

## Eng 167 Introduction to Creative Writing

Fall Term 2010

T-Th, 8:00 – 9:15 AM

Professor: Philip F. Deaver

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**Monday** 8:00-12:00; **Tuesday** 11:00-12:00 PM/1:00-4:00 PM; **Thursday** 11:00-12:00 PM  
Or by appointment

### Overview

This is a college creative writing course. It will tap your creative side but also your analytical side. One or the other of the forms that we concentrate on in this class (creative nonfiction, fiction, poetry) may be familiar to you. Others of the forms might feel strange, and you'll have to push yourself into a new creative area. As always, the writing aspect of the course will be accompanied by a program of good reading, so that you come to understand the range of possibilities in these forms as exemplified by modern and contemporary writers. When you depart this class, you should have in mind the conventions of creative writing in fiction, in poetry, and in the creative essay, and you will have produced some work in these forms that you'll want to keep. If you are of a mind to continue creative writing in your life, successful completion of this class will serve as a beginning to arm you for the journey.

### Required Texts

*Creative Writing: Four Genres in Brief*, by David Starkey

Spiral-bound Writer's Notebook

### Course Requirements

- ◇ participation in class discussions, peer response sessions, and writing exercises
- ◇ careful attention to all assigned reading, including fellow students' manuscripts
- ◇ one completed creative nonfiction essay (2000 words minimum)
- ◇ one completed short story (2000 words minimum)
- ◇ eight poems in final form

### Goals and Assessment Procedures

#### A. Goals:

- to study models and conventions of three major creative writing genres.
- to write and revise work in these three genres.
- to give and receive constructive peer feedback in the class.

#### B. Evaluation

- grade – all work handed in in final form will be letter-graded (A, B, C, etc.)
- weightings
  - participation, exercises, discussions **25%**
  - eight poems minimum **25%**
  - short story and creative nonfiction essay **25% each**

### **Class Policies**

- ◇ Three absences maximum – the grade is lowered by one semester grade per absence above three. You must be present when your work is being covered in the class, and you must provide your work for the class to review according to the agreed-upon plan. Miss the beat in this regard and the grade drops a full semester grade.
- ◇ All work will be due at the beginning of class on the due date; thereafter the grade on the story, poem, or essay goes down one half an assignment grade per five minutes of lateness. Don't let printing the work out be a reason for lateness.
- ◇ Mostly manuscripts are posted for distribution on Blackboard. You are expected to print them out to critique them.
- ◇ Computers in class. I would prefer your writing exercises in class be handwritten. If you prefer to use the computer, that's your choice; however, computers and phones will not be open or accessed during class except for the writing exercises. Class notes will be taken in your notebooks, by hand.
- ◇ The class conforms to the college Honor Code. Membership in the student body of Rollins College carries with it an obligation, and requires a commitment, to act with honor in all things. Because academic integrity is fundamental to the pursuit of knowledge and truth and is the heart of academic life at Rollins College, it is the responsibility of all members of the College community to practice it and to report apparent violations.

The following is a binding commitment by the students of Rollins College:

The development of the virtues of Honor and Integrity are integral to a Rollins College education and to membership in the Rollins College community. Therefore, I, a student of Rollins College, pledge to show my commitment to these virtues by abstaining from any lying, cheating, or plagiarism in my academic endeavors and by behaving responsibly, respectfully and honorably in my social life and in my relationships with others.

This pledge is reinforced every time a student submits work for academic credit as his/her own. Students shall add to all work submitted for this class the following handwritten abbreviated pledge followed by their signature:

“On my honor, I have not given, nor received, nor witnessed any unauthorized assistance on this work.”

### **Student Conferences**

Student conferences as needed, by appointment.

## Tentative Schedule

This class is divided into three parts: fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry, and the forms will be covered in that order. The schedule below is tentative, but provides an indication of the flow of the class. Use the buddy system when you're absent to confirm what the assignment is for the class you're returning for. You're responsible for the work due the day of your absence *and* the day of your return.

### August—Fiction

- 24 Course Introduction. Review of syllabus. Discussion of fiction. Writing exercise.
- 26 Pages 92-110 in Starkey (text). Short story assigned. Writing exercise.
- 31 Pages 110-139 in Starkey. Writing exercise.

### September—Fiction (cont'd)

- 2 Pages 139-146 in Starkey. Boyle, Carlson, and Carver short short stories.
- 7 Pages 146-151 in Starkey. Cheever, Dybek, and Gilfillan short shorts.
- 9 Pages 151-157 in Starkey. Hempel, Kincaid, Proulx, and Yamanaka short shorts.
- 14 First draft of short stories due. Small group discussions of stories.
- 16 Revised final drafts of stories due. Story workshops commence.
- 21 Story workshops.
- 23 Story workshops.
- 28 Story workshops.
- 30 Story workshops.

### October—Creative Nonfiction

- 5 Pages 160-190 in Starkey. Discussion of Creative Nonfiction. Writing exercise.
  - 7 Pages 190-202 in Starkey. Creative Nonfiction essay assigned.
  - 12 Fall Break, no class.
  - 14 First draft of CNF essays due. Small group discussions of essays.
  - 19 Revised final drafts of CNF essays due. Workshops commence.
  - 21 CNF essay workshops.
  - 26 CNF essay workshops.
  - 28 CNF essay workshops.
- (Oct.29 Drop Deadline)

### November—Poetry

- 2 Pages 9-20 in Starkey. Discussion of Poetry. Eight poems assigned.
- 4 (<125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary no class)
- 9 Pages 20-46 in Starkey. Writing exercises.
- 11 Pages 46-64 in Starkey. Writing exercises
- 16 Pages 67-90 in Starkey (browse the sample poems in text). Writing exercises.
- 18 Eight poems due. Poetry readings and discussion.
- 23 Poetry readings and discussions.
- 25 (<Thanksgiving no class)
- 30 Poetry readings and discussions.

### December

- 2 Robert Hass's "Consciousness" and other favorite poems. Portfolios handed in.

### **Dr. Deaver's Statement Concerning Academic Excellence**

In order to foster a challenging intellectual experience in this course, I have joined a number of other Rollins faculty members in a commitment to the following principles:

1. Believing that my high expectations are an indication of my respect for you and for your capacity to work at a level of excellence you may not have thought possible, I will follow the grading standards outlined in the college catalog:
  - *Grade A is reserved for work that is exceptional in quality and shows keen insight, understanding, and initiative.*
  - *Grade B is given for work that is consistently superior and shows interest, effort, or originality.*
  - *Grade C is a respectable grade. It reflects consistent daily preparation and satisfactory completion of all work required.*
  - *Grade D- is the lowest passing grade. It is below the average necessary to meet graduation requirements and ordinarily is not accepted for transfer by other institutions.*
  - *Grade F is failing.*
2. Recognizing that the work done in class is only a small part of your acquisition of an education—and that pursuing a college education should be thought of as the equivalent of a fulltime job--, I will design the assignments for this course so that you may plan to spend at least two hours outside of class for every hour in class.
3. I will faithfully enforce the attendance policy stated in this syllabus, which makes clear that absences and lateness will affect course grades.
4. Recognizing that college graduates must be able to communicate clearly and effectively, I will not assign A's or B's to papers marred by an accumulation of the following errors, which are so serious that they are usually seen as the markers of an uneducated writer:
  - *Sentence fragments*
  - *Run-on sentences; comma splices*
  - *Lack of agreement: subject/verb; noun/pronoun*
  - *Lack of possessive apostrophe*
  - *Dangling or misplaced modifiers*
  - *Shifting verb tenses*
  - *Unparallel constructions*
  - *No comma after introductory element*
  - *No comma after nonrestrictive element*
  - *Use of I as objective case pronoun*
  - *Confusion between it's and its, to and too, and among their, there, and they're*
  - *Misuse of colons and semicolons*
5. In fairness to all students in the class and with the knowledge that, in the world beyond college, workers are expected to meet deadlines even in the absence of ideal circumstances. I will faithfully enforce the policy concerning late work stated in this syllabus.
6. I will assign evaluated work throughout the term; I will treat your work seriously and will respond to it as the serious endeavor of a serious student.
7. Knowing that ultimately your education is what **you** make it, I will encourage you to come to class prepared; I will encourage you to initiate conversations, ask questions, and comment on the readings and other assignments; I will encourage you to engage your classmates in lively intellectual exchanges.

Because I want to be a part of your intellectual growth and because I enjoy the play of ideas, I will be available to you during my office hours and at other scheduled times, and I encourage you to use those times, not just for discussions of grades and assignments, but also of the ideas generated by the class.