

LITR 2371: Introduction to Creative Writing  
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Office Hours: Mon. 5–7 & Wed. 2–4

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## Introduction to Creative Writing

### Course Description, Learning Outcomes, and Core Objectives:

This course will introduce you to the principles of writing poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction. You will gain a knowledge of the tradition in which we write. To gain that knowledge, you will engage in intensive reading across a range of genres and historical moments. The semester is divided into thirds, with about five weeks spent on poetry, fiction, and nonfiction respectively. By experimenting with a wide variety of exercises and approaches, you will discover which genres and styles suit you, and which intrigue or challenge you. Specifically, you will

- ❖ Acquire and demonstrate strategies for brainstorming, generating, and editing creative work
- ❖ Learn a vocabulary for giving useful feedback and collaborative literary citizenship
- ❖ Learn principles of producing effective poetry and prose
- ❖ Glean principles of effective poetry and prose from ample reading assignments and analysis
- ❖ practice the discipline of writing daily and submitting work in a timely fashion
- ❖ Discover the demands of the writing life, which include but are not limited to discipline, precision, seriousness in the approach to craft and form, as well as imaginative risk, spontaneity and playfulness.

This course will be part of the **Creative Arts** Foundational Component Area. As such, it will focus on the appreciation and analysis of creative artifacts (verse and prose texts) and works of the human imagination. It will involve the synthesis and interpretation of artistic expression and enable critical, creative, and innovative communication about works of art, i.e. the poems, stories, and essays that you read and write.

In addition, the following four Core Objectives must be addressed in each course approved to fulfill this category requirement: **Critical Thinking Skills (CT)**, **Communication Skills (COM)**, **Teamwork (T)**, and **Social Responsibility (SR)**.

### Required Texts:

Stephen Minot, *Three Genres*

Annie Dillard, *The Writing Life*

Printouts of supplementary readings and your own work, as requested by the instructor

### Required Writing:

Journal Entries	20% (10 x 2%)		
Workshop Poems	15%	One short story	15%
One essay/memoir	15%	Critiques	10%
Participation	5%	Revisions	10%
Artist's Statement	5%		

### Grading:

Your grade in LITR 2371 depends on the level of writing in your workshop submissions, your ability to produce Journal entries on time, and with a consistent spirit of experimentation and

adventure, your complete, attentive, serious, helpful critique letters (write for five workshop members in each of the three workshops, your revisions, artist's statement, and participation. Because the workshop depends on its members, and because the writing life is very much about "showing up," absences and a failure to provide insightful, thoughtful contributions to class discussion will limit your chances of success in the course.

Learning Outcomes	CO	Assessment Methods	Criteria/Targets
Learn the difference between formal and free verse. Learn the rules for at least three forms (villanelle, sonnet, pantoum).	CT, COM	Write own villanelle, sonnet, pantou, and free verse poem. Demonstrate knowledge regarding the distinct effect of each form in the writer's statement.	70% students will receive acceptable or excellent.
Learn that meter (such as iambic pentameter) consists of stressed and unstressed syllables. Learn scansion. Understand the difference between scanning free verse poetry and formal poems.	CT, COM	Produce scans (using appropriate symbols for stressed and unstressed symbols) of published poems, as well as students' own formal and free verse poems.	70% students will receive acceptable or excellent.
Learn the distinct effects of literary devices such as rhyme, slant rhyme, alliteration and assonance.	CT, COM	Articulate in critiques the effects of fellow students' use of literary devices (rhyme, alliteration, assonance) to forge connections that would otherwise not be evident.	70% students will receive acceptable or excellent.
Learn how lineation works in contemporary poetry, namely through the tension between naturally syntax and grammar of the poems sentences, and the pauses energe by line breaks.	CT, COM	Analyses of readings assessed in weekly writing and in class participation. Understanding of lineation demonstrated in poems produced as well as writer's statement explainating said poems.	70% students will receive acceptable or excellent.

Learn what a revision of a poem entails, namely, the reconsideration of point of view, lineation, rhyme scheme, image connections, and where the volta or “turn” occurs	SR, TW	Produce two possible revisions of a single poem, and articulate the rationale that underpins the artistic choices that created each one.	70% students will receive acceptable or excellent.
Practice the discipline of writing daily and submitting work in a timely fashion	COM	Experiments, workshops, with late work heavily penalized.	70% students will receive acceptable or excellent.
Learn that for a story to work, its plot <i>must</i> be a chain of cause and effect, and that suspense is generated by establishing a pattern (such as a pattern in which power shifts back and forth between protagonists), and permitting readers the sense that they can almost predict the story’s outcome, a conclusion that should feel both impossible to predict and also inevitable once revealed.	CT	Analyze the plots of published stories in weekly homework and in class. Produce sketches of several potential plots for homework. Produce one short story, whose plot logic is accounted for in the writer’s statement. Comment on the effectiveness (and reasons for that effectiveness) of peers’ plots in critiques.	70% students will receive acceptable or excellent

Recognize that for good literature to be produced in a culture, collaboration between writers, editors, publishers, and reviewers is necessary. Each member in the chain of literary production must perform her task in a timely, professional manner.	SR	Critiques will be collected and evaluated each class period, to ensure students have developed and demonstrated adequate social responsibility.	70% students will receive acceptable or excellent
One group poem will be written, as well as one collaboratively written short story opening, in order to help students learn to write together, and support the writing of others.	T	Production of poems and short story openings as a team will be observed by the professor.	70% students will receive acceptable or excellent
Discover the demands of the writing life, which including include but are not limited to discipline, precision, seriousness in the approach to craft and form, as well as imaginative risk, spontaneity and playfulness.	CT, COM, SR	Artist's Statement	70% students will receive acceptable or excellent

### *Course Policies*

**Late Work:** You must anticipate problems, and submit your work EARLY to avoid lateness. You CAN upload a new draft if you get one done right before the deadline, but computer and printer problems at the last minute are NOT AN EXCUSE. Work submitted within one week of the deadline will receive a MAXIMUM OF A C (75%), and after one week, it's a ZERO.

**The Writing Center:** This is an instructional facility designed to provide all university students with peer tutors to help with their writing projects, and can support creative writing students do better in class. Their office is at SSB 2105, their phone number is (281) 283-2910, and their website is [www.uhcl.edu/writingcenter](http://www.uhcl.edu/writingcenter).

**Blackboard:** It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with Blackboard. Should you run into technical difficulties please contact UCT ([281] 283-2828) and/or use the support tabs.

**Disabilities:** The University of Houston System complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for students with a disability. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, each University within the System strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them. If you believe that you have a disability requiring adjustments/auxiliary aid, please contact disability services (SSB 1.301, #281-283-2627) ASAP, and **provide me with an accommodation letter.**

**Academic Honesty and Plagiarism Policy:** All UHCL students are responsible for knowing the standards of academic honesty. Please refer to the UHCL catalog and the Student Life Handbook for the University Academic Honesty Policy. Briefly, plagiarism is using another person's words and ideas as though they were your own and it is easy to avoid: simply put the material you have taken from someone else's writing in quotation marks and cite the person's name and publication in your paper. If you are paraphrasing from an outside source—explaining someone else's ideas using your own words—you *must still acknowledge and cite the source*. Plagiarism is not restricted to the use of published work; the **passing of another student's work as your own**, turning in **any work that you submitted for another class**, or having another person write your paper is also a case of plagiarism. If I suspect unacknowledged dependence on outside sources, I will investigate it thoroughly; a paper found to contain any plagiarized material will receive a "0" and is sufficient grounds for failing the course.

**6 Drop Rule Limitation:** Students who entered a Texas public college or university for the first time in fall 2007 or later should be aware of the course drop limitation imposed by the Texas Legislature. Dropping this or any other course between the first day of class and the census date for the semester/session does not affect your 6 drop rule count. Dropping a course between the census date and the last day to drop a class for the semester/session WILL count as one of your 6 permitted drops. You should take this into consideration before dropping this or any other course. Visit [www.uhcl.edu/records](http://www.uhcl.edu/records) for more information on the 6 drop rule and the census date information for the semester/session.

**Email:** I will do my best to answer all students emails as promptly as I can, which usually means within 24 hours, though I ask you to allow me 48 hours to respond. Please treat emails like **letters** rather than text messages, and use a salutation, good punctuation, and whole words.

**Emergency Hotline Number for University Closures:** 281-283-2221