

English 250: Creative Writing (3 units)

Imperial Valley College Fall 2013 Room 2727 Thursday 6:30-9:40 pm

Instructor: David Zielinski david.zielinski@imperial.edu **Office:** 2790 **Phone:** 760-355-6470
Office Hours: MW 2 to 3 p.m. & TuTh 3 to 4 p.m.

Course Description: Study and application of the principles of literary construction, plus exercises in writing of imaginative literature, including short story, poetry, screen-writing, and stage play-writing. The student will be expected to attempt all genres of imaginative writing. The student may elect to specialize in one of the genres in order to achieve maximum progress.

Student Learning Outcomes: You will learn to

- compose a short story with adequate development of plot, theme, and character development, with properly formatted dialogue, description, and literary devices.
- compose a short poem with demonstrated understanding of line length, alliteration, assonance, rhyme, meter, imagery, symbolism, and metaphor.
- proofread, edit, analyze and criticize fellow students' stories and poems based on their mastery of the appropriate elements as described above.

Required Texts:

***The Portable MFA in Creative Writing* by The New York Writers Workshop.**

ISBN-13: 978-1-58297-350-0

***The Triggering Town* by Richard Hugo.**

ISBN 978-0-393-33872-0

Class content: We will primarily cover short story writing and poetry. If you have a special interest in other creative forms such as stage plays, screenplays, or novel writing, the class can be adapted to suit your interests and abilities. Primarily, however, we will cover the fundamentals of the creative writing craft. In fiction, this includes setting, character development, plot, dialogue and dialect, and point of view. Poetry creates images, feelings, and insights through wordplay using metaphor, meter, rhyme, assonance, consonance, and alliteration. Your stories and poetry will be the material we will study and edit in a workshop setting.

Writing required: You will write many exercises in poetry, personal writing, and fiction. Three of your pieces will be polished through multiple revisions into graded pieces. The quantity of work produced is flexible, as long as you're engaged in the creative process. You should expect to produce a minimum of 6,000 words. You will also be required to help proofread and edit final drafts for submission to our class. You must write both poetry and fiction.

Anthology: *Borderlines 2013*

As a group, the class will produce an anthology or collection of our best work. Toward the end of the semester, we'll shift our activities from writing toward revising and then proofreading the anthology. The final stages are the hardest because the production process requires a great deal of time and effort. We need to read everything carefully for errors.

To make revising and editing easier, all graded work (but not homework) must be produced on a computer. Many are available on campus in the Reading/Writing Lab and in the library.

Your first draft must be typed in standard manuscript form on 8½ by 11" paper, one inch margins, double spaced. We will spend much of our class time discussing one another's writing, so please make sure that your printed works are dark enough to copy and distribute. Final drafts will be submitted both in paper form and electronically—either attached to e-mail or copied to a flash drive. Please save your final draft as an RTF file (not a DOC file) using your name in the filename (e.g., jose_baca_poem1.rtf).

You will be responsible for making sufficient copies of your work to distribute in our workshops.

Grading: Your course grade is calculated as follows:

1. Workshop Participation	20%
2. Homework & Online Discussions	10%
3. First Submissions	25%
4. Revised Submissions	30%
5. Critical Response Activity	15%

1. **Workshop and Participation:** This is a workshop-centered class, which means that your focused participation is essential. You will be evaluated on your contributions to class discussions and your understanding for the elements of quality in other students' work. Twenty percent of your grade is derived from the way you engage in the peer-review process.
2. **Homework and Online Activity:** We will use Blackboard to enhance our writing activities this semester. Students will be required to regularly log on and post content to discussions, blogs, journals, or wikis. Blackboard will also be used to share resources (web sites, videos, documents).
3. **First Submissions:** When you initially turn in a story or a set of poems, you will be graded primarily on effort. However, this initial grade will suffer if the work does not adhere to basic usage standards. Good clear use of language enhances the power of your work.
4. **Revised Submissions:** After we workshop your story or poetry, you will be required to revise your first submission into a stronger work. Writers revise their work repeatedly; it takes a great deal of effort to realize the promise of a good story or poem. Your revised submission will be graded based on the feedback you received during the workshop event.
5. **Critical Response Activity:** The final exam will assess your ability to identify, analyze, and criticize a short story and a poem for fundamental concepts and for quality. Your workshop participation throughout the class will prepare you for this final exam.

Due dates: For the workshop format to function as it should, we need you to turn in your work as soon as possible. Unlike most writing classes, we don't have group due dates. Someone's work will be due each week; you volunteer for this. Once you volunteer, you have made a very important commitment. That date now becomes your firm date, and you will be penalized if you don't meet it. The following dates are designed to keep the whole class on schedule—the very latest someone may turn in work.

First story/poetry: September 19 Rewrite is due: October 10
Second story/poetry: October 17 Rewrite is due: October 31
Third story/poetry: November 7 Rewrite is due: November 28

November 21 will be the last day to submit the polished works that you want to appear in the anthology.

You will be asked to sign up for story/poetry turn-in dates. Your story may be discussed that evening, but most likely will be discussed during the following class meeting (one week later), after your colleagues have a chance to read and reflect upon about the work you have submitted.

MEASURABLE COURSE OBJECTIVES AND MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR GRADE OF "C": Upon satisfactory completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. distinguish and explain principles of writing in the short story, drama, poetry and essay.
2. demonstrate the ability to recognize and interpret styles and techniques in all genres and to practice these in their own writing.
3. criticize his/her own work and the work of others by identifying and analyzing principles of style and structure in all genres.
4. distinguish among various opportunities for publication including contests, literary journals and other media, applying this information to their own work by writing a query letter and preparing manuscripts for submission.
5. collect and organize a representative compilation of his/her own works for inclusion in a creative writing anthology.

Classroom behavior: Everyone should follow ordinary rules of etiquette and civility, meaning that everyone listens respectfully when another person is speaking. Cell phones should be turned to vibrate or off during class time. Students may be dropped after missing two consecutive classes. And the last day to drop the class this semester is Saturday 9 November 2013.

Disabled Student Programs and Services

Any student with a documented disability who may need educational accommodations should notify the instructor or the Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSP&S) office as soon as possible.

DSP&S: Health Sciences Building, Room 2117 (760) 355-6312