
INTRODUCTION TO CREATIVE WRITING: A CROSS-GENRE WORKSHOP in Fall 2018 (CL2100)

Course Code	CL2100	Professor(s)	Amanda Dennis
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	G-116
Class Schedule	W: 13:45-16:40 in G-102	Office Hours	Weds 12:30-1:30 & by appt.
Credits	4	Email	adennis@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2018	Office Tel. Ext.	N/A

Course Description

This workshop is designed to accommodate students who are new to creative writing or have taken a genre workshop and wish to continue developing their skills in the discipline. Through assignments and selected examples, students will become familiar with the elements of poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction. In poetry, we will explore forms, figurative language, alliteration, central metaphor, and rhythm and pacing. In prose, we will work on setting, point of view, characterization, dialogue, conflict, lyricism, and dramatic structure.

Above all, we will examine what makes a poem or an imaginative prose piece moving, evocative, and imbued with a sense of necessity. We will look for its *raison d'être* (reason for being), its central conflict, the point of view of the speaker, the tone, and how the dramatic situation is transformed or is transformative. We will discuss how obscurity, sentimentality, or problems with structure can undermine the quality of the writing and the intended effect of a piece.

The focus of this course will be to produce poems and narrative prose based on assignments and present them to the class for constructive consideration and ideas for improvement. Each student will develop her critical eye and critical voice when it comes to her own and colleagues' work, increasing her awareness as a writer. We'll also read published poems and prose to take inspiration from what we most admire. A final portfolio will include all assignments and revisions. Midterm conferences and a final presentation will be scheduled.

Course Learning Outcomes

To develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for the art of poetry and creative prose writing through practice and analysis.

To develop skills in editing and writing strategy.

To explore the defining characteristics of poetry, fiction, and literary nonfiction and where the borders between them blur.

General Education

Note that this course provides an opportunity for students majoring in Literary Studies and the Creative Arts to contribute to their portfolio requirement. This course also can be applied to the Creative Writing minor and major.

Course Outline

CLASS SCHEDULE: *(craft topics may change as the class's needs emerge and evolve)*

Most weeks, you will be given the reading for the following week, by email. Please make sure you are able to refer to these texts (digitally or printed) in class.

W1: Weds. Sept. 12th

Mon. Sept.

Introduction: Ways to play. Assignment #1 (due 17th by email): Two-pages of prose or 20-line poem that responds to class exercises ("happenings").

September 16th – last day to drop/add courses online

W2: Weds. Sept. 19th

Mon. Sept. 24th by email): Two pages of prose or 20-line poem focusing on character and the first person.

Persona: inventing the self as character. Assignment #2 (due

W3. Weds. Sept. 26th Writing People/Character: physical description, action, voice, desire. Assignment #3 (due Mon. Oct. 1st email): Two pages

of prose or 20-line poem focusing on dialogue and the third person.

W4. Weds. Oct. 3rd Finding the Heat: building tension (conflict) Assignment #4

(due Mon. Oct. 8th by email): Two pages of prose or 20-line poem that portrays conflict (protagonist v. antagonist; can be internal conflict).

W5. Weds. Oct. 10th Writing Place. Assignment #5 (due Mon. Oct. 15th by email): Two-page sketch or 20-line poem that portrays place.

W6. Weds. Oct. 17th Epiphany (recognition, transformation)—or not: Assignment #6 (due Mon. Oct. 22nd by email): Two-page sketch or 20-line poem that provides moment of recognition and transformation for the speaker or a character.

W7. Weds. Oct. 24th Artful! & Breaking With Form. Assignment #7 (due Mon. Oct. 29th by email). Two pages of prose or 20-line poem that uses an existing work of literature or art as its point of inspiration, with notes on creative choices.

October 26th, Mid-semester grades due

W8. October 31th - November 2nd (included) Fall break, No classes

W9. Weds. Nov. 7th Midsession conferences. See sign-up sheet.

W10. Weds. Nov. 14th Unfinished workshop discussion. First full-length assignment (due Mon. Nov. 19th to everyone by email). Discussion of style.

Reaction Paper #1 Due

Guest Speaker

W11. Weds. Nov. 21st First full-length assignments workshop (Please print 15 copies before class). Discussion on style.

W12. Weds. Nov. 28th Continued workshop discussion of full-length works; Discussion on style. Second full-length assignment due Mon. Dec. 3rd to everyone by email.

W13. Weds. Dec. 5th Second full-length assignment workshop (Please print 15 copies before class); Discussion on style.

Reaction Paper #2 Due

W14. Weds. Dec. 12th Complete Portfolio; Final workshop discussion of full-length works; Discussion on style.

December 13th -16th, Reading days; December 17th – 21st Final exams

Textbooks

This course doesn't have any textbook.

Attendance Policy

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

Grading Policy

REQUIREMENTS:

+ **Class assignments** (2 pages/500 words each or one poem approx. 20 lines long)

+ **Two Reaction Papers** (2 pages/500 words each)

+ **Portfolio:**

Prose writing emphasis: Two 6-page personal essays or works of fiction and a 2-page essay on the creative journey, placing your work in a literary context.

Poetry writing emphasis: 6-poem sequence or series and a 2-page essay on the creative journey, placing your work in a literary context.

Mixed writing emphasis: One 3-page essay or work of fiction and a 3-poem sequence or series and a 2-page essay on the creative journey, placing your work in a literary context.

GRADING:

Class participation/exercises 20%

Two short reaction papers 10%

Midterm conference/final presentation; Portfolio 70%

ATTENDANCE:

Attendance is mandatory. This course is a seminar-style course, and you are graded on performance. Also, this class only meets once a week, so each absence represents a significant portion of the semester. Unexcused absences or more than one excused absence will result in failure of the course. Three or more latenesses (15+ minutes) will also result in a failing grade. If you must miss a class, contact me at adennis@aup.edu before the class.

Other

SUBMITTING WORK:

When you send your submissions by email (to the address above), make sure that your work is in a Word Document. Make sure to put your name and the title of the work at the top of the document.

Save your document like this:

Your Name_ Assign1

Your Name_ Assing2

Your Name_ ReactionPaper1

Your Name_Portfolio (all work for your portfolio should go in one Word Document)

Most weeks, you will be writing and submitting. Submit by **Monday at 9 a.m.** Any late work risks not being read or workshopped. Each week, before class, you'll receive an emailed 'Mastercopy' which will contain the work of all students for that week. Make sure you have this with you in class so that you can refer to a student's text for workshop.

The Mastercopy can be brought to class as a printed hardcopy or accessible through your computer or other device. I allow the use of technology in the class for this reason, and for any in-class writing exercises. Any other use is not appropriate.

Everyone's portfolio at the end of term will be sent to *Paris Atlantic* unless you express a desire to the contrary. This is the University's Literary review. If your work or a part of it is selected for publication, you'll be contacted for permission and any editorial notes.

WHAT IS A REACTION PAPER?

- Go to any literary event. Take notes. Write down any quotes or points the writer makes in discussion that you find interesting, that stay with you. Think about craft, form and deviation from form. Think about voice and style. Push, prod. I don't know what aspects of craft are most interesting to you or whether you'll agree or disagree with what is said. Neither do I know what gems might come up in the events you go to. This is for you to know and present in a way *that is engaging to read*.
- The emphasis of the reaction paper is on creativity in the style of your writing: you respond as a *writer* to the event, not simply as a reader/attendee. This can take any form. Be creative. Find *your* voice—what makes you want to keep writing.
- Each reaction paper is 500 words (2 pages). All the words you select in your reaction paper should deserve their place (first sentences like "I arrived at the venue" or "The event I chose for my reaction paper was X at Y" do not fit this description).
- You will find literary events going on at Shakespeare & Co., Le Chat Noir, Paris Lit Up

open mike, The American Library, and many more places. It is your responsibility to find an event. I suggest going to more than two so that you have a choice.