

Creative Writing Class – Overview

Adapted from the Association of Writers and Writer's Programs (AWP) Recommendations on the Teaching of Creative Writing to Undergraduates

AWP has created these ideas to clarify the goals and methods, of teaching creative writing.

The general goal for a graduate program in creative writing is to nurture the literary artist, which includes more than sitting under a tree and writing in a journal every day. Literary artists need to be well read and well-rounded; exposed to a diversity of world literature, practiced in the process of critical reading, and patient working through editing and revising their own texts. In this way, students learn about themselves, their craft, and their passions as they find their voice and learn to use that voice more effectively over time. **However, let's be clear that an expert writer must first become an expert reader.** Students will gain a deeper understanding of a diverse set of texts, in order to understand the themes other authors have shared, as well as to learn to imitate the skills these authors have used. In this class students will be guided in:

- reading** and critical analysis of diverse texts as models – written, visual, and audio;
- learning** the strategies other authors have used in these literary models;
- writing** original poems, stories, creative nonfiction, plays, multimedia; and
- reviewing** each other's writing in discussions lead by the instructor.

In this way, students will encounter literature “from the outside” as readers and critics, and they will encounter literature “from the inside” as writers of their own texts.

Why Creative Writing? Seven Goals

- ***An Overview of Literature.*** Creative writing classes and workshops introduce students to a wide range of literature, spanning time, space, and a variety of cultural viewpoints.
- ***Expertise in Critical Analysis.*** Students will be shown how to think critically, to look for patterns and themes in a diverse set of texts, in order to create a personal toolbox of skills to use in their own writing.
- ***Intellectual Discipline.*** Students will at times be told to narrow their focus and energies to produce the most effective work while learning in addition to meet deadlines and manage time efficiently. And while imitating other authors will be encouraged as a way to learn new styles and writing skills, plagiarism will not be allowed.

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- ***Creativity.*** By requiring students to work in various literary forms and genres, creative writing classes require creative problem-solving, experimentation, and inventiveness.
- ***Understanding of Diverse Cultural Values.*** The study of literature is the study of our own humanity. Students will come into contact with points of view other than their own, encouraging them to become more effective not only as writers but as members of a global community.
- ***A Strong Command of Grammar.*** Creative Writing class requires students to deepen skills they may have first developed in their English classes. Specific emphasis will be placed on the variety of tools students can use to build better sentences.
- ***Persuasive Communication Skills.*** Because literature is not mere telling stories or freestyle a rap, creative writing students learn rhetorical tactics for becoming more persuasive in their own writing and in their daily lives.

General Curriculum

An introductory course like this exposes students to a variety of models and basic skills useful in writing non-fiction, fiction, poetry, and drama. FCPS requires that students both learn about each of these genres, and show examples of their own writing in each by the end of the year. In addition this class will focus on

- nurturing each student's gifts as writers, recognizing no two students are the same
- giving students freedom to write in forms of their own choosing, on topics and expressing themes that follow their passions,
- encouraging students to develop and use their own “voice”
- grading students based on each student's efforts and development over time

Grading

This is a course in which students will build a Portfolio of creative works. By the end of the year, students will have written **examples of each of the four main areas of study: Non-Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and Fiction. Within these areas, students will have freedom to choose styles, content, and presentation**, though all works will need to also have a typed version (script, lyric sheet, etc.) for review. Along with these choice elements, students will be asked to analyze a text, write a brief autobiography/memoir, and respond to a specific short story.

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Essential Questions

Throughout this course we will analyze texts both from the view of the author and the view of the reader. Creative writing is concerned both with the tools an author uses to express their passions, as well as the power a text can have on the reader. With this dual focus in mind, the essential questions for this course include:

- How does reading other texts help me improve my writing?
- What techniques can be used to shape an author's text?
- How are the author's message and the medium/genre the author uses connected?
- How can performance increase the power of the author's message?
- What are effective ways of both voicing a passion, and having an effect on others?

Expectations

As with all FCPS classes, there are some additional and specific expectations for students:

Academic Honesty: Students are to create original work. Imitation of other authors is encouraged but copying is plagiarism and not acceptable.

Preparation: Students are expected to be prepared for class, by bringing with them computers, journal, books, texts, and supplies for use in class, each class. While much of the reading for this class is by student's choice, and take place outside of class, students will be asked to finish texts on a schedule throughout the year.

Participation: Students are expected to speak, respond, discuss, and offer one another suggestions and positive feedback. This is at times less of a class and more of a writing community, where students can feel free to share what they are working on and get feedback they can use in revising their work without fear of judgement or rejection.

Deadlines: Creativity is hard to do on a schedule. But as every author knows: "Writing is never done, but sometimes it is due." Students will have a lot of flexibility in their writing and Portfolios, but there will still need to be specific deadlines for grading.

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Grading Details

Classwork

Daily worksheets and practice (20 x 10 per qtr)

Friday Peer Practice Sessions (5 x 10 per qtr)

Quizzes	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
	Literary Devices (25)	Literary Journal (40)	Sentences (25)	Poetry Vocab (30)
	Sentence Basics (25)	Irony (10)	Literary Devices (25)	Dialogue (20)

“Tests”	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
	Choice Fiction	Choice Non Fiction	Choice Drama	Choice Poetry
	Memoir	Analysis Paper	Choice Video / Web	Persuasive
		Choice Midterm		Choice Final

Choice Fiction – Short Story or Alternative	Minimum of 7 pages
Choice Nonfiction	Minimum of 4 pages
Choice Drama – Screenplay, 1 Act, or Alternative	Minimum of 5 minutes
Choice Video / Web	Minimum of 2-4 minutes
Choice Poetry – Poetry, Rap, Lyrics, Spoken Word	2 pieces, min 10 lines each
Memoir (Autobiography or Fiction)	Minimum of 4 pages
Analysis Paper – Analysis of book read in 1 st Semester	Minimum of 3 pages
Persuasive Essay on “Omelas” short story	Minimum of 3 pages

Choice Midterm and Final are an additional Choice assignment of any type to be finished within the first and second semesters and added to the Portfolio.

Students are encouraged to try new things, experiment, follow passions and above all: to find their own voice and use it effectively.

Students are also expected to work with peers to give and receive feedback in a positive manner, working as a writing community to help each student improve.

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Texts

Fiction

Short selections from famous authors as models
(Tolkien, Poe, Thurber, LeGuin, Rowling, Atwood)
20 Choice Fiction Books for students (using an IB selection process)

<i>Shatter Me</i> , Tahereh Mafi	<i>The Alchemist</i> , Paulo Coehlo
<i>Things Fall Apart</i> , Chinua Achebe	<i>Train to Pakistan</i> , Kushwant Singh
<i>The Little Prince</i> , Antoine de Saint-Exupery	<i>Wizard of Earthsea</i> , Ursula K. LeGuin
<i>The Great Divorce</i> , C S Lewis	<i>The Hobbit</i> , J R R Tolkien
<i>Frankenstein</i> , Mary Shelly	<i>Man who Was Thursday</i> , G K Chesterton
<i>Harry Potter/Deathly Hallows</i> , Rowling	<i>Death of a Ghost</i> , Margery Allingham
<i>Cloud of Witnesses</i> , Dorothy Sayers	<i>Short Stories</i> , Edgar Allan Poe
<i>Picture of Dorian Gray</i> , Oscar Wilde	<i>Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde</i> , Robert L. Stephenson
<i>Adventures of Sherlock Holmes</i> , Sir Arthur Conan Doyle	
<i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> , Zora Neale Hurston	
<i>Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy</i> , Douglas Adams	
<i>Miss Peregrine's Home for Children</i> , Ransom Riggs	

Nonfiction

News Articles and Op Eds from newspapers and journals, TED Talks
Short selections from famous authors as models
(Thurber, Orwell, Chesterton, Solnit, Baldwin, King, Carmichael, Baker, Allen)
Selections from *Paper Bullets*, Jeffrey Jackson

Drama

“Waiting for Godot” (play), Beckett
“No Exit” (play), Sartre
Portions of *The Matrix* (script), Wachowski and “Hamlet” (play) Shakespeare

Poetry

Collected poems from Anthologies
Selections from *A Hard Day's Write* (Beatles); *1965 A Revolutionary Year*, Jackson

Creative Writing Class 2021-2022
Choice Options / Menu of Alternatives



MENU



Fiction

Short Story
Fan Fiction
Flash Fiction
Novel
Parody / Satire
Science Fiction
Fantasy
Historical
News Article
Monologue

Nonfiction

Speech / Rant
PSA / Advertising
Web Site / Vlog
“TED Talk”
“How-to” Video
Opinion Editorial
Sermon
Literary Review
Storyboards
Book / Movie Trailer

Drama

Music Video
Script
1 Act Play
Screenplay
Adaptation
Comedy Skit
Parody / Satire
TV show episode
Storyboards

Poetry

Poetry
Rap
Song Lyrics
Spoken Word
Shakesperean
or Greek play
Ad Jingles