short short

Week Sixteen/May 8: Part II: Class reading of poems or short short

Finals Week: **ALL PORTFOLIOS Due Friday, May 17 by 12:30 pm**./ Additional drop off times will be announced.

## *Reminder: A class that is this exercise and workshop intensive CANNOT BE RETAUGHT, so make sure to ATTEND REGULARLY to get full credit.*

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