

Creative Writing Syllabus

2024-2025

Instructor Information

Instructor

Mr. Strom

Email

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Office & Classroom Locations

Classroom: 207H

Office: 205H

General Information

Course Description

Creative writing offers learners the opportunity to develop and improve their technique and individual style in a wide variety of prose. The emphasis of the course is on writing; however, learners may study exemplary representations and authors to obtain a fuller appreciation of the form and craft. Although most creative writing classes cover expressive forms, others concentrate exclusively on one particular form (such as poetry or playwriting).

Expectations and Goals

1. RESPECT, RESPECT, RESPECT!
2. Be prepared: Bring homework, writing utensils, notebooks, textbooks, etc. every day.
3. Act responsibly. Use the bathroom between classes, do not work on other school work unless you have permission - Use the time given to you in class wisely.
4. Accept the opinions of others - Be open to new ideas and constructive criticism.
5. Help to create a positive and comfortable atmosphere - Show respect to everyone.
6. Share your thoughts and opinions.
7. Challenge yourself!
8. If you need additional help, please visit with me as soon as possible. If there are technology issues, please communicate these issues as soon as they arise.

Accommodations

Any students with disabilities or other special needs, who need accommodations in this course are invited to share these concerns or requests with me.

Grading

A - 90%-100%
(Advanced)

B - 80%-89%
(Proficient)

C - 70%-79%
(Emerging)

D - 60%-69%
(Developing)

F - 50%-59%
(Incomplete)

Homework Policy

Make-Up and Late Work

All make-up work is to be done within the standard allotted time (one day plus days missed). Work missed for a school activity or family trip must be made up in advance.

All late work will be accepted for full credit until the end of each quarter-- All of us have experiences and moments in our lives that may detract from our ability to meet a deadline. My preference is that students communicate when they need an extension for any assessment prior to the deadline.

Cheating and Plagiarism

With regard to cheating, school policy will be enforced. Remember that cheating is as much a character issue as it is a policy issue. The English department recognizes a difference between intentional cheating and accidental plagiarism. Our common definition includes:

- Cheating is the intentional use of someone else's work being presented as one's own work (i.e. submitting another student's essay). Accidental plagiarism is the misrepresentation of another's work as one's own (i.e. forgetting a works cited page; not attributing a quotation to the author; not understanding the correct method of paraphrasing a quotation).
- Generative AI, such as Chat GPT, promotes institutionalized plagiarism. Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Rutgers Dr. Lauren M.E. Goodlad notes that "[AI is] trained on massive amounts of data, most of which data has been scraped from the internet without any compensation or consent or knowledge of the person who generated the data." As such, any work found to be produced by chatbots will be considered plagiarism. *This AI/ChatGPT policy is new territory and is evolving. It may change to align with English Department, WFHS, and/or WFPS policies. Any changes will be announced.*

Food and Drink Policy

No food in hallways: This includes breakfasts and lunches purchased from school, brought from home, fast food, take-out from a restaurant, etc. Food in classrooms must be provided by teacher(s); All drinks must be in a container with a non-spill lid; **Food or drinks NOT in a non-spill like will be directed to be thrown away.**

Cell Phone and Device Policy

- Students shall not use any electronic device that in any way disrupts or detracts from the educational environment. Electronic devices are inclusive of cell phones, smart watches, earbuds, and school-issued devices.
- Cell phones must be out-of-sight and out-of-use from the first bell to the last bell of all classes, including during study halls and within flexed learning spaces that are an extension of a classroom.
- Photographing or recording of another person should be used for educational purposes as defined by the teacher. Any use of an electronic device for other than educational purposes will result in a consequence.

WFHS Attendance Policy

West Fargo High School Procedure:

- 3 and 5 absences: Letter is mailed home to families.
- 7 absences: Administrator connects schedules a meeting with student
- 9-10 absences: The administrator connects with the family and the student to establish a plan outlining expectations. If expectations are not met, the student will be dropped from the course(s) at a predetermined number of days.

After 20 minutes since the start of class, an unexcused tardy becomes an unverified absence. Every fifth unexcused tardy will convert to an unexcused absence. This is per class period and will adhere to the attendance policy. All passes will be limited in the first and last 15 minutes of class (exceptions made for verifiable emergencies)

WFHS CCR

Compassion

- Learners will demonstrate their understanding of complexities of cultures and global issues and see viewpoints beyond their own in order to positively impact the world around them.

Collaboration

- Learners will work together, resolving controversy and conflict through respectful negotiation.

Responsibility

- Learners will be actively engaged in their learning and demonstrate responsibility, organization, and perseverance.

Creative Writing Procedures

Our overall goal for this class will be to generate as many workable drafts as possible to help stretch yourself as a writer - The most ideal version of this course will allow you to personalize every product that you create, though guidance and structure can be provided as needed.

Daily Reading and Writing

In order to continuously improve as a writer, you will need to explore the work of others - this means that we will begin each class period with a minimum of 15 continuous, uninterrupted minutes of reading and 15 minutes of continuous uninterrupted writing. Procedures will develop as we continue progress throughout the semester.

Mini-Lessons

Direct instructional content will be determined mostly by students. My goal is to conference with each student in the class multiple times to design lessons that cater to your interests and needs as a creative writer.

Weekly Writer's Workshops

To help ensure that feedback reaches you in a timely manner, we will host a weekly Writer's Workshop in order to receive both instructor and peer feedback. To help ensure that all workshops run smoothly, we will have expectations to follow before any workshop and during any workshop:

Expectations Before a Workshop

When Receiving Criticism

- Turn in a clean manuscript
 - Be sure to use a readable, 12-point font, and leave margins wide enough for comments
- Sideshadow your work
 - Direct those giving you feedback; ask your audience for specific feedback that can help your draft
- Prepare Emotionally
 - This is a rare opportunity for concentrated, critical attention. It will be both stressful and helpful

When Giving Criticism

- Read the work attentively
 - Follow your workshop guidelines and write thoughtful responses to the author's work
- Talk to the author
 - People are often nervous before their work is critiqued; giving effective feedback may require some added context
- Take notes as you read
 - It's much easier to comment in detail if you have the details in front of you

Expectations During a Workshop

When Receiving Criticism

- Engage
 - If your workshop allows it, ask some of the questions you noted about your work while prepping
- Question
 - Use open ended questions to stimulate discussion; use yes/no to redirect
- Take Notes
 - Keep careful record of others' comments to help you recall and apply feedback

When Giving Criticism

- Practice professional Criticism
 - Critical responses should be concrete and specific; explain clearly and thoughtfully what you mean
- Keep tone appropriate
 - Pitch your voice down; speak calmly and slowly; avoid sarcasm and jokes
- Allow the work to stand alone
 - The writer needs your "cold eye" in order to know whether a draft is succeeding

End Goal: Creative Writing Portfolio

What it is: The writing portfolio is a collection of an assortment of written pieces which the writer has created throughout their writing focus. Each project is representative of successive drafts and can provide a clear foundation of the style that the writer has developed over a course of time.

Why: The writing portfolio establishes evidence for the author to claim copyright on work and contains representative samples of a variety of genres: personal and objective essays, illustrated writing, poetry, and short story, etc. These samples offer prospective publishers an opportunity to develop a perspective on the writer's craft. The portfolio provides the instructor with evidence for evaluation. Finally, it will allow the writer to view and own the body of work as a whole and to offer an evaluation of how it has developed and where it is likely to grow in the future.

How it is assembled: As writers you may assemble your writing portfolio as a word document for submission or you may create a digital portfolio using a website platform to further your ability to market your writing (Wordpress, Google Blogs, etc). In your portfolio, you should include the following:

1. The first page should be a title page that includes a title connected to the collection of your work. Consider a title that fits with a general theme or motif of your writing.
2. Next, create a table of contents for your work - your portfolio should be a compilation of **at least nine creative writing pieces** that you've explored and drafted throughout this semester, one of which should be the progress you've made on your passion project. The table of contents should include the title of each piece and the page it can be found in
3. Following the project list, should be a double-spaced 2 to 3 page reflection/review of the writing. This reflection piece should address the following:
 - a. Best/favorite piece and why
 - b. Piece the writer struggled with the most and why
 - c. Areas in which the writer has noted the most improvement and growth (e.g. journaling, pre-writing, organizing, developing a voice, using more effective and varied language and sentences, revising, editing, using metaphor, etc.)
 - d. Areas which need more development
 - e. The writer's plans for writing in the future (e.g. what aspect or kind of writing and how to plan to go about it).
4. Assemble the projects listed in order based on the table of contents. Each draft must include a brief introduction that explains its significance to you as a writer. You can introduce your draft by thinking about any of the following questions: What inspired the piece?