

CUYAMACA COLLEGE
COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD

English 126 – Introduction to Creative Writing

3 hours lecture, 3 units

Catalog Description

Introduction to the craft of creative writing through study and analysis of the works of established, contemporary, and peer writers. Students write short fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, and drama, and use writing workshops and instructor feedback to evaluate and revise work. Opportunities for inclusion in college publications, student readings, literary events, and special projects.

Prerequisite

Placement into ENGL C1000 (formerly ENGL 120) or ESL 122

Entrance Skills

Without the following skills, competencies and/or knowledge, students entering this course will be highly unlikely to succeed:

- 1) Critically read and analyze a text at the college level.

Course Content

- 1) The roles of creative writing in literature and culture
- 2) Understanding audience, purpose, and voice
- 3) The writing process: drafting, revising, editing
- 4) Developing a writing practice and workshop etiquette
- 5) Exploration of the major genres of creative writing, including:
 - a. Fiction: short stories, flash fiction, experimental prose
 - b. Poetry: free verse, sonnet, spoken word, etc.
 - c. Creative nonfiction: memoir, personal essay, autobiography
 - d. Drama and scriptwriting: stage and screen plays, dialogue-driven storytelling
- 6) The elements of craft, such as:
 - a. Imagery and description: showing vs telling, sensory details
 - b. Character development: complexity, reliability, believability
 - c. Setting and worldbuilding: place, atmosphere, mood
 - d. Point of view and perspective: first-person, third-person, etc.
 - e. Dialogue and voice: speech, subtext, dialect
 - f. Plot and narrative structure: conflict, pacing, resolution
 - g. Theme and meaning: ideology, implication, context, etc.
- 7) Reading as writers, including close reading and literary models
- 8) Applying craft techniques in published works to student work
- 9) Workshopping and peer critique, including formats and ethical considerations
- 10) Revision and editing techniques
- 11) Publishing and careers in writing, including submission strategies for writers and opportunities for publication of student work

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- 1) Analyze the roles of creative writing in literature and culture.
- 2) Apply foundational writing techniques to generate original creative texts
- 3) Develop a writing practice that includes drafting, revising, and workshopping
- 4) Compose original works in multiple genres, including short fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction
- 5) Analyze published creative texts through a writer's lens
- 6) Identify and evaluate how authors create meaning through literary elements
- 7) Engage in peer review, workshop, and critique processes
- 8) Apply peer and instructor feedback to refine creative texts
- 9) Practice ethical and inclusive workshop approaches by responding thoughtfully to diverse perspectives
- 10) Revise and edit work to improve clarity, impact, and style
- 11) Identify publishing opportunities and prepare a piece for publication
- 12) Participate in readings, anthologies, and other opportunities to share creative work

Method of Evaluation

Grades are based on demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter determined by multiple measurements for evaluation. Assessment frameworks may include alternative, equity-minded approaches to evaluation, such as ungrading, labor-based grading, contract-based grading, etc. The instructor continually evaluates students' work and provides regular and timely feedback so that students can improve their creative writing skills. Feedback is strengths-based and supportive. The instructor also proactively addresses concerns with attendance and assignment outcomes before the student is in danger of failing the course.

Methods of evaluation may include:

- 1) Students' awareness of their own challenges, methods of overcoming difficulties, and improvement.
- 2) Written exercises, class discussion, participation, in-class presentations, quizzes, examinations, reflection activities, peer review work, responses, journals.
- 3) Original, creative texts in the genres of short fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, and drama.
- 4) Written assignments that require students to produce prewriting and preliminary drafts before completing a final draft.
- 5) Revision which demonstrates students' ability to utilize peer and instructor feedback, as well as individual reflection to improve draft(s).
- 6) Participation in workshops and critique sessions.

Special Materials Required of Student

None

Minimum Instructional Facilities

Smart classroom

Method of Instruction

Instructors use culturally relevant and equity-minded approaches to teaching and learning. These approaches center student identities, values, experiences, and goals; use strengths-based approaches to learning; convey growth-minded faculty mindsets about student potential; offer just-in-time remediation strategies to boost language and writing skills; are attentive to student affective domains; and individualize support so that students may have equitable learning experiences.

On writing assignments, the instructor will include comments to indicate strengths and areas for improvement, enabling students to revise their work. Class time is also devoted to explaining and discussing various writing techniques, analysis and discussion of published and student writing, and peer commentary of selected assignments. A variety of teaching methods may be used:

- 1) Lecture and discussion
- 2) Small and large group discussion
- 3) Structured, in-class activities
- 4) Writing workshops
- 5) Multimedia presentations
- 6) Guest speakers
- 7) Individual and/or group projects
- 8) Oral presentations
- 9) Self-assessment
- 10) Auxiliary use of study groups and peer tutoring

Out of Class Assignments

- 1) Reading from texts and handouts
- 2) Annotations, responses, journals
- 3) Writing fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, and drama
- 4) Attending plays and public performances by students, professional writers, and actors
- 5) Researching assignments
- 6) Submission to a platform for publication

Texts and References

- 1) Required (representative examples):
 - a. Sellers, Heather. *The Practice of Creative Writing: A Guide for Students*. 4th ed. Macmillan, 2021.
 - b. Schraffenberger, J.D. Rachel Morgan, and Grant Tracey. *Elements of Creative Writing*. University of Northern Iowa, 2023. OER Textbook via Open Textbook Library.
 - c. Starkey, David. *Creative Writing: Four Genres in Brief*. 4th ed. Macmillan, 2022.
- 2) Supplemental: None

Exit Skills

Students having successfully completed this course exit with the following skills, competencies and/or knowledge:

- 1) Write creatively in a variety of genres such as fiction, poetry and drama.
- 2) Identify and analyze literary and rhetorical techniques in creative texts.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this class, students will be able to:

- 1) Interpret the poetry, fiction, drama, and creative nonfiction of established and/or emerging writers.
- 2) Utilize the creative opportunities and/or constraints of different literary genres, forms, and styles to produce original work.
- 3) Apply the writing process (including critical reading, drafting, revising, and/or workshopping) to produce polished creative writing, such as poetry, dramatic scenes, and/or short stories.