

Eng. 367 — Creative Writing Workshop Fiction

Spring Term 2011

Meeting time: Tuesday-Thursday, 11:00-12:15
Orlando Hall 213

Professor: Philip F. Deaver

Prefer contact by email: pdeaver@rollins.edu

Office: Carnegie 113

Office hours: M-W 9:00-12:00; T-Th 1:00-4:00

Or by appointment; prefer email rather than phone

Course Description

During this creative writing workshop, students will write three short stories. In addition, this is a reading class, and we will become familiar with important American short stories and notable contemporary fiction writers. The stories are chosen to provide craft models. We will analyze these stories as writers do, to inform our own craft as well as to appreciate them as literature. In the workshop phase, participants in the class will read and critique each other's work according to the instructor's workshop design. Course outcomes: Three creative efforts in the short fiction form, revised, critiqued, and revised again, so that they might be ready to submit for publication. It is also a feature of this class to discuss how to submit short work for publication.

Required Texts:

Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft, Janet Burroway and Elizabeth Stuckey-French, Eds. ISBN 978-0-205-75034-4, Retail: \$84.25.

Like You'd Understand, Anyway: Stories, by Jim Shepard. ISBN 987-0307-27760-2
A spiral notebook for writing exercises and first drafts, Retail: \$14.95.

Class Policies

- ◇ Three absences maximum.
- ◇ Over fifteen minutes late, it's an absence. Regular lateness will be deemed an absence at the professor's discretion.
- ◇ You must be present when your work is being covered in the workshop or when you are assigned to conduct the workshop. Use the Buddy System when you are absent (see below for discussion of Buddy System).
- ◇ This is the discussion of the Buddy System mentioned above. Find out from your buddy what is expected of you in the class following an absence. If you miss a class, you're still responsible to get feedback to the student(s) whose workshop you missed as well as the students being workshopped when you return. Ask your buddy whose stories are being workshopped when you return. If you have to miss a class on a day a paper is due, the paper is still due and it is expected to be on time. Send hard copy with buddy. Do not email it to me. After an absence, do not email me and ask if we did anything important in class. If you do, it will prove you didn't read this.
- ◇ All work will be due at the beginning of class on the due date.

Course Requirements

- ◇ **participation in class discussions, peer response sessions, and writing exercises:** a word on participation –talking about what you’re learning is not only a display of what you’re learning but is the process of learning it. And in this class there is no final exam, so the “final” is, in a sense, every day, you participating in the class discussions. On days when you don’t participate in a substantive way, you’re getting a C for the day. Being shy isn’t an excuse. Thinking you have nothing of value to add isn’t an excuse. And on the other hand, just blurting stuff to seem to be participating is a C also. Participating like mad on the last three days of class won’t do either.
- ◇ **careful attention to all assigned reading, including fellow students’ manuscripts:** a word on feedback to your fellow students – providing good feedback makes you a better writer. Feedback comes in two forms: discussion in the workshops and written comments on a hard copy of the story plus a separate summary paragraph of “talking points” (two hundred words). The professor evaluates workshop participation at all times during the workshops and will make periodic spot checks to ensure you are providing detailed written feedback to your fellow writer. Give feedback generously and in the best spirit. After a student reads your feedback, he should be anxious to get back to his story and work on it.
- ◇ **three new stories in revised and edited final submission form by the end of the class:** in this class, all the work that is read by me for a grade and workshopped by this class will have been written during this semester FOR this class exclusively. And every draft you hand in should be proofed for editing essentials and formatted as prescribed. Another good way to use the buddy system – trade papers with your buddy and fix up the mechanics. I encourage this, and it is not an Honors violation.
- ◇ **compilation of a portfolio of stories that assembles all of the stories for the class after one last revision:** by the end of this class, you will have three sort stories in final form. You’ll hand them in on the last day – Story Three, plus Story One and Two with my graded copies attached.

Evaluation

- ◇ grade – all drafts that are handed in receive a letter grade. Your idea of a draft and mine may be different. These drafts, when they are ready to show to the professor and to the workshop, must be thoroughly proofed, spellchecked, and formatted as prescribed, even if not finished.
- ◇ weightings for final grade
 - participation/feedback to peers **25%**
 - workshopped stories/portfolio **75%**

Conferences

Most of the discussion of your work should take place in the class; however, I’m open to one on one conferences to clarify my comments on your manuscripts.

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Tentative – Subject to Change

Please note: A rough outline of the class is this. We will read master stories in the first 45 days. We will think about what makes them master stories, both craft issues and content. We will do writing exercises, tons of them. On the 17th of February, a draft of the first story is due. On March 1, the final of that story is due. No changing stories. The story you hand in Feb. 17, is your first story, the one you will refine and edit and make better, to be handed in on March 1. So it goes for the rest of the class. March 17, draft of second story; March 29, final draft. April 19, draft of the third story; April 28, final draft. On April 28, you will hand story 3 in with your portfolio, which will contain the copies of your first two stories with my markup and grade plus a clean copy revised after you received my graded copy. In summary, the portfolio contains Story Three plus clean new copies of Story One and Two revised after receipt of my markup.

January

- 11 Course Introduction
- 13 "Helping," by Robert Stone – Lecture about stories
- 18 "Errand," Raymond Carver – Continuing lecture about stories (Story One Assigned)
- 20 "The Littoral Zone," by Andrea Barrett (Winter with the Writers) – Writing Exercise
- 25 "Cathedral," Raymond Carver – Writing Exercise
- 27 Burroway, Ch. 2; Ray Carver story on p. 253

February

- 1 Burroway, Ch. 3; Tim O'Brien story on p. 53
- 8 "Killings," by Andre Dubus II (his son, Andre III, Winter with the Writers)
- 10 "The Rabbit Hole As a Likely Explanation," Ann Beattie – Writing Exercise
- 15 "Waiting," Ann Beattie – Writing Exercise. Prescribed format for all drafts.
- 17 Burroway, Ch. 4; Tobias Wolff story, p. 158. Draft of Story One Due – Class Activity
- 22 "Firelight," Tobias Wolff – Writing Exercise.
- 24 "Reunion," Richard Ford – Writing Exercise.
- 25 "Lowell and the Rolling Thunder," Philip F. Deaver -- Workshop on Workshops

March

- 1 Workshops. Story One Due. (Story Two Assigned.)
- 3 Workshops.
- 8 Spring Break
- 10 Spring Break
- 15 Workshops. Burroway, Ch. 7
- 17 Workshops. Draft of Story Two Due.
- 22 Workshops.
- 24 Workshops.
- 29 Workshops. Story Two Due. (Story Three Assigned.)

April

- 5 Workshops. Burroway, Ch. 8
- 7 Workshops
- 12 Workshops
- 14 Workshops
- 19 Workshops. Draft of Story Three Due.
- 21 Workshops
- 26 Workshops
- 28 Workshops. Story Three Due as part of Portfolio (see "Please Note" above)

Academic 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 poems 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.”

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*
 - *Improper punctuation of dialogue*
 - *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.