



Creative Writing: The Art and Craft of Authorship

Overview Information

Title of Course: “Creative Writing: The Art and Craft of Authorship”	
Course Author(s): Lani Wolf and Barbara Ditz	Schools where the course will be taught: Archie Williams, Tamalpais HS, Redwood HS, Tamiscal, San Andreas
Length of Course: Semester	Subject Area and Discipline: English
Grade Levels: 11-12	Is this course an integrated course? No
Is this course being submitted for possible UC honors designation? no	Are you seeking UC approval? If so, in what area (A-G)? Yes, UC B
Prerequisites (required or recommended): none	Co-requisites (required or recommended): none
If there are prerequisites for the course, please include a justification as to why they are in place: N/A	
Check all that apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UC A-G course, UC “B” approved<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Graduation Requirement (can be used towards 1 semester of upper-division English)<input type="checkbox"/> Elective<input type="checkbox"/> Honors/AP<input type="checkbox"/> CTE	

Introduction to the Course

Course Overview:

“Creative Writing: The Art and Craft of Authorship” is a one-semester course in which students learn the craft of creative writing in a variety of forms. The course gives college-prep students (upper level, 11-12) continued practice in the examination of complex literature including short story, poetry, creative nonfiction, and other contemporary creative modes with a focus on how authors use language and literary devices to express their perspective on important personal and cultural issues as well as for entertainment purposes. Students apply what they learn about the art and craft of authorship to the creative process of writing original works in various genres. The course will be divided into three broad units focused on different modes of writing: short story, poetry, and a final flexible unit on drama, creative nonfiction, and/or modern multimedia forms of literature (depending on teacher expertise).

Teachers will be able to choose from various anthologies of literature (printed and online) to select pieces written from diverse perspectives to reflect the range of cultural, racial, and personal identities of our student body. Through an appreciation of this literature students will be encouraged to give voice to their own experiences by creatively developing fiction and nonfiction pieces that express the narratives of their lives. Students will be encouraged to seek a wider audience for their creative pieces through submission to a range of writing competitions, open mics and readings, and other forums, such as school literary magazines, and local and online publications.

How the Course Addresses U.C. A-G Requirements:

By reading a wide range of fictional, poetic, and other creative texts from various time periods and authorial perspectives, students will expand their understanding of the human experience across diverse historical and ethical contexts.

By writing their own original works of fiction, poetry, and other imaginative writing, students will apply what they've learned through their reading while showing an awareness of self, others, and context as they respond to the demands of audience, task, purpose, and genre.

By critiquing each others' original imaginative works, students show their ability to work collaboratively to master course skills, to engage in intellectual discussion, both orally and in writing, and also to listen and respond to divergent viewpoints.

By writing analytically about the exemplar texts they read, students will show their critical thinking skills and ability to ask thoughtful questions and explore multiple possible answers. They will also demonstrate their ability to support their arguments with evidence and reliable source material, as well as to engage in the recursive writing process through thoughtful revision.

By publishing their own works of creative writing in both oral and written forms, students will show their ability to use technology and digital media to publish their work, and also to articulate themselves in both speech and writing.

Overall, this course asks students to think, read, write, and speak critically and creatively in response to a variety of literary and imaginative texts that represent a diversity of human experience and perspective.

Essential Questions:

- How do writers use the elements of fiction, literary and poetic devices, and language as artistic tools to craft impactful stories and poems?
- They say "the best writers write from personal experience": How do authors combine personal lived experience with imaginative fictive elements to produce more effective creative work?
- What value do stories hold for both individuals and communities?
- How can I craft my own original pieces of creative writing that communicate my understandings thus far in life through an imaginative lens?

Unit Title: *Short Story*

Unit Summary:

Students will read a collection of short fiction from writers of diverse cultural backgrounds, genders, and personal perspectives and will learn how these writers use elements of fiction, figurative language, and literary devices and techniques to create textual meaning. Students will practice what they learn from these exemplar texts through creative writing exercises that culminate in their crafting their own original full-length pieces of fiction, which may be short stories or novel chapters. Students will present their creative writing in workshop format and before an audience of listeners. Students will also analyze exemplar texts in order to articulate, both orally and in writing, their understanding of how authors create meaning in fiction works. By writing original stories inspired by their own lives, students will be connecting directly to issues of real-world relevance to them and to their communities.

Unit Outcomes [[See CCSS for ELA - Content Standards \(CA Dept of Education\)](#)]

Students will:

Read exemplar fictional texts from published authors:

- Read a range of exemplar texts from a variety of authors and time periods that demonstrate how authors use language and literary elements and devices to build meaning. CCSS-ELA-W.11-12.10. CCSS-ELA-RL.11-12.1-7 and 9-10.

Write their own original fictional texts:

- Ascertain that writing fiction is both an inspirational and deliberative process; in other words, that writers carefully shape the products of their imagination into a meaningful whole through the application of specific techniques. CCSS-ELA-W.11-12.3.a-e. & CCSS-ELA-L.3a. & CCSS-ELA-L.5a-b.
- Engage in daily journaling exercises that help establish within them the habits and thought processes of writers. CCSS-ELA-W.11-12.10.
- Write both short and full-length imaginative texts that display a range of fictional devices studied in class. CCSS-ELA-W.11-12.10. & CCSS-ELA-L.3a. & CCSS-ELA-L.5a-b.

Critique their classmates' original fictional texts:

- Within the forum of the writing workshop, critique the effectiveness of their own and their peers' use of fictional techniques to create meaning within original imaginative texts. CCSS-ELA-W.11-12.4.

Revise their original fictional texts based on feedback:

- Revise their own fictional texts based on their own assessments and on those of their teacher and peers in order to make their writing more effective and engaging. CCSS-ELA-W.11-12.5.

Present their original fictional texts in both written and oral formats:

- Collect their work, both analytical and imaginative, into a digital and/or print writing portfolio that demonstrates their growth and evolution as a writer. CCSS-ELA-W.11-12.6.
- Share excerpts from their work through performance or participation in a fiction reading at the conclusion of the unit before an audience of their peers. CCSS-ELA-SL.4.a. & CCSS-ELA-SL.5-6

Analyze how authors create meaning in fictional texts through literary devices and techniques:

- Analyze in both informal short written and spoken responses and formal fully-developed thesis-driven essays the features and devices of short fictional texts and the way in which authors use those features and devices to create meaning. CCSS-ELA-W.11-12.1.a-e. & CCSS-ELA-W.11-12.9.a. & CCSS-ELA-L.1-6.
- Practice revision of analytical writing assignments in order to make their writing more effective and persuasive. CCSS-ELA-W.11-12.5.
- Discuss in a Socratic forum and compose short analytical essays that articulate their conclusions about how the works of published authors use specific fictional techniques to create meaning. CCSS-ELA-SL.11-12.1.a-d.

Sample Unit Assignments:

For each short story in the unit (which the teacher selects according to student interests and needs), students are provided with background history and information on the fictional genre; style, characteristics, and themes characteristics of the genre; and the author's biographical background in order to provide context. Assignment series for each form will be similar, including reading, discussion, creative writing, and literary analysis.

Sample Unit Assignment Series (Raymond Carver and the "dirty realism" genre):

1. **Fiction Reading and Annotation:** Read the short story "Cathedral," by Raymond Carver (1981), annotating for how and why the narrator is unsympathetic and unreliable. What are his biases and blind spots?
2. **Discussion:** Be prepared to discuss the following questions in class: What type of unreliable narrator is this? What makes him so unsympathetic, and even offensive? How and why do your feelings about him change by the end of the story? Carver, whom critics have called "the American Chekov," is known as a "dirty realist." Dirty Realism, according to the literary magazine *Granta* (Summer 1984), is "the fiction of a new generation of American authors. They write about the belly-side of contemporary life – a deserted husband, an unwanted mother, a car thief, a pickpocket, a drug addict. [...]. Understated, ironic, sometimes savage, but insistently compassionate, these stories constitute a new voice in fiction." – What can you borrow from Carver from your own writing? How can you make your readers feel compassion for flawed characters?
3. **Literary Analysis:** Create a [character body-map](#) of Carver's narrator. Then, using your ideas on your character body map, write an essay analyzing the narrator's change. How and why does he change from the beginning of the story to the end? How does imagery of sight and blindness, as well as religious symbolism, help illustrate his change?
4. **Original Fiction Writing:** Write a story in first-person point of view with an unreliable narrator who's unsympathetic in some way with a clear "flaw" in their character. Make your reader sympathize with this character – despite how unlikeable and unreliable they are. Finally, create an ending which allows the character to experience positive change and moral growth – even redemption – so that the reader feels relief and compassion for the character.

Sample Unit Assessments:

Students create a "Fiction Portfolio": For their portfolios, students will select their best revised work from the fiction unit, including both pre-write sketches, story fragments, and one complete short story or novel chapter, into an anthology. [Short Story Rubric](#).

Students participate in a Young Author Reading: Each student gets three minutes to present an excerpt from their culminating short story. Students practice reading out loud, dramatic vocalization and performance techniques to then present in a reading before an audience of peers. [Public Speaking Rubric](#).

Students write a thesis-driven literary analysis essay on a short story of choice: Students choose a story of choice from our exemplar works of short fiction and analyze how the author uses elements of fiction, literary devices and techniques, and figurative language to convey thematic meaning. [Literary Analysis Essay Rubric](#).

Recommended Texts and Resources:

TUHSD approved books: (on shelves at some sites)

Responding to Literature: Multicultural Perspectives, Foote, et. al. McDougal, Littell & Company, 1993. ISBN: 0-8123-7097-X

40 Short Stories: A Portable Anthology (3rd edition), Lawn, Beverly. Bedford St. Martin's, 2009. ISBN-13: 978-0-312-47710-3. ISBN-10: 0-312-47710-4.

Possible Textbooks and Anthologies for Approval:

Teachers will be able to choose from various anthologies of literature (printed and online) to select pieces from diverse perspectives to reflect the range of cultural, racial, and personal identities of our student body.

Imaginative Writing: The Elements of Craft (5th edition), Burroway, Janet. Florida State University, 2023. E-Book ISBN-13: 9780137674152. Print Book ISBN-13: 9780137674039.

Online Resources:

[40 of the Best Websites for Young Writers](#)

[25 Helpful Websites for Creative Writers](#)

Helpful Resources for Teachers:

Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft, 8th Edition, by Janet Burroway, Elizabeth Stuckey-French, and Ned Stuckey-French.

The Portable MFA, by New York Writer's Workshop, by Cincinnati: Writer's Digest, 2013.

Master Class in Fiction Writing: Techniques from Austen, Hemingway, and Others, by Adam Sexton. New York: McGraw Hill, 2006.

Unit Title: *Poetry*

Unit Summary:

In this unit students will be introduced to a range of poetic literature written by authors of multicultural backgrounds, genders and personal perspectives across a range of traditional poetic forms and writing styles. As an upper level course, students will continue to explore the literary strategies introduced in English 1-4, but go deeper to analyze the dynamics of poetic devices focusing on the art of creative composition. Students will explore how authors convey their unique "poetic sensibility" to effectively express the significance of personal experience, cultural narratives and viewpoints. Through directed creative writing exercises, students will apply what they learn about effective poetic literary strategies to composing original poems that articulate the issues and values important to their own lives. Students will utilize the draft process, writing workshops and editing groups to create refined poems incorporating a variety of literary techniques and poetic devices.

Unit Outcomes: [\[See CCSS for ELA - Content Standards \(CA Dept of Education\)\].](#)

Students will:

(CCSS ELA-RL level 11-12: 6, 1 a-d) Practice reading literary poems out loud as well as "participate effectively

in a range of collaborative discussions” that include whole class discussions, literature discussion circles, “Socratic” or other formal seminars, and writing workshop feedback and editing.

(CCSS ELA-RL level 11-12: 2, 4, 7) (CCSS W 11-12: 2 a-f) Become more sensitive to the tone and feelings expressed in the text and develop more sophisticated interpretation of the significant issues and themes of the literature including multiple interpretations.

(CCSS ELA-RL level 11-12: 4, 5, 6) (CCSS W 11-12: 2 a-f) Be able to analyze how poets use devices of form, imagery, and sound to produce an overall poetic effect.

(CCSS ELA-W Level 11-12, 10, 5): “Write routinely” including on demand quick writes, multiple draft interpretive analysis paragraphs that build to writing a formal literary analysis process piece. Students will craft their own draft process poems incorporating a variety of literary strategies, poetic devices and styles.

(CCSS ELA-L Level 11-12: 1-6) Compose and edit (1,2, 3,4,6) their literary analysis work using a draft process. Through their literary analysis and application to composing original poems, students “apply knowledge of how language functions in different contexts, varying syntax for creative effect” (3) and demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuance of word meaning” (5).

(CCSS ELA-W level 11-12:) “Use technology” in a variety of ways while composing, sharing, peer editing, and publishing their expository and creative writing.

(CCSS ELA-SL Level 11-12: 6) “Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks”: Students will be involved in whole class discussion, small group literary discussions, and peer response writing groups; they will practice memorizing and performing their poetry, and participate in a culminating “open mic” presentation of original poems.

Sample Unit Assignments:

For each traditional poetic form (haiku, limerick, sonnet, villanelle, free verse) students are provided with background history and information on the poetic tradition, style of the form, and biographical background of key authors to provide context. Assignment series for each form will be similar, including reading, literary analysis and creative writing.

Example Assignment Series (villanelle):

- 1) **Reading Literature:** Students read and annotate a range of villanelle from Dylan Thomas’s classic “Do Not Go Gentle into that Goodnight” to relatively modern and contemporary pieces such as George Higgin’s (Bay Area African American lawyer and poet) modern “Villanelle”. Students read, annotate and discuss an example villanelle as a whole class (such as “Do not go Gentle”) then read, discuss and annotate other villanelle selections in small groups and individually. **(CCSS SL level 11-12: 6, 1 a-d) (CCSS RL level 11-12: 2, 4, 7) (CCSS RL level 11-12: 4, 5, 6)**
- 2) **Written Literary Analysis Exercises.** Students write literary interpretation timed draft responses to poems from the provided selection of villanelle, then revise one into a more formal literary interpretation paragraph or mini-essay. **(CCSS W Level 11-12, 10); (CCSS RL level 11-12: 4, 5, 6) (CCSS W 11-12: 2 a-f)**
- 3) **Creative Writing Application Exercises:** the students apply what they have learned about the form to writing a well-crafted villanelle: A) they write a series of 10 couplets on contemporary issues and

personal topics of importance, then choose a favorite couplet around which to center their B) crafting of a villanelle using a provided structure chart. (CCSS L Level 11-12: 3,5); (CCSS Level 11-12: W3,5) [CW: Villanelle Creative Exercise.docx - Google Docs](#)

Sample Unit Assessments:

Students create a “Poetry Unit: Portfolio Collection”: This consists of 1. an anthology of their best revised work from the poetry unit and 2. An expanded, revised and refined literary interpretive-analysis essay on a more complex literary poem from the unit, or a literary comparison essay.

[CW--Poetry Collection.docx - Google Docs](#) [CW--UnitColl rubric.docx - Google Docs](#)

Students participate in a Young Author Reading #2: Each student gets to present a selection of their best poetry. Students practice reading out loud, dramatic vocalization and performance techniques to then present in a formal reading as well as in an open mic format. [CW--Young Author Performance Rubric - Google Docs](#)

Recommended Texts and Resources:

TUHSD approved books: (on shelves at some sites)

- *Poetry 180: A turning back to poetry*, Billy Collins
- *The Mentor Book of Major American Poets*, Oscar Williams and Edwin Honig
- *Poems to Read: A New Favorite Poem Project Anthology*, Robert Pinsky and Maggie Dietz
- *The Discovery of Poetry: A field Guide to Reading and Writing Poems*, Frances Mayes

Possible textbooks and anthologies for approval: We do not necessarily have to acquire class sets of the anthologies. These could just be used by teachers to create their own handouts and assignments.

- *African American Poetry: 250 Years of Struggle & Song* (Penguin Ransom House; ISBN: 978-1-59853-666-9; 1150 pages– was \$45, seeing \$27 at Library of America: Phone orders: 1-800-964-5778; Request product #203499
- *From Totems to Hip-Hop*. Edited by Ishmael Reed. Da Capo Press, 2002. ISBN: 978-1560254584 . Amazon has 2002 edition = \$14.58 paperback, \$31.47 hardcover. 2003 edition New York: Thunder Mouth Press West)
- *Imaginative Writing: The Elements of Craft* (5th edition), Burroway, Janet. Florida State University, 2023. E-Book ISBN-13: 9780137674152. Print Book ISBN-13: 9780137674039. (also in unit 1)

Sample online sources of poetry: for other lit and current authors

- Poetry Foundation– Link= <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/>
- Academy of American Poets link= <https://poets.org/>
- Poetry International link= <https://www.poetryinternational.com/en/>
- Poetry Out Loud– Link= <https://www.poetryoutloud.org/>
- Poetry 180 (Billy Collins project for a poem a day for highschool students) link= <https://www.loc.gov/programs/poetry-and-literature/poet-laureate/poet-laureate-projects/poetry-180/>
- How a Poem Happens (Authors reflecting on the making of their poems) link= <https://howapoemhappens.blogspot.com/2011/08/david-hernandez.html>
- La Casa de Colores (Poet Laureate Project by Juan Felipe Herrera) link= <https://www.loc.gov/programs/poetry-and-literature/poet-laureate/poet-laureate-projects/la-casa->

[de-colores/](#)

- Living Nations, Living Worlds (Native American Poetry Celebration project, Joy Harjo) link=
<https://www.loc.gov/programs/poetry-and-literature/poet-laureate/poet-laureate-projects/living-nations-living-words/>

Unit Title: *Additional Forms of Creative Communication*

Unit Summary: The final unit will be flexible. Teachers can choose from a variety of unit focus depending on their expertise and student interest at the school site as well as consideration of the paired semester course. The intention of this final unit is to have students explore other genres and mediums for creative writing and composition, ones that might be applicable to writing for contemporary professional and creative outlets. Possible culminating assessments could be choice and student driven: slide presentations, expository papers, creative projects in the genre.

The final unit can either be A) an additional literary genre focus (a teacher-driven unit) with an essay that includes some secondary sources as part of the literary analysis or B) a culminating individual or group project that includes both research and creative components (student-driven choice).

Possible options include (but are not limited to):

- **Drama:** theater and screenwriting, one act plays and scenes from a variety of stage and screenplays.
- **Art genre collaborations:** combining literary writing with other art forms such as dance, performance art, or fine visual art.
- **Graphic novel, comic strips, and political cartoons**
- **Creative nonfiction/memoir**
- **Video game and role playing narratives**
- **Fan fiction, YA and popular genres (vampire, romance, etc)**
- **Digital storytelling (visual poetry recitation; story video production)**
- **Blogging, vlogging**
- **Paths to Publication: getting on track to professional writing**

Unit Outcomes:

The 3rd unit will include similar activities as the first two, and as such will continue development of skills in similar ELA speaking and listening, reading, and writing CCSS. The unit will additionally include research related skills practice and development (CCSS noted below).

Option A (teacher-driven focal literary unit) outcomes: Students gain upper level knowledge of a third creative literary genre (see above). Students learn the history of the genre, the role the genre plays in contemporary culture, and the defining characteristics of the genre as well as key multimedia communication techniques. **(CCSS ELA 11-12 W6)** Students examine examples of the literary form, to gain deeper appreciation of the ways that authors communicate meaning to their intended audiences using the specific styles, techniques, and composition of the form **(CCSS ELA 11-12 W4,5)**. The literary response in this unit (formal paper, presentation, online communication genre) will include some secondary source research **(CCSS ELA 11-12 W 7, 8, 9) (CCSS ELA 11-12 RI 4,7)** to support student interpretive analysis of the literature. Students apply what they learn about effective communication in the genre to creative exercises and composing their own original work **(CCSS ELA 11-12: W 4,5)**.

Option B (student driven research and creative project) outcomes: Students choose to research a unique multimedia communication genre (see list above) and then compose their own original project. Students will have the choice to work in groups or individually. Students demonstrate research skills **(CCSS ELA 11-12 W7, 8, 9) (CCSS ELA 11-12 RI 4,7)** through a formal research project that culminates in either a written expository essay or a class presentation. They will compose and create an original creative piece in their chosen genre **(CCSS ELA 11-12: W 4,5)**.

Sample Unit Assignments:

Option A–Focal Literary Genre Assignment Examples:

- Students read a series of teacher selected literature, such as one act plays or scenes from plays of different genres, [Act I Study Guide.docx - Google Docs](#) and then write a scene (prequel, epilogue, lost scene in the style of the author)
- Students watch episodes of TV shows, read screenplays of those, and then write a proposal for a new series and write a pilot scene.

Option B –Individual Project:

Research Assignment examples: for the purpose of designing a presentation for the class and/or a short paper

- Library research, selection of reliable sources
- Note Taking (Cornell note skills, sub topic bullet notes)
- Composition of short expository paper with formal citation and source list
- Oral presentation: organization, practice in pairs, formal presentation (could be as groups or more formal individual final pres)

Option B Creative Assignment examples:

- Student chooses a focal genre to explore writing in the new medium/form
- Student brainstorms, develops story, composes creative piece
- Student prepares, practices and presents an excerpt from their completed or ongoing original creative work

Sample unit Assessment:

- Culminating option A essay with research component, and option A creative piece.
- Culminating option B presentation that includes a brief overview of the multi-media genre to inform students and author “reading” or presentation of their creative composition/piece. [CR--Ind w Group Genre Prese grade sheet.docx - Google Docs](#)

Recommended Texts and Resources:

We recommend that each site acquire titles for the school libraries to be available to students during research. We have a few suggestions below. Individual teachers can also add to the library collections as they teach their courses.

[Reinventing Comics: How Imagination and Technology Are Revolutionizing an Art Form, Scott McCloud, Perennial, 2000](#)

[She Changed Comics: The Untold Story of Women Who Changed Free Expression in Comics, Berkeley, CA, Image Comics, 2016](#)

Recommended Online Resources:

[How to Write a Screenplay: A 10-Step Guide - ScreenCraft](#)

Board Approval Date: 2005

Updated: Spring 2024

UC "B" Approval Date: Revision approved 2/21/2025