

CREATIVE WRITING
Course Syllabus: Shortened Version
Loyola University Chicago
Monday-Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
June 30 to July 18, 2008

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

As learning outcomes, students will learn the basics of writing dramatically effective original fiction and how to supportively analyze and critique the fiction of their fellow writers.

The course will present a foundation in the principles of effective fiction writing through a combination of lectures, exercises, and in-class readings and discussions of master fiction writers and their techniques. Topics may include: methods for story generation, dramatization of conflict, choosing a point-of-view, use of concrete sensory detail, different kinds of plot construction, realistic dialog, effective openings and endings, revision considerations, and prose stylistics. These will be studied not only to guide the students' own original writing, but also to provide a critical vocabulary for discussing and constructively evaluating fellow students' writing, through both written comments and in-class discussion, in the last week of the course.

After this grounding, students will write and revise their own short stories, and will then discuss these in a supportive workshop atmosphere. Under the guidance and modeling of the instructor, they will learn to become effective commentators on one another's work, analyzing problems and considering how to solve them.

TEXTBOOK: (*Subject to Change*) *THE SCRIBNER ANTHOLOGY OF CONTEMPORARY SHORT FICTION*, Ed. Michael Martone and Lex Williford.

Week 1—Mornings: Lectures on the craft of fiction writing (possible topics, above), followed by in-class readings and discussions of illustrative short stories by master writers (anthology, coursepak, or handouts to be decided by the instructor)

Afternoons: Follow-up in-class exercises keyed to whatever aspect of the craft of fiction writing has been studied in the morning. Some time will be set aside for students to begin writing their original short stories.

Week 2—Mornings and afternoons: Similar to week 1

Week 3—Mornings and afternoons: Workshopping of original short stories (M, T, W); Revision of short stories, based upon student and instructor feedback (Th, F).

ASSIGNMENTS: Assignments are of three kinds:

The reading of master fiction writers and (on occasion) a text on the craft of fiction writing; The writing and revising of an original short story; The reading and critiquing of fellow students' writing in both oral and written comments.

Through these assignments, students learn the critical and technical vocabulary of fiction writing and how to use it in writing clearly and effectively for an intended audience of readers. Students also learn how to use this same critical and technical vocabulary by clearly and supportively critiquing the work of their fellow student writers.

GRADING: Grades will be determined as follows:

Exercises - 20% Class participation - 20% Short story - 60%

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional appropriation of ideas, languages, or work of another without sufficient acknowledgement that the material is not one's own. Although it is generally recognized that everything an individual has thought has probably been influenced to some degree by the previously expressed thoughts and actions of others and that therefore no thought can be considered purely original, such influences are general ones, affecting an entire way of seeing things and expressing thoughts. Plagiarism, however, involves the taking of specific words or ideas of others without proper acknowledgement. The penalty for plagiarism will be an F for the course.