ENGL 5367. 061 – Spring 2015 ONLINE
Seminar
(Studies in Creative Writing)
Professor Goebel

Course Description:

This course will teach you concepts and methods for the practice of teaching Creative Writing. We will consider the term “practice” to be important to the work ahead. Creative Writing is an art, not a science, and the act of teaching this art is an art form unto itself. Whereas much pedagogical theory has arisen in the field of teaching composition through the specialization of Composition and Rhetoric, the field of Creative Writing has traditions of literary criticism and traditions of poetics and writers of prose and narrative reflecting on their process, but does not have the sort of theoretical pedagogy developed such as Comp/Rhet.

And if one looks at the hundreds/thousands of books published to instruct eager writers in how to write creatively with skill which have been published in just the past years, one quickly understands the vastness of approaches, practices, and approaches to teaching Creative Writing, and how subjectively based they are—and often how imprecise and opinion-based based these approaches truly are. I am saying that this teaching Creative Writing business is based on aesthetics and values that are more likely handed down in workshops in classrooms and mentor/student communities of study and inspiration.

The teaching of creative writing must at some point, I feel, rest upon the belief in notions such as: The sentence or line is important and must be interesting and new. Language must be precise and innovatively employed. Each person must find a voice that is theirs and that captures the essence of the writer in some way, be the writing close to the author’s experience or not, be the genre fiction, poetry, nonfiction, creative essay, sci-fi, or fantasy. Or: Poetry is best when it employs the best objects, movements, swerve, and subject and formal experimentation.

But of course these are subjective beliefs, though often grounded in literary tradition, aesthetics, statements of poetics, manifestos of writers, etc.

Still, one may pick up a best selling novel and see the language is not new or daring or innovative, and that the author’s self is not bound up in their employment of sentence, syntax (everything that makes a sentence), or sound. One may read the poetry of many, many poets (especially lay poets) and see that they are not employing the best objects, or doing much in a short amount of lines, or using any sort of poetic logic that “makes it [poetry] new” as Ezra Pound famously said it must be made in his poetics so many years ago.

So…consider that in teaching Creative Writing you may have to develop your own beliefs about what good writing is and how it can be known, taught, spoken of, etc.

It is seemingly impossible to develop a single clear method to giving students or aspiring writers a clear conceptual map that will instruct them how to be successful writers in creative endeavors. They will want one, most likely. They will want you to just “tell them how to do it” so they can succeed. It is not that easy I am afraid. They must find their way through practice and you can help them on their path—you can give them the framework to find the skills. You must
certainly learn and teach the terminologies, which are specific to Creative Writing that you will employ to focus the students’ abilities to discuss writing and to understand key concepts and to approach writing as a Creative Writer. You can give them secrets that will change how they see writing and write creatively forever. You can give them the keys to the “kingdom” so to speak, but they must open the doors and it is not always the easiest thing to do in the world to get them to open. But they can be opened. And you can show the students what to think about, what to notice, and how to approach the world of writing creatively. Learning how to do this is the purpose of this course.

Keep in mind, throughout this course, that this is an art, a practice, and while there are frameworks and terminologies, and methods to teaching Creative Writing, this is a creative endeavor and you must find your way as you help them to find theirs. You get to employ and exhibit the writing that you love from the field of creative writers alive and past. You get to show them what you feel will inspire them, and it must also be what inspires you, and you get to help them see these works as writers looking at writing, rather than as analytic scholars.

You get to show them writing in a way they have never seen it, and teach them and offer them access to writing creatively in ways they have never imagined. Most students have never even thought of writing in the ways you will be asking them to. Most students will have never thought truly about their own voices (lives), about how sound and sounds work together, about the parts of the mouth and throat that make different sounds and how those sounds affect readers and listeners. Most have not thought about how to write description, or event, or scene, or plot, or dialogue, or about character.

Then think about how many of your future students have ever investigated syntex from a level of sound, recursion, repetition, difference, sentence variation, time, “chora”, sounding…as you can see the terrain ahead is vast and varied—and the word “flow” which the whole world of young people seem to think is the only word that matters when discussing writing of any kind must be thrown out the window. It must be smashed to bits.

Flow is out!

If you are looking for a clear map, or formula, on how to teach Creative Writing, you are sure to be confounded in this course of study. If you are looking to, by the end of the course, have the vocabulary, the values, the methods, the practices, and the know how to teach Creative Writing, then you are in the right place.

The good news is there ARE practices that have proven useful over the test of time in the art of teaching Creative Writing, and we will be studying these. We will also be working to establish our own individual “Aesthetics” which will inform us as we approach the classroom and help our students to develop their skills as Creative Writers. I believe, as Peter Elbow pioneered, that learning to write comes mostly from practice, from writing, as well as from reading like a writer (we will speak to this in the course soon). For this reason, you will be both a Creative Writer in this course as well as one learning how to teach Creative Writing to others in the future.

You will do some of the assignments that you will be learning to teach students to try in the future. Critical thinking and an inquisitive mind will be required of you, as to establish new perspectives on who you are now, and how you relate to writing and to your world.

Welcome to the course. I hope you enjoy this course and get the most of it. I am available to you all at any time via email and office phone. My office hours are listed and gladly by appointment. I will help you in any way I can. This is a subject I have devoted my lifework to, and I want you future teachers of Creative Writing to be the best! So take advantage of my time and reach out for me for help and clarification anytime you’d like.

**Student Learning Objectives:**

The goal of this course is to help you develop your ability to teach Creative Writing—not only for your course work at the university level, but also for your career, for your civic responsibilities,
and for your growth as a person. We write, among other reasons, to discover who we are—what we feel and think—and how we see and relate to our world. We write to validate our experiences and views, and to persuade and affect readers. We humans are above all else, meaning makers. You will along the way develop an aesthetic you can explain for what you value in Creative Writing. You will write, you will develop your own craft as a writer, and you will learn to teach!

By the time you are finished with this course you will:
- Be able to write a teaching philosophy;
- Have the ability to develop lesson plans for teaching Creative Writing units/genres, including understanding how to appropriately construct assignments that take into consideration the context of the course and its students.
- Be prepared to develop a course in Creative Writing.
- Know terminologies, ideas, prompts, etc. for teaching Creative Writing.
- Know methods for conducting workshop and leading students in responding to one another’s work, in courses you may someday teach.

**Required Materials:**

1) Access to the Blackboard page.
2) I provide all materials. You don’t have to buy books!!!

**GRADES:**

Your final grade for the semester will be based on the following breakdown:

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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPNFE ESSAY</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>FINAL EXAM</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Community Membership*</td>
<td>40%</td>
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*Course Community Membership includes posting to discussion boards, doing all assignments, quizzes, group work, reflections, peer review, handing in assignments on time, etc.*

**Responsibilities to Our Community:**

This is a community we are forming, and this community depends on everyone feeling safe and valued. It also depends on everyone participating. So, in order to facilitate this, there will be mutual respect given to one another, to all groups, and all people. This is true on discussion boards and in emails and any other correspondence. As with any class, students are expected to adhere to the guidelines of the University as stated in the code of conduct. Also, no one’s work may be reproduced, distributed, shared, or discussed outside of the online classroom forum of this Blackboard course!

**Contacting Me:**

Please contact me at any time. Sending an email works well. Please, be professional and courteous. Also, I respond to emails fairly rapidly, so if you have written me and have not received a response in six hours or so, email me again or find a way to get in touch with me, as my UT TYLER email address sometimes eats emails. Call or email me and tell when you want to meet, and we will set up a time for a meeting in my office or via electronic
correspondence. However, be professional and respectful in how you communicate with me. Address me as Professor Goebel. I will address you by your name as well. Please do not write me a text or an email that begins with the word: Hey.

**Student privacy:**
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.

**Standard UT Tyler Syllabi 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://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php

**Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies**
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.uttyler.edu/registrar](http://www.uttyler.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.

**January 26 Census Date:** Deadline for all registrations, schedule changes, and section changes.

**March 23rd:** Last day to withdraw from one or more courses.