ENGL 1303.001 Basic Creative Writing  
Fall 2014  
Professor Luke Goebel  
University of Texas at Tyler  

Required Texts:  
1. One piece of poetry or prose (or several short pieces) that you will bring to read aloud during our first week of class—something(s) you find exemplary in terms of sound and affect.  
2. Your work. Bring your photocopied work on the class meeting prior to the one in which your work will be discussed and work-shopped. Also, this means you will also bring drafts to be peer reviewed as noted on syllabus. Each person will respond in the form a letter to the work you have submitted for workshop (NOT PEER REVIEW) and these letters will be handed to you at the end of the discussion of your work.

Course Description:  
This course aims to enhance student ability in language arts communication through studies and practice of non-fiction, short story, poetry, and other forms of creative human expression. This course may be substituted for either ENGL 1301 or ENGL 1302 to satisfy core curriculum requirements.

Detailed Course Description:  
WE are going to read fiction, nonfiction, poetry, essay, and other forms of creative writing. In order to examine these works of creative writing, we are going to first build an understanding of the context of Creative Writing (first called poetry and representation) among some of our first ancient thinkers and writers. This will give us a first context from which to begin.

We will then continue to study the form and craft elements of chosen genres while considering the works in larger contexts. We will study how authors establish “authority” and control. We will at this time be able to begin discussing works both at the level of form (craft) and function (meaning/effect).

We will read, investigate, scrutinize, and discuss the constructions of poetry, short fiction, creative non-fiction, and prose. We will read, re-read, and then ask questions in class about the assigned reading materials—always paying attention to work being done in each sentence or line—to sound and effect, but also to context, to message, to theme, to interpretation. We will probe. We will realize. This isn’t about looking good or proving how intelligent we are, but about studying how authors do what they do, and also what their literary works mean. We are here to discover the techniques authors have employed in their literary works and we are going to
glean what we can from these techniques, learning as we go about what is accidental, mysterious, wondrous about the writing process, but with attention to choices, so we can focus our own endeavors at writing our first Creative pieces rather than firing blindly. We will also be looking at the effect and meaning of our works and the works of those we study.

We also will discover why we and others write. We must have something original compelling us to the page. This class should inspire you to find what you must write, and should teach you the craft of your writing and how to attend to the choices and elements you face in writing.

**The Work and the Process:**
You will write personal imitations, responses, and essays and works of fiction/nonfiction/poetry, and engage in meaningful discussions with our fellow writers. Perhaps most importantly, every member of this class will participate in workshop, giving and receiving careful feedback within the workshop setting we will create together.

Each of you will create a portfolio of your writing. This will include all essays, other genres, as well as responses, and pastiches—both self-directed writing and writing generated through assignments given in class.

What you write will be strengthened through revision and revision will be strengthened and directed through class and workshop.

Hopefully, you will leave this class with at least one good reader whom you can show your work.

**Format:**
The course will at times be framed in the study of five major literary elements.

1. **Style/Sound/Voice:**
2. **Form:**
3. **Character:**
4. **Place:**
5. **Plot/structure:**

*Note:* Of course, all of these forms overlap and will be uses as a springboard to discuss specific texts. However, our discussion will never be limited to any one of these terms at any one time.

**Student Learning Objectives:**
Upon finishing this course, students will be able to achieve the following objectives:

1. **Critical Thinking:** assessed by student ability to relate their life experience to larger social/cultural narratives.
2. **Communication:** through essay prompts and creative writing assignments, assessed by student communication skills through their choices of syntax, voice, and sound.
3. **Team work:** assessed by groups and team work in revision to demonstrate student oral communication skills.
4. **Social responsibility:** assessed by student personal ethical choices articulated through creative writing to indicate larger significance of these choices based on a variety of cultural settings.
5. Personal responsibility: assessed by student demonstration of “ethics” in creative writing through understanding the nature of responsibility to self and others in creative writing and through the discussion of contexts and freedom in creative writing.

Grades:

**Participation**  
40%  
Attendance, discussion, work-shopping, the reader’s letters write to your peers, presentation.

**Quizzes**  
These quizzes are random, cannot be made up, and count for toward the 40 percent of your participation.

**Creative Personal Nonfiction Essay/Writing**  
20%

**Portfolio**  
40%  
To be turned in at the end of the semester including creative writing, responses **15-30 pages** of writing that you generated and work-shopped in class. This will be revised “final” work that has been written during the semester and which has gone through the workshop process. This means you MUST be working on your own writing alongside of the rest of the course matter. You must be writing some work(s) of fiction/poetry/essay/nonfiction/lyric essay during the semester. This is the work you will bring to workshop also and include in your final portfolio!

**Attendance & Tardiness:**  
You will be on time, present, and appropriately engaged in class meetings with all necessary materials including required texts. You may miss 3 documented, excused classes before your course grade goes down by 10 percent. After this, your grade will drop one grade for each unexcused absence that follow.

**University Policies**  
**Students Rights and Responsibilities**  
To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: [http://www2.utttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php](http://www2.utttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php)

**Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date**  
Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at [http://www.utttyler.edu/registrar](http://www.utttyler.edu/registrar). Each semester’s Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.

Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.
The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions that students need to be aware of. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a “W” grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

State-Mandated Course Drop Policy
Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date).

Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

Disability Services
In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychiatric disabilities. If you have a disability, including non-visible disabilities such as chronic diseases, learning disabilities, head injury, PTSD or ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment you are encouraged to contact the Student Accessibility and Resources office and schedule an interview with the Accessibility Case Manager/ADA Coordinator, Cynthia Lowery Staples. If you are unsure if the above criteria applies to you, but have questions or concerns please contact the SAR office. For more information or to set up an appointment please visit the SAR office located in the University Center, Room 3150 or call 903.566.7079. You may also send an email to cstaples@uttyler.edu

Student Absence due to Religious Observance
Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities
If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security and FERPA Statement
It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

**Emergency Exits and Evacuation**
Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor’s directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

This syllabus is subject to change, so long as all students are notified of the changes and all changes apply to all students in the class equally, and so long as the changes are in keeping with university policies and standards.

**Detailed Syllabus: We will get behind schedule due to delight and this schedule WILL CHANGE!**

**WEEK ONE:**
**Tuesday August 26th:** Introductions: getting to know one another. Discussion of our favorite writers/texts. Looking at a brief piece of writing you bring to class. Syllabus review.
HOMEWORK: Read selection from Annie Dillard’s *For The Time Being*

**Thursday August 28th:** IN Class reading of Plato’s ION.
HOMEWORK to be finished by Sept 2nd: READ remainder of Ion and assigned part of Republic. SEE BLACKBOARD

**WEEK TWO:**
**Tuesday Sept 2nd:** In class reading and discussion of “The Republic” Excerpts.

Homework to be finished by Sept 5th: READ Plato: SEE BLACKBOARD

**Thursday Sept 4th:** In Class reading and discussion of Plato’s “Phaedrus”

HOMEWORK to be finished by Sept 10th: Finish reading Plato’s “Phaedrus”: SEE BLACKBOARD

**WEEK THREE:**
**Tues Sept 9th:** In class reading and discussion of ARISTOTLE’s POETICS

HOMEWORK to be finished by Sept 12th: FINISH POETICS: SEE BLACKBOARD

**Thursday Sept 11** In Class discussion of ARISTOTLE’S POETICS: Possible In-Class look at David Foster Wallace’s “The View From Ms. Thompson’s”
HOMEWORK to be finished by Sept 17th: Read THE SENTENCE IS A LONELY PLACE

WEEK FOUR:

**Tuesday Sept 16th:**  Free write Exercises. Discussing VOICE and VOICEWORK vs. CHARACTER
A voice in isolation talking versus the miracle of purely happening story—personae-centric CW versus telling the “story” of outside events. The focus on the self or on the outer world or concept? Nietzsche and the notions of Dionysian versus the Apollonian.

HOMEWORK: FINISH WHAT we don’t read in class

**Thursday Sept 18th:** In Class Reading of St. Lucy’s Lonely Home for Girls Raised by Wolves by Karen Russell

WEEK FIVE:

**Tuesday Sept 23rd:** In Class Reading: “A Poetics for Bullies” by Stanley Elkin.

Homework: Finish reading POETICS FOR BULLIES

**Thursday Sept 25th:** In Class Reading of James Purdy’s “Why Can’t They Tell You Why”
Discussion of voice/POV/Narrative Voice versus Plot and Miracle of Story.
How POV works. Why certain POV’s are chosen for certain stories.

WEEK SIX:

**Tuesday Sept 30th:** Writing about the self in fiction/non-fiction/poetry  **In-class look at** Examples: Barry Hannah’s Water Liars. Allan Ginsberg’s HOWL. These are examples of middle point writings about self and about world—autobiographical fiction.

Homework to be finished by October 3rd. See Blackboard.

**Thursday October 2nd:** Reading Lydia Yuknavitch in class. Memoir. Writing about Self.
HOMEWORK: Begin thinking of the Personal Creative Nonfiction Essay

WEEK SEVEN:

**Tuesday October 7th:**  Megan Foss’s “LOVE LETTERS” in class. Rhetorical Triangle and the PERSONAL CREATIVE NONFICITON ESSAY
HOMEWORK: Read essay on Alcoholism. See BLACKBOARD.

**Thursday October 9th:** PREPARING TO START PERSONAL CREATIVE NONFICTION ESSAYS. In Class examination of more CPNFE’s such as Kiese Laymon’s essay “How to Slowly Kill Yourself and Others in America: A Remembrance”, **A LOOK AT FIRST PARAGRAPHS in the CPNFE form!!!**

HOMEWORK to be finished by October 14th. Bring first attempt at paragraph or two of essay to show the class.
WEEK EIGHT:
Tuesday October 14th: First SENTENCES WORKSHOP: Looking at Poetry by Eileen Myles, others.
Thursday October 16th: First SENTENCES WORKSHOP: Craft Essay

WEEK NINE:
Tuesday October 21st: In class writing of essays

HOMEWORK: WORK ON ESSAYS

Thursday October 23rd: Finish ESSAYS
HOMEWORK: BRING PRINTED ESSAY FULL DRAFT TO CLASS on OCTOBER 28th

WEEK TEN:
Tuesday October 28th: PEER REVIEW

HOMEWORK: REVISE ESSAYS

Thursday October 30th: Reading of J.D. Salinger’s “A Perfect Day for Banana Fish”

HOMEWORK: FINISH ESSAYS AND ASSEMBLE CPNE PORTFOLIOS to hand in Tuesday Nov. 4th

WEEK ELEVEN:
Tuesday Nov. 4th: In class reading of Junot Diaz “Fiesta 1980” HAND IN CPNE PORTFOLIOS.

Thursday Nov. 6th: In class reading of James Baldwin’s “Sonny’s Blues”

HOMEWORK: Write a pastiche or a 3 page response to either “Fiesta 1980” or “Sonny’s Blues”

WEEK TWELVE:
Tuesday Nov. 12th: In class reading of Aimee Bender’s “The Girl in the Flammable Dress”
Thursday Nov 14th: In class reading of Joyce Carol Oats’ “Where are You Going, Where Have You Been”.

WEEK THIRTEEN:
Tuesday Nov. 19th: WORKSHOP Four Students __________ & __________ & __________ & __________
Thursday Nov. 21st: WORKSHOP Four Students __________ & __________ & __________ & __________

WEEK FOURTEEN:
Tuesday Nov. 26th: WORKSHOP Four Students __________ & __________ & __________ & __________
Thursday Nov. 28th: WORKSHOP Four Students __________ & __________ & __________ & __________

WEEK FIFTEEN:
Tuesday Dec. 3rd: WORKSHOP Four Students __________ & __________ & __________ & __________
Thursday Dec. 5th: WORKSHOP Four Students __________ & __________ & __________ & __________