Course Information

The career of flowers differs from ours only in audibility.
—Dickinson

Welcome to Creative Writing II. This is a flexible, introductory workshop course in "imaginative writing with a concentration in one or two genres." It will help you to develop critical awareness and acquaint you with the literary fine arts. We will read a number of poets and fiction writers, complete a variety of exercises and writing prompts, and possibly venture into the F/M community to attend literary readings and talks. Most of the course, however, will be given over to students' own writing through drafting and intensive workshop sessions, with the goal of producing a (eventually) publishable collection of work.

Textbooks

Longerbach, The Art of the Poetic Line
Graywolf Press, 2008

Doty, The Art of Description
Graywolf Press, 2010

Sebold, The Best American Short Stories
Mariner Books, 2009

Kelman, The Principles of Uncertainty
Penguin Books

Note: all other course readings will be on the Web or handouts.

Helpful Resources for the Serious Writer

Amy Holman, An Insider's Guide to Creative Writing Programs: Choosing the Right MFA or MA Program, Colony, Residency, Grant or Fellowship, Prentice Hall Press, 2006.

Wendy Bishop, Keywords in Creative Writing, Utah State University Press, 2006.

Required Resources

Frequent access to email, the Web, Blackboard, and a word processor. Materials for the final chapbook, which at minimum will be a folder with at least 23 pages of paper.

Aims of this Course

• to complete a chapbook of fiction and/or poetry;
• to learn beginning skills necessary for writing short fiction and poetry;
• to help you locate and explore your own centers of interest in a setting both supportive and challenging;
• to learn how to access local and national resources for creative writers;
• to improve critical awareness, which includes understanding the standards and expectations of various literary communities, especially within the established (noncommercial, nonmarket) fine arts;
• to understand "literature" as both corpus of knowledge to be studied and an ongoing, evolving, living enterprise;
• to enjoy stories and poems, and to explore a variety of course readings for models.

In some ways this class is like the proverbial arts enclave: a comfortable meeting place for writers who are seeking the support, feedback, and stimulation of other writers. We sit down together, share and discuss our writing. That's the gist of it.

This is also an academic experience, of course, and I do need to ultimately assign a grade for each student. Though much of the class is student-directed and open, you'll complete some assigned projects as well as a self-published chapbook.
Grades

Grading is based on a simple point system, in which your aim is to earn as close to 100 as possible. You’ll start the semester with 0, then earn credit for the coursework described below. To arrive at a specific number of points for a given assignment, I generally first assign a grade where Outstanding=A; Very Good=B; Fair=C; Poor=D; Unacceptable=F. I then fine-tune that letter grade judgment with points.

At the end of the term, I tally the points you’ve earned for all course work and determine a semester grade where

88-100 pts. = A  
75-87 pts. = B  
62-74 pts. = C  
49-61 pts. = D  
below 49 = F

Coursework

**Workshop (10 pts.)**

Workshopping is the heart of this course: good-spirited, large-group discussion of work written by class members. Everyone must submit material for workshop at least twice, though you are free (time permitting) to submit more. Each session earns you 5 pts., for a max of 10. Click here for full instructions. Note too that some of our workshop sessions will likely be conducted online as written critiques.

**Hoodoo and Flapdoodle (check system)**

You will complete an assortment of short exercises, in-class writing, quizzes, Blackboard postings, brief small-group projects, writing prompts, excursions outside the classroom, and any number of mysterious and challenging something-somethings. Expect the unexpected. Daily work of this sort is worth a check-plus, check, or check-minus. Please note, however: I reserve the right to adjust your end-of-semester numerical score to account for an especially weak or strong showing in your Flapdoodle work. I’ll always alert you well in advance if your grade is in serious danger.

**Projects (45 pts. or 45% of semester grade)**

The projects are assignments designed to give you practice with a variety of skills and approaches. Everyone will turn in a draft for written instructor feedback. Any project draft may be used as a workshop submission, and any completed project may be included in your chapbook and count as chapbook credit.

You will complete the following:

- **Fiction Project 1 (5 pts.)**
  - Finding the Story
  - Traditional Narrative
  - Click here for full instructions

- **Fiction Project 2 (15 pts.)**
  - Short story in the realistic mode with traditional, chronological plot and continuous narrative, at least 6 pages. OR a play or film script, with a traditional, chronological plot, at least 11 pages.

- **Poetry Project 1 (5 pts.)**
  - The Thing Itself
  - Click here for instructions

- **Poetry Project 2 (5 pts.)**
  - The Thing and Other Things
  - Click here for instructions

- **Poetry Project 3 (15 pts.)**
  - The Oral and Visual Traditions
  - Click here for instructions

**Cyber Class (check system)**

Work completed independently, as part of our hybrid course arrangement, receives a check-plus, check, check-minus, or minus. This record will be factored subjectively into my overall assessment of your performance at the end of the term. That is, a semester record of especially weak or strong performance in your cyber class work may result in a adjustment of your semester score toward a higher or lower final grade. I’ll always alert you well in advance if your grade is in serious danger. Cyber class work will likely overlap with our other weekly work (Hoodoo-Flapdoodle).

Each week’s cyber class work is due by class time on Fri.
"A tree crying out to be covered with leaves."

Your chapbook will be a self-published collection of your completed stories and/or poems. It will contain work which has been conscientiously revised (mainly with the help of workshop feedback), may include your projects as well as other pieces you've written independently, and may also include any hoodoo-flapdoodle material which evolved into usable work. Click here for full chapbook instructions.

Portfolio (15 pts. possible or 15% of semester total)

Your portfolio will be a compilation of at least 20 pages of course work in at least three genres. It will include 1) a modified version of your chapbook; 2) a selection of your hoodoo work; 3) a reflective letter. Click here for full portfolio instructions.

What To Do If You Miss a Class

1. Please DO NOT come to me asking, "What did we do?" (Or, even worse, "Did we do anything?")
2. As soon as possible, a) check our online schedule, and b) check Bb for new or updated Power Point presentations which will contain class info. Then contact 2 or more classmates for full class notes, instructions, handout titles, etc. If the classmates you contact did not take helpful notes or are otherwise uninformed, you should contact someone else. (You are responsible for knowing what transpires in each class session, whether you are present or not.) If you know in advance that you will miss a class meeting and/or class work, contact classmates well ahead of time for assistance.
3. After contacting classmates for full information, you may then visit or email me if you have specific, informed questions. Always include your class and section number on the subject line of emails.

Late or Missed Course Work

Workshop

Workshop activity (whether you are critiquing or being critiqued) may be completed late with timely and sufficient notice to the instructor and the class. Any late written material should go in the Late Work forum of our Bb Discussion Board.

Hoodoo and Flapdoodle

This work can be made up within a week of the time it was assigned. Any late material should go in the Late Work forum of our Bb Discussion Board and you should inform me that you've turned it in.

Cyber Class

This work can be made up and/or revised any time between the three respective check sessions.

Chapbook and Portfolio

These are handed in at the end of the term and will not be accepted after midnight on May _____. Exceptions are only made with documented evidence of serious hardship or illness.

Feel free to visit, call, or email me if you ever have questions or concerns.

Disclaimer: I believe in the creative as well as practical value of spontaneity. I also believe that disorder is always there, lurking in any plan or scheme no matter how carefully devised — especially my own. I therefore reserve the right, if the occasion warrants it, and with ample advance notice to you, to alter some of the details on this page as the semester progresses. Fundamental aspects of the course, such as basic requirements and aims, will not change.

A Note to English Majors

During their senior year, English majors generally enroll in the English Capstone course (Engl 467), during which they assemble a portfolio containing representative written work from NDSU English courses. The English Department evaluates these portfolios to assess its undergraduate programs, analyzing how student work meets departmental outcomes. In order to facilitate the preparation of senior portfolios, English majors are encouraged to save copies of their written work (in electronic and hard copy) each semester.

Departmental Outcomes

This course meets at least three English Dept. outcomes:

• Outcome 1: English majors will be able to write and speak effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences in a variety of genres and media.
• Outcome 2: English majors will be able to read (analyze, interpret, critique, evaluate) written and visual texts.
• Outcome 7: English majors will develop professionalism exhibited in such qualities as self-direction, cooperation, civility, reliability, and care in editing and presenting the final product.

General Education Outcomes
This course has been approved for the Humanities and Fine arts category in General Education because it 1) "promotes the appreciation of aesthetics and the expression of creativity"; and 2) "systematically explores cultural and intellectual forces shaping events, individual expression, and social values."

The course meets the following General Education Outcomes:

#1: "Communicate effectively in a variety of contexts and formats."
#6: "Integrate knowledge and ideas in a coherent and meaningful manner."

Americans with Disabilities Statement/Students with Special Needs

Any students with disabilities or other special needs, who need special accommodations in this course are invited to share these concerns or requests with the instructor as soon as possible.

Student Conduct

All interactions in this course including interactions by email, weblogs, discussion boards, or other online methods will be civil and students will demonstrate respect for one another. Student conduct at NDSU is governed by the Code of Student Behavior. See http://www.ndsu.edu/p boa/code/ for more information.

University Statement on Academic Honesty

All work in this course must be completed in a manner consistent with NDSU University Senate Policy, Section 335: Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct. http://www.ndsu.nodak.edu/policy/335.htm

Any instances of deliberate plagiarism in English 322 will result in an F for the course.

 Produced by Cindy Nichols
 NDSU Webmaster
Creative Writing II Schedule

Hybrid Course, Spring 2011

Following each date below are reading or other assignments due for that day. Also following each date are tentative activities and topics for the class period. If you miss a meeting, you should 1) check for new and updated Power Point presentations in Bb; 2) get full notes from several classmates; and 2) check with me if you have specific, informed questions. Because this schedule is very flexible and subject to change, and because it’s a workshop course, it’s vital that you attend regularly and keep up with current announcements. Be sure as well to check your email and this online schedule regularly for changes and updates.

Jan. 14 —
- Introduction to course.
- Begin work with fiction and Fiction Project #1: munch snow. How find/make a story in any event or sequence of events?

Jan. 21 — "We didn't go outside today because it was too shivery, shivery freeze cold. Popcicle brain freezey cold."
- Something a friend’s little girl said yesterday morning.

Before Class
- Read our Homepage carefully.
- Go into our Bb Discussion Board, find the forum titled, "YOUR PERSONAL CYBER CLASS THREADS," and create your personal thread as instructed in class.
- Also in our Bb Discussion Board, find the forum titled, "WEEKLY CYBER CLASS INSTRUCTIONS." Click on "For Week of Jan. 21st" and then follow the instructions for your first cyber class posting. Each week’s work is due by class time on Fri.
- Be working on Fiction Project #1. (A draft will be due by Mon. Jan. 24th in our Bb "Projects and Hoodoo-Flapdoole" forum.)

Jan. 28 —

Before Class
- By Monday, Jan. 24th, post a draft of Fiction Project #1 in our Bb Discussion Board forum titled, "PROJECTS AND HOODOO-FLAPDOODLE."
- Read about Workshop.
- Check your email and/or the Bb Discussion Board "WORKSHOP" forum for anything your classmates may have submitted for discussion this week. (Be sure to read that material carefully before class.) And feel free to submit something yourself!!!!
- Read O'Brien's, "How to Tell a True War Story" and Carver's, "Cathedral."
- CYBER CLASS ASSIGNMENT: groups complete worksheet on O'Brien and Carver.

In Class
- Review fiction Crash Course Power Point and talk about fiction generally.
- Discuss your Project #1 drafts.
- Carver and O'Brien.

Feb. 4 — "Art is thinking in images." —Aleksander Potebnya

Before Class
- Read stories in Sebold.
- Finish Fiction Project #1.

In Class
- Completed version of Project #1 due. Post in our Discussion Board forum titled, "PROJECTS AND HOODOO-FLAPDOODLE."
- CYBER CLASS ASSIGNMENT: full details will always be in Bb

Feb. 11 —
Before Class

- Read stories in Sebold.
- Read all of Doty.
- Begin work on Fiction Project #2.

In Class

- Close look at Project #2.
- Work with Doty and stories.
- CYBER CLASS ASSIGNMENT: full details will always be in Bb
- Cyber Class check this week!

Feb. 18—

Before Class

- Read stories in Sebold.
- Work on Project #2.

In Class

- Continue work with Doty and stories.
- CYBER CLASS ASSIGNMENT: full details will always be in Bb

Feb. 25—

Before Class

- Complete a very full draft of Fiction Project #2.

In Class

- Draft of Fiction Project #2 due.
- Critques.
- CYBER CLASS ASSIGNMENT: full details will always be in Bb.

March 4 —

Before Class

- Read online poems.

In Class

- Begin work with poetry, The Luminous Object.
- Begin work with Poetry Project #1.
- CYBER CLASS ASSIGNMENT: full details will always be in Bb.

March 11 —

Before Class

- Read online poems.
- Read all of Longenbach.
- Review Doty.

In Class

- Completed version of Fiction Project #2 due. Post in our Discussion Board forum titled, "PROJECTS AND HOODOO-FLAPDOODLE."
- Begin work with Longenbach. Continue work with Poetry Project #1.
- Cyber Class check this week!
- CYBER CLASS ASSIGNMENT: full details will always be in Bb

March 18—SPRING BREAK

March 25—

Before Class
• Read online poems.

In Class
• Poetry Project #1 due.
• Begin work with Project #2.
• Preview Chapbook and Portfolio assignments.
• Finish work with Longenbach.
• CYBER CLASS ASSIGNMENT: full details will always be in Bb

April 1 —
Before Class
• Read online poems.

In Class
• CYBER CLASS ASSIGNMENT: full details will always be in Bb

April 8 —
Before Class
• Read all of Kalman.

In Class
• Draft of Poetry Project #2 due.
• Sign up for visual/spoken word presentations.
• Work with Kalman.
• Intensive workshop.
• CYBER CLASS ASSIGNMENT: full details will always be in Bb.

April 15—
Before Class
• Work on materials for chapbook.

In Class
• Poetry Project #2 due.
• Cyber Class check this week!
• Discuss Writer’s Link and writer’s resources.
• Finish up work with poetry.
• Complete discussion of Kalman.
• Discuss portfolios.
• CYBER CLASS ASSIGNMENT: full details will always be in Bb

April 22 — Holiday Recess

April 29—
Before Class
• Work on final project.

In Class
• Begin visual and spoken work presentations (10-11 @ aprx. 6-8 min. each).
• CYBER CLASS ASSIGNMENT: full details will always be in Bb

May 6 —
In Class
• Continue visual and spoken work presentations (10-11 @ aprx. 6-8 min. each).
• Course wrap-up.
• CYBER CLASS ASSIGNMENT: full details will always be in Bb
Chapbooks and Portfolios due May _______. No late work accepted without documented evidence of serious hardship.

Back to 323 Homepage