

Vanguard University
School for Professional Studies
Degree Program

“CREATIVE WRITING”
ENGL 350

Student Guide

6/07
V2.1
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Prerequisite: ENGL 120 or equivalent. Students learn and implement the basic techniques and theory specific to the three genres: fiction, poetry, and drama. Lecture and workshop 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.

Recommended texts:

Bly, Robert. Leaping Poetry. Beacon Press. ASIN: 0807063932

Byron, Ellen. Graceland. Dramatist's Play Service, 1998.

OVERVIEW

This course serves as a foundation for creative writing and is designed to introduce the student to three of the genres that make up that world – 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 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, represent our final unit of creative writing, and as such, build on the previous two genres. Plays, like poetry, demand a certain economy of language, and it shares with fiction, the elements of good storytelling. Plays, given the limitations of the stage 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 poems, stories, and plays; read and critique each other's work; participate in a public reading of their own work; and most importantly, write their own poems, stories, and plays, creating, by the end of the course, a portfolio of original work. The portfolio will be comprised of a balance of poetry, the short story, and drama, 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 fiction, poetry, and drama.

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 classroom 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 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**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Because each course meets only five to eight times, it is important that students not miss class unless it is unavoidable. To receive the full participation points students must arrive on time to class with a working knowledge of each session's assignments and they must actively engage in class discussions.

Students who miss 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 absence, beyond the 5 hours was under extremely unavoidable and unusual circumstances (i.e. hospitalization, death in the family, major auto accident), the professor may file an academic petition on behalf of the student to the Program Chair. 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 be required to re-take the course.

Students who miss the first two class sessions, or the first five hours of a course, will automatically be dropped and be required to retake the course.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY (incl. Plagiarism)

Academic dishonesty, either cheating or plagiarism (presenting the words or opinions of others as one's own work), is regarded as a serious violation of both the academic and moral standards of Vanguard University. Dishonesty in any class assignment can result in: loss of credit for the assignment, loss of credit for the entire course, and referral to the Director and/or Provost. It is the prerogative and responsibility of the instructor to determine if academic dishonesty has occurred and the seriousness of the infraction. The Office of the Provost is to be notified of instances of academic dishonesty.

A student commits plagiarism if he/she submits as his/her own work:

1. Part or all of an assignment copied from another person's assignments, notes, or computer file.
2. Part or all of an assignment copied or paraphrased from a book, magazine, pamphlet, or website.
3. A sequence of ideas transferred from another source which the student has digested, integrated, and reorganized, and for which he/she fails to give proper acknowledgement.

A student is an accomplice in plagiarism if he/she

1. Allows his/her paper or other assignments, in outline or finished form, to be copied and submitted as the work of another.
2. Lends his/her computer disk to another student or otherwise allows his/her computer files to be copied for the purposes of plagiarism.
3. Prepares a written assignment for another student and allows it to be submitted as another's work.

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

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The School for Professional Studies intends to foster a Christ-centered community that promotes appreciation and respect for individuals, enhances the potential of all members, and values differences in gender, race, abilities, and generation. As such, we endeavor to communicate with honesty, to speak with encouraging and edifying words, and to create a safe environment in our classes and interactions.

GRADED HOMEWORK/ASSIGNMENTS

If an instructor chooses to submit graded papers or assignments to the SPS office, students may pick-up their work at the SPS Office Front Desk. Graded work is not kept 5 weeks beyond the last class session. Please note: the SPS office is not responsible for unclaimed or lost papers or assignments.

If a student chooses to submit their paper or assignment to the SPS office, this must be arranged between the instructor and student prior to submission. The SPS Office will gladly forward the completed paper or assignment to the instructor, however the SPS office is not responsible for unclaimed or lost papers or assignments.

LATE WORK

No late work is accepted. Exceptions may be made between the instructor and student.

STUDENT EVALUATION

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

1. Attendance and Participation (50 points)

Students will earn 50 points if they attend every class session from start to finish. Students will not receive any credit for the class after two absences.

2. Reading and in-class exercises (200 points)

Students can receive a maximum of 200 points for reading the text and doing the in-class exercises, which include, amongst them, the in-class poem, in-class short story, and in-class stage play. All in-class exercises must be typed before being turned in, and they are due at the beginning of each class period.

3. Poems (150 points)

Students can receive a maximum of 150 points – approximately 50 points each – for the poems that are required. The instructor will assign a provisional score to each poem. The final score will be assigned after the revised drafts are turned in. Poetry is graded on its language, structure, content, but most importantly, on the implementation of the theory and technique discussed in class.

4. Short Story (150 points)

Students can receive a maximum of 150 points for the short story that is required. The instructor will assign a provisional score to each story. The final score will be assigned after the revised drafts are turned in. Stories are graded on their language, structure, content, but most importantly, on the implementation of the theory and technique discussed in class.

5. Stage Play (150 points)

Students can receive a maximum of 150 points for the stage play that is required. The instructor will assign a provisional score to each play. The final score will be assigned after the revised drafts are turned in. Plays are graded on their language, structure, and content, but most importantly, on the implementation of the theory and technique discussed in class.

6. Public Reading (100 points)

The Public Reading, which takes place in lieu of a final exam, requires each student to read an original creative work in front of an audience. This work can be a poem, short story, or the staging of a play.

7. Portfolio (200 points)

The creative portfolio consists of two poems, one short story, and one stage play, written during the course. The portfolio must include all revisions made to the work, which is to say that the work included in it must be revised. Particular attention with respect to the grading process will be paid to the totality and quality of the portfolio, as well as the process and evolution of the creative writer during the five weeks of the course.

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

LOGISTICS CHART

Hour	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
1	Introductions Discussion of “What makes a Poem?”	Discussion Workshop	Discussion Fiction Lecture	Discussion Short Story Workshop	Discussion Ten-Minute Plays
2	Plunging In— selected poetry Break	Workshop (cont.)	Short Stories	Short Story Workshop (cont.)	Ten-Minute Plays (cont.) Break
3	In-Class Poem Discussion and Sharing	Break Playing Games with Images Introduction to the Short Story	Break Showing versus Telling Exercise	Break Introduction to Drama In-class Play	Public Reading
4	Associations Exercise Next Week’s Assignments The Oral Nature of Poetry	In-class Writing Exercise Discussion Next Week’s Assignments	Discussion and Sharing Next Week’s Assignments	In-class Play (cont.) Discussion and Sharing Next Week’s Assignments	Public Reading (cont.) Course Evaluations

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS**WEEK ONE****READ:**

Chapter 25: What Makes a Poem a Poem? pp. 187-197

Chapter 26: Plunging In: A Selection of Poems, pp. 198-224

Please read all of the poems in Chapters 25-26, but pay particular attention to the following:

Ezra Pound, "In a Station of the Metro," p. 194

Robert Frost, "Design," p. 200

Elizabeth W. Holden, "As the Cold Deepens," p. 201

Robley Wilson, "On a Maine Beach," p. 208

Gwendolyn Brooks, "We Real Cool," (see end of syllabus)

Robert Hayden, "Those Winter Sundays," (see end of syllabus)

Theodore Roethke, "The Waking," p. 209

E.E. Cummings, "Buffalo Bill's," p. 211

Richard Wilbur, "The Pardon," p. 213

Nikki Giovanni, "Balances," p. 214

Theodore Deppe, "The Paradise of Wings," pp. 218-219

In addition to the above named poems, students should also identify what their favorite poem in the chapter is, why it is their favorite, and be prepared to read it aloud. Also, students likewise identify their least favorite poem in the chapter, and why it is their least favorite.

Chapter 27: Sources: Where Poems Come From, pp. 225-235

WEEK TWO**READ:**

Chapter 28: The Impact of Images, pp. 236-248

Chapter 29: Using the Sound of Language, pp. 249-258

Peruse Chapters 30-33: pp. 259-308

Robert Bly, Leaping Poetry (If available)

READ:

Chapter 4: Images: The Essential Element. 57-71

Chapter 5: The Sound of Words. 72-82

Chapter 11: Poetry: From Craft to Art. 138-144

WRITE:

Revised In-Class Poem.

Greeting Card Poem.

Association Exercise.

Association Poem.

WEEK THREE**READ:**

Chapter 1: Literary Nonfiction, pp. 1-4

Chapter 6: Fiction, pp. 32-40

Chapter 7: Finding and Shaping Fresh Material, pp. 41-52

Jhumpa Lahiri “A Temporary Matter” (Handout)

Or Chapter 8: “Escapes,” A Story by Ann Hood, pp. 53-59

Chapter 10: “Rwanda,” A Story by Stephen Minot, pp. 68-77

Chapter 11: The Making of a Story, pp. 78-83

Chapter 12: Structure: From Scenes to Plot, pp. 84-91

Raymond Carver “So Much Water, So Close to Home” (Handout)

Or Chapter 22: “Gotta Dance,” A Story by Jackson Jodie Daviss, pp. 166-169

WRITE:

Revised “Workshop Poem”

Image Exercise

Imagist Poem

Revised “Where Were You Last Night?” Story

WEEK FOUR**READ:**

Stories to be used in the workshop

Chapter 37: Drama: A Live Performance, pp. 328-333

Ellen Byron “Graceland”

Or Chapter 38: A Play by William Saroyan: “Hello Out There,” pp. 334-346

Chapter 39: The Dramatic Plot, pp. 347-355

Chapter 41: Conflict: Generating Emotional Impact, pp. 364-372

WRITE:

Show Versus Tell Exercise

Short Story

Written Response to Workshop Short Stories

WEEK FIVE

WRITE:

Revised In-Class Play

Ten-Minute Play

PREPARE:

A creative piece for Public Reading.

FINAL PAPER: DUE ONE WEEK AFTER LAST CLASS

WRITE: Creative Portfolio: two revised poems, a revised short story, and a revised stage play; include earlier drafts along with the final drafts. Send to professor with your self-addressed, stamped envelope for return.

“We Real Cool”

The Pool Players.

Seven at the Golden Shovel.

We real cool. We

Left school. We

Lurk late. We

Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We

Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We

Die soon.

by Gwendolyn Brooks

“Those Winter Sundays”

Sundays too my father got up early
and put his clothes on in the blueblack cold,
then with cracked hands that ached
from labor in the weekday weather made
banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him.

I'd wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking.
When the rooms were warm, he'd call,
and slowly I would rise and dress,
fearing the chronic angers of that house,

Speaking indifferently to him,
who had driven out the cold
and polished my good shoes as well.
What did I know, what did I know
of love's austere and lonely offices?

by Robert Hayden