

# File assignment



If I had a nickel for every person who ever told me he/she wanted to become a writer but 'didn't have time to read,' I could buy myself a pretty good steak dinner. Can I be blunt on this subject? If you don't have time to read, you don't have the time (or the tools) to write. Simple as that. " -? Stephen King " Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at least something different. " -? T. S. Eliot Course Description: This is an introductory course in writing fiction and poetry.

A basic premise of this course is that powerful stories and poems often emerge from the collision of attentive reading, fearless writing and rigorous revision. Some writers may be born, but all writers are made (as are athletes, doctors, painters, lawyers, and musicians) through the deliberate and persistent practice of a discipline. In English 209, readings, class discussions and in-class writing exercises will focus on the elements of craft. We will pay special attention to readings as models and jumping off places into our own work. We will, in effect, " imitate toward originality. The in-class writing workshop is also a key component to English 209, as it will help us better understand the art of revision and the skill of giving others constructive feedback. If at any time you have doubts, questions or concerns, I'm available and willing to help. English 209 does not propose to turn students into professional writers in one semester, but it will give students a chance to experience and practice the craft and discipline of writing fiction. The skills we learn here will carry into future writing projects and disciplines. 2 Texts and Materials: Texts: ; Seeders, David.

Children Playing Before a Statue of Hercules. 1st deed. New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2005. Swenson, Cole, and David SST. John. American Hybrid: A Norton Anthology of New Poetry. 1st deed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. , 2009. ; various readings on Blackboard (print & bring to class) Materials: ; blank notebook, journal, diary, sketchbook, etc. ; pen! Pen! PEN! (or pencil) ; folder for your drafts, revisions, peer comments, handouts, etc. ; some sort of binding for your final portfolio (can be handmade or whatever) Reading and Journals: You are required to bring your blank book or journal to every class period.

Throughout the course, you will be asked to read poems, short Stories, and craft essays from the required texts or the class Blackboard site. You are required to write a short (3-4 paragraph) response in your blank book to 5 readings. Any additional responses will earn you extra credit points toward your final grade. Keeping up with the reading and responses is imperative to your success in the class, as these assignments will guide our class discussions. You will also use your notebook for all in-class writing exercises, as well as any brainstorming, collaring, or note-taking you do outside of class.

This book will function as your personal creative space, so encourage you to personalize it forever you want fill it with images, cutouts, stickers, song lyrics, quotations, drawings, etc. As the creative process often demands that we step away from the daily clutter of our lives, please do not use this notebook for other classes. I will periodically check your notebooks for completion throughout the semester, so again, be sure to bring them to each

class period. Attendance and Participation: Participation is vital to our classroom environment.

You will be graded on your participation in both the large-group discussions and your smallpox workshops. In the large group, the quality of our input to the class discussion will determine your grade; in the small- groups, your grade will largely derive from the quality of the critiques you provide for your peers. The small-group workshops can only thrive if all members of the group are present and actively participating, so try not to miss unless it's truly unavoidable. This is not a traditional lecture class, and attendance and class participation will be crucial to your success in this course.

For this reason, absences should be rare, and more than three (equal to one week of class) will drop your participation grade by five points for each instance. Missing more than six classes without notifying me beforehand will most likely result in a failing grade. Students who know they must be absent because they participate in university-sponsored events are responsible for 3 notifying me in advance and providing a note from a coach, director, or academic advisor. Students who need to miss class for religious observance should also notify me prior to class.

Please be respectful of your peers by arriving to class on time. There is no class policy in regards to tardiness, but if students repeatedly show up late or leave early, will enforce a punitive measure. We will be working hard to squeeze our discussions into a fifty minute timestamp, so every minute counts! Assignments: Each week, you will turn in a creative assignment. These must be typed, in a 12-point font (poems are single-spaced, fiction

should be double-spaced). There is no set length for poems, but work that is obviously incomplete or hurried will receive a lower grade.

Fiction pieces should be between 2-4 pages long. Each of your creative assignments should be polished and error-free. These pieces will be read and critiqued by your peers, so don't write anything that you are uncomfortable discussing in a public setting. Please keep all of the writing assignments you complete, as you will be revising many of them for your final portfolio. I do not comment on late work. Note: Although you will receive a prompt for every writing assignment you are given, these are closer to general suggestions than strict guidelines.

If you have a creative project you feel passionately about (for instance, if you are working on a longer Story and want to bring in a scene from it each week, or if you have an idea for revision that you really want to try), that's fine. I believe that this class should accommodate your creative impulses rather than subdue them, so feel free to experiment! Workshops and Comments: On Fridays, you will turn in your out-of-class writing assignments and distribute them to your peers. Pay attention to the number of copies required for each class.

You must thoughtfully comment on your peers' writing by the following Friday, when we will workshop those pieces (at first, as a group; later, in small workshop groups of five). Missed workshops cannot be made up. I will take up your critiques at the end of class and return them the following week. Workshops are spaces for you to constructively discuss each other's work—describing positive attributes of each piece and giving suggestions for

revision. Please be respectful toward your peers and mindful of their feelings as you critique their work.

Workshops should be a safe space in which you nurture each others creativity, not a place where you tear each other down or make personal attacks. Also, you get to go outdoors! Safe-space: A place where anyone can relax and be fully self-expressed, without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, or unsafe on account of biological sex, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, cultural background, age, or physical or mental ability; a place where the rules guard each person's self-respect and dignity and strongly encourage everyone to respect others. Tj? Advocates for Youth: " Creating Safe Space for GUILTY Youth: A Toolkit," Diversification. Org 4 Grades: Grades will be determined as follows: Final Portfolio 30 Weekly Writing Assignments 20 Large-Group Participation (class discussions, attendance, etc. ) 15 Small-Group Participation (workshop and comments on peers' work) Journal (reading responses and in-class writing) Total 100 Understanding your Grades: Students will not receive a letter grade on individual assignments, as this tends to shift the focus away from reading, writing, and critical thinking skills.

Students do, however, receive feedback and comments on their work. Individual assignments, peer reviews, and homework will be noted in my grade book with a check, check minus (if assignment sloppy, is not typed, or is incomplete), or check plus (if assignment is particularly astute, thorough, or original). Late work will not receive comments. There will be no final

exam. Instead, on the last day of class, you will turn in a final portfolio. It will be an assessment of your work in the course over the master.

I will be looking for evidence of your involvement with the course, willingness to revise, your success in working on your writing, and your ability to give and receive constructive feedback to and from your peers. Important: If your work at any point is not of passing quality, I will inform you immediately. If you have not done the work of the term, have not turned in assignments on time, have not attended classes regularly, you will not be eligible to submit a portfolio, which will result in a failing grade for the course.

Students must hand in assignments and final portfolios on time to receive a passing grade. If at anytime, you have doubts or questions about your standing in class, please contact me by email or visit my office hours.

Academic Honesty: Presenting someone else's words or ideas as your own will not be tolerated. If you are not sure what constitutes plagiarism, come see me or refer to the JIM undergraduate Honor Code ([http://www.Miami.Deed/dean-students/PDF/undergrad\\_honored.PDF](http://www.Miami.Deed/dean-students/PDF/undergrad_honored.PDF)).

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. If you plagiarize in this course, you will fail the assignment, and may also fail the course and be brought before the Undergraduate Honor Council. Accessibility and Accommodations: If you receive accommodations from MUM'S office of Accessibility Resources (ARC), please let me know. Please let me know early in the semester if you have any concerns regarding your learning potential, participation, or general access in this course. (<http://www.Miami.Du/>) 5 Open Door Policy/Grade Issues: If you have any questions or concerns about your grade,

assignments, or any aspect of this class, I am happy to address them in person with you during office hours or another time by appointment. Will not address specific grade information in front of other students, in the lassoer, or via email or telephone. Office Hours and Location: My office hours are from pm every Wednesday. If you are unavailable at that time, please contact me Via email, and I will set up an appointment with you at a different time.

My office is located at the English Composition Center in the Pendant House building, past the architecture school and behind the Bank United Center. Please see Christie at the front desk (room 1 10, first floor, under the archway-thing) when you stop by. Final Portfolio: Your final portfolio will contain four revised poems, one beviess and expanded fiction piece (5-10 pages) and a 2-3 page self- assessment Of your work. The self-assessment should describe your progress, process, and personal evolution as a writer.

You should write about what you have learned, define your best pieces, and explain your choices. The self- assessment should also contain an analysis of the quality of your response journal and of your written feedback to your peers, as well as a personal response to the readings (what you liked best and least). Your final portfolio should be typed, in a 12-point font, and stylishly bound in a report cover, older, binder, etc. Feel free to get creative and personalize your portfolio however you want.