

Vanguard University
School for Professional Studies
Degree Program

“CREATIVE WRITING”
ENGL 350: Online

Student Guide

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Prerequisite: ENGL 120 or equivalent. Students learn and implement the basic techniques and theory specific to the four genres: creative non-fiction, short story, poetry, and script. Video lecture and on-line discussions combined.

TEXTS AND MATERIALS

Required texts:

Minot, Stephen. Three Genres: The Writing of Poetry, Fiction, and Drama. 8th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2007.

OVERVIEW

This course serves as a foundation for creative writing and is designed to introduce the student to four of the genres that make up that world – creative non-fiction, poetry, fiction, and drama. The course is structured in such a way that each genre naturally builds on the one that precedes it. Hence, we open with a unit on creative non-fiction, which by is based on true events. Drawing on the writer’s life experience gives the student confidence and opportunity to develop theme before having to construct a totally fictional story embed a theme within. Then we move to poetry, which, by definition, demands a certain economy. This economy allows the student to pay particular attention to language, word choice, and rhythmical patterns, and the student will be provided with opportunities to implement the theory and technique specific to this genre in a number of different kinds of poems. In addition to exploring the various ways in which the poetic genre might manifest, the emphasis on specificity of language will serve the student well when moving on to the next two genres.

The study of the short story follows, and students will continue their quest towards the development of creative language skills. The elements that make up a work of fiction will be discussed in detail, as will structure, literary conventions, and the value of showing versus telling. The aim of the unit is to allow students to develop not only a greater appreciation for the art of storytelling, but to understand the theory and technique behind what appears to be a relatively simple form of art.

The study of drama, and the writing of stage plays or screenplays, represent our final unit of creative writing, and as such, build on the previous two genres. Scripts, like poetry, demand a certain economy of language, and it shares with fiction, the elements of good storytelling. Scripts, given the limitations of the stage or screen itself, carry an even stronger reliance on structure; they also make use of elements specific to the genre.

Each unit will follow a similar format: students will study/review the fundamentals and theory specific to each genre; read and analyze professional creative non-fiction, poems, stories, and scripts; read and critique each other’s work; and most importantly, write their own creative non-fiction, poems, stories, and scripts, creating, by the end of the course, a portfolio of original work. The portfolio will be comprised of one piece from each genre and will signify not only the quality of the five-week course, but a roadmap of their own creative process.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Educational Targets and Course Objectives for Students

Intellectual Engagement

Students will understand the technique and theory specific to the creative writing genres of creative non-fiction, fiction, poetry, and scripts.

Students will learn how to implement this technique and theory in their own creative work and through the works of their peer group.

Spiritual Formation

Students will practice openness as they dialogue with one another in on-line discussion.

Students will gain appreciation for the beauty and variety of God's creation as they encounter various aspects of that creation through their own work.

Professional Excellence

Students will develop their critical thinking skills as they analyze various literary genres, literary works, and the works of their peers.

Students will develop their own creative writing skills by producing original creative non-fiction, poetry, fiction, and drama.

Aesthetic Expression

Students will understand various sources of aesthetic sensitivity and expression as inherent human endowments and part of God's creation.

Students will gain an awareness, understanding, appreciation, and expression of the fine and performing arts.

Socio-cultural Responsiveness

Students will gain a broader perspective on their own cultural position as they learn to see through other perspectives, as well as the deeper perspective they'll acquire as a result of exercising their God-given creative talent.

Responsible Stewardship

Students will prepare their assignments in a prompt and thorough manner.

Students will work responsibly, avoiding plagiarism.

COURSE POLICIES

PARTICIPATION

You must complete all sessions assignments and submit written work to get credit for each class session. Since in a classroom setting, attendance is necessary in order to complete the course, for an on-line course, completing the session assignments is like attendance.

Therefore, unfinished assignments will be considered "absence" for the portion of the session that is not completed.

Due to the concentrated scheduling and the emphasis upon participatory learning, students need to be in attendance every week. Students who miss more than one class meeting (or more than five class hours) in any given course will automatically receive a failing grade and need to retake the course to obtain a passing grade. If an instructor deems that a student's second absence was under extremely unavoidable and unusual circumstances (i.e., an auto accident), the professor may file an academic petition on behalf of the student to the Dean of SPS. If the academic petition is approved, the instructor may give the student a "W" (Withdrawal) grade in place of a failing grade. The student will still be required to retake the course.

The equivalent of 5 session hours will be the maximum missed to complete the course with a passing grade. Any missed sessions past 5 hours will be considered an automatic fail. If there are extreme circumstances that keep you from turning in your assignments on time, you can contact me and either make them up, or take a "W."

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Participation in an on-line course is limited and therefore all the more important when called upon in a forum. Each student is expected to participate the minimum expectations with thoughtful engaged comments and responses.

SUBMISSION OF FINAL EXAMS / PAPERS

The School for Professional Studies office does not assume responsibility for any final papers. No homework or final papers will be accepted for professors in the SPS office, nor will final papers be returned to students through the SPS office.

The method for the submission of homework and the final exam or final paper will be determined by the professor. The professor will discuss the method that will be employed during the first night of class. All exchanges of papers will be between the student and the professor.

LATE PAPER POLICY

You are responsible for submitting assignments on time (by 6:00 pm). Unless authorized by the Professor in advance, no credit will be given for assignments not turned in when due.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Work submitted for assessment purposes must be the independent work of the student concerned. Plagiarism, or copying and use of another's work without proper acknowledgment, is not permitted. Nor is it permissible for any former or present student to allow another student to refer to, use as a sample, or in any way copy or review their work. If a student needs guidance, he or she must seek the Professor's assistance.

DISABILITY SERVICES

For students with documented medical or psychological disabilities, please contact the Coordinator of Disability Services to request reasonable accommodations. The Coordinator of Disability Services is located in the Counseling Center on the second floor of the Scott Academic Center and can be reached at extension 4489 or by email at disabilityservices@vanguard.edu

For students with a documented learning disability who would like to request appropriate accommodations, please contact the Director of Learning Skills, located upstairs in Scott Academic Center at extension 2540 or by email at disabilityservices@vanguard.edu

STUDENT EVALUATION

The students' grades will depend on their performance in the following categories:

Percentage of grade	Actual Points	Expectation	Description
40%	400	Portfolio	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> See attached rubric and description
20%	200	Creative Writing Exercises	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> There are 5 per session, totaling 25. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> There is a prompt with the intent to get the creativity flowing. You are to spend about 15-20 minutes writing and then submit. These are not meant to be perfect or revised. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complete them as they are assigned during session work.

Percentage of grade	Actual Points	Expectation	Description
20%	200	Session Assignments	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reflections, summaries, and thoughts from videos, discussions, and reading. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quantity varies per week.
20%	200	Feedback through discussion boards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> You will be expected to comment on student postings of their writing as you will also be relying on other students to comment on your posted writing. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minimum 25 comments. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Session 2,3, and 4 will have models of categories and how to give feedback so that your comments are helpful.

When the points each student earns have been added together he or she will receive a letter grade according to the following scale:

Percentages	Points	Grade	Significance	GPA
93-100%	930-1000	A	Exceptional	4.00
90-92.9%	900-929	A-	3.67	
87-89.9%	870-899	B+	3.33	
83-86.9%	830-869	B	Above Average	3.00
80-82.9%	800-829	B-	2.67	
77-79.9%	770-799	C+	2.33	
73-76.9%	730-769	C	Average	2.00
70-72.9%	700-729	C-	1.67	
67-69.9%	670-699	D+	1.33	
63-66.9%	630-669	D	Below Average	1.00
60-62.9%	600-629	D-	0.67	
00-59.9%	000-599	F	Failure	0.00