

INTRO CREATIVE WRITING-2310-22303

Dr. Stephanie Vanderslice-Office: Thompson 303

Office Hours: Online: Monday 10-12 am, Office: Monday, Weds., Friday 3-5 pm

Email [STEPHV@UCA.EDU](mailto:STEPHV@UCA.EDU) PHONE 501-450-3340 (EMAIL IS THE BEST WAY TO REACH ME). [www.stephanievanderslice.com](http://www.stephanievanderslice.com)



Creative writing is a kind of problem solving. What would be the most appropriate title for this poem? How do I use repetition to create lyricism in this essay? What kind of plot twist will keep this reader at the edge of her seat? That's what we'll be doing in this class as well, looking at how you can use creative writing to not only make you a better writer but also a more creative thinker. Someone who can **access** that creative thinking more easily than the average adult whose creativity and problem solving skills have been shut down by the memorization and rote learning that have dominated education in the last twenty years. The quote above is right—the creative adult IS the child who survived. This class is all about rediscovering that child, whether you want to do so in order to write a brilliant screenplay or come up with a solution to a problem that no one has ever thought of.

The most creative organizations in the world, such as the design firm IDEO, spend massive amounts of time studying people or immersing themselves in real-world situations so they can learn about problems that are out there waiting to be tackled. Creative companies such as Disney view problems as

opportunities; hence, the problem of long lines at Disney World becomes an opportunity to use costumed characters to interact with people in line. The author and futurist **Bob Johansen** refers to this as “dilemma flipping;” you find a problem and flip it to your advantage.

Creative individuals can do this, as well: If you’re a solo entrepreneur, you find a problem that the big guys don’t want to be bothered with, that no one else is tackling because it’s too hard or too narrow or too controversial. *The problem is the opportunity.*

**No matter what field you ultimately choose, being able to solve problems sets you apart from everyone else.**

“When CEOs were asked, “What is the skill you most value in your people?”, they said creativity, the ability to solve problems, come up with new solutions, and use brainpower to figure things out.”

Shannon McGovern, *US News and World Reports*

How will we do this in this class? Well, first we’ll look at creativity and the different ways we can express that over the course of our lives. Then we’ll look at creative writing and the different ways we can use creative writing to tell more powerful stories about the world we live in and to pay closer attention to the stories that the world is telling us. We’ll look at the universal elements common to strong creative writing (all good writing, really) as explained by Heather Sellers in your textbook, *The Practice of Creative Writing*. And then we’ll spend time in online full class workshops helping one another to learn how to talk about the creative work we’ve done in a way that will improve it.

## TEXTS:

Gilbert, Elizabeth. *Big Magic*.

Sellers, Heather. *The Practice of Creative Writing*.

Microsoft Word

(here is how you can download Microsoft Office Free

<https://uca.edu/it/knowledgebase/installing-office/>)

### *Assignments*

Online Discussions            200

Writing Project I            100

Writing Project II           100

Full Class Workshop        100

Reading Journal            200

PCW Talking Points        100

Final Portfolio            200

(A=1000-900, B=899-800, C=799-700, D=699-500, F=499 or below)

## **WORKSHOPS**

### **Self Critiques**

**Each piece** of creative writing you turn in to me (Writing Projects I and II, Full Class Workshop) will have a cover sheet that will serve as a self-critique. In this one-to-two page critique, you will introduce the piece by describing the process of writing it, discussing the piece's strengths and weaknesses and describing the kind of feedback from me that would most benefit you.

\*\*\* *The grade you receive on your creative writing will be based **entirely** on how thoughtful and considered your self-critique is, not on the contents of the creative writing itself. I will respond **extensively** to your creative writing but will only **grade** the critique. My goal is that not worrying about a grade will give you the freedom to take risks with your writing. As you will learn in class, art and writing is 90% failure—you need to feel the freedom to take risks and fail.*

Also, being able to think and talk about something you've written is also proven to enhance your development as a writer.

While we're on that subject. . .

### **Writing Projects I and II AND Full Class Workshop Piece (3 Projects)**

These are the creative pieces that you will hand in during the semester. They can be in any genre (poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, drama) that you wish to write in. However, it is important for you to experiment, so the only requirement of these pieces is that they each be a *different* genre (including the full class workshop piece).

General guidelines:

Poetry: Minimum of 5 poems, typed.

Fiction, Creative nonfiction, Drama: Minimum of 5 pages. Typed. Double-spaced.

**NOTE: WRITING PROJECTS MUST BE SUBMITTED AS MS WORD DOCUMENTS. NOT PDFS or shared on google drive. See here for how to download Microsoft office <https://uca.edu/it/knowledgebase/installing-office/>**  
REMEMBER: NO SELF CRITIQUE? NO GRADE.

**A Note on How I Comment:**

When I read your work, I'll read it once holistically, to get a sense of it, and then again to develop my comments and suggestions. I like to use track changes in MS word to make suggestions line by line because this method is often used professionally so it's good for you to get used to it. At the end, I will comment on what is working in a piece and make suggestions for the most important changes that will help you take the piece to the next level. I may not comment on every single thing that could be improved in a piece, but only those elements that are most important as you proceed to the next draft. This is because research tells us that evolving writers are easily overwhelmed by a long list of what is wrong with their work, so it's more helpful to focus comments on what's most important. Keep revising (this critical) and writing and paying attention to your writing and to the suggestions of others (especially those suggestions that you hear a lot) and you will evolve as a writer.

**Full Class Workshop**

In the last month of the semester, each student will have a chance to have a full class workshop of her or his work. You'll sign up for a date to post your work on a discussion page online, and the class will discuss it online. You'll be able to sign up for the date for this workshop at the beginning of the semester and choose any piece you want to bring before the whole class (as long as it's different and a different genre from Writing Project I and II). For more about the Full Class Workshop, see the Peer Response section below.

Try not to sweat the full class workshops too much. Many of my students tell me they really worry about getting raked over the coals during full class workshops and then discover the experience is really more helpful and encouraging than harmful. *However, if you do not turn in your full class workshop on time, you will lose two letter grades on the final assignment.*

What **NOT** to submit:

1. Work from more than six months ago unless it has been hugely revised (i.e. "I wrote this in tenth grade and my teacher always liked it").
2. Work that has been published or feels finished to you, to the extent that, if you're honest with yourself, you don't really *want* feedback on it.
3. Song lyrics. It's not that I don't like them. But song lyrics are an art form and, in contrast to popular belief, one that is quite different from poetry. It is also a form I know nothing about. Therefore I cannot critique them and that does neither of us any good.

**Peer Responses-Full Class Workshop**

Within three days each workshop date and each student work posted, you will post at least two paragraphs in response. After that, you will have 2 days to

post 3 responses to the responses to the student work posted. As you can see from the assignment list, your responses are a *significant* part of your grade. Take them seriously. Learning to examine and respond to another writer's work is crucial to developing the ability to read and evaluate your own. In fact, what you learn from writing these responses may be the most important part of this course. Also, stay on top of your responses; if you get behind you will end up responding to too many pieces at once.

You may be wondering, "How am I going to think of enough to write two paragraphs? I've never done anything like this before?" *The Practice of Creative Writing* is a good place to look for guidance—Heather Sellers provides lists of questions that can help you think about your peer's work.

FIRST RESPONSES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED MORE THAN TWO CLASS DAYS AFTER A PIECE OF WRITING HAS BEEN WORKSHOPPED. **PERIOD.**

### **Talking Points**

During the module, you will need to submit 10 talking points reflecting on both the chapter and the creative readings at the end. Talking points are a list of important points, questions, observations, the readings inspired from you.

### **Late Papers:**

Work is considered late if it is not posted by the due date. Late papers will lose one full grade for each day late.

### **Your Journal:**

Even the most experienced writers do a lot of low stakes writing to give themselves material to draw from. To explore ideas and practice what you're learning, it's important to do this kind of writing in this class. Fortunately, each chapter of *The Practice of Creative Writing* has many exercises to get you started. During Modules 2-9 you will chose **one** exercise from each chapter to write in your online journal. This journal will just be between you and me and I will be mostly just checking to see that you are doing the work. If you complete every exercise, you will get full credit for this important part of the course. Who knows, maybe you'll even create something you can draw on for one of your writing projects or full class workshop.

### **PORTFOLIO:**

At the end of the semester, you'll create a portfolio of your work. It will contain: 2 pieces of revised work (so you can choose two of the three pieces you write this semester) and a 2-3 page introduction that describes your growth in the course and explains the revisions you made to the two revised pieces.

## MORE ABOUT STORYTELLING: CRITICAL TO LIFE IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

Have you ever:

- Made a new friend
- Applied for a job
- Negotiated a schedule change or raise at work
- Resolved a conflict?
- Worked through a difficult personal experience?

Each of these tasks, along with countless others in our lives, require us to be storytellers. The better we are at telling stories, the more others are able to see and understand our point of view. As we improve our own storytelling skills, we also learn to look more closely at the stories that others tell, improving understanding and increasing empathy and tolerance. Storytelling allows us to process our own emotions. We learn about ourselves by working our way through our own personal and family stories, and by listening to the stories of those around us.

*Creativity is rapidly shifting from a “nice to have” to a “must have” quality for all types of successful organizations – from delicatessens to design firms. A firm’s embrace of creativity in their workplace culture requires a disciplined approach to unleash the chaos of inventive ideas.* Barbara Dyer, Fortune Magazine

FALL 2019

Weekly Schedule

August 22

Class Begins

Module 0 Online

Start *Big Magic* to get ahead

August 27-31

Module 1 Part 1

*Big Magic*

September 3-8

Labor Day-September 2

Module 1 Part 2

Big Magic

September 9-15

Module 2

Practice of Creative Writing (PCW), Intro, Finding Focus

September 16-22

Writing Project 1 Due September 16

Module 3 PCW Building Blocks

September 23-29  
Module 4 PCW Image

September 30-October 6  
Module 5 PCW Energy

October 7-13  
Module 6 PCW Tension

October 14-20  
Fall Break and Catch Up Week

October 21-27  
Writing Project 2 Due  
Module 7 PCW Pattern

October 28-November 3  
Module 8 PCW Insight

November 4-November 10  
Module 9 PCW Revision, Forms  
SIGN UP FOR A FULL CLASS WORKSHOP  
There will be a discussion page where you can sign up with instructions.

November 11-17  
Module 10 Full Class Workshop 1

November 18-24  
Module 11 Full Class Workshop 2

November 25-December 1  
Module 12 Full Class Workshop 3

December 2-December 8  
Module 13 Full Class Workshop 4

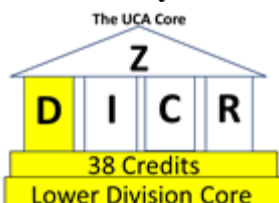
December 13-Midnight  
Portfolio Due  
Module 14

# 29 WAYS TO STAY CREATIVE

- 1 **MAKE LISTS**
- 2 **CARRY A NOTEBOOK EVERYWHERE**
- 3 **TRY FREE WRITING**
- 4 **GET AWAY FROM THE COMPUTER**
- 5 **QUIT BEATING YOURSELF UP**
- 6 **TAKE BREAKS**
- 7 **SING IN THE SHOWER**
- 8 **DRINK COFFEE**
- 9 **LISTEN TO NEW MUSIC**
- 10 **BE OPEN**
- 11 **SURROUND YOURSELF WITH CREATIVE PEOPLE**
- 12 **GET FEEDBACK**
- 13 **COLLABORATE**
- 14 **DON'T GIVE UP**
- 15 **PRACTICE PRACTICE PRACTICE**
- 16 **ALLOW YOURSELF TO MAKE MISTAKES**
- 17 **GO SOMEWHERE NEW**
- 18 **COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS**
- 19 **GET LOTS OF REST**
- 20 **TAKE RISKS**
- 21 **BREAK THE RULES**
- 22 **DON'T FORCE IT**
- 23 **READ A PAGE OF THE DICTIONARY**
- 24 **CREATE A MEMOIR**
- 25 **STOP TRYING TO BE SOMEONE ELSE'S PERFECT**
- 26 **GOT AN IDEA? WRITE IT DOWN**
- 27 **CLEAN YOUR WORK PLACE**
- 28 **HAVE FUN**
- 29 **FINISH SOMETHING**

Reference: paulbil.tumblr.com/post/1336025995 www.vecteezy.com  
 Designed by: Islam Abudoud islam.abudoud@live.com

## LD Diversity



This course is part of the Diversity component of the Lower-Division Core. Diversity courses promote the ability to analyze familiar cultural assumptions in the context of the world's diverse values, traditions, and belief systems as well as to analyze the major ideas, techniques and processes that inform creative works within different cultural and historical contexts. For more information, go to

<http://uca.edu/core>.



# UNIVERSITY POLICIES

**Disability Policy:** The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this act due to a disability, contact Disability Support Services at 450-3613. They are located in room 212 of the Student Health Center. Please feel free to discuss this issue with your instructor, in private, if you need more information.

**Sexual Harassment Policy:** Harassment by any faculty member, staff member, or student is a violation of both law and University policy and will not be tolerated. Please read the appropriate pages of your Student Handbook for the policies, definition, and procedures concerning harassment. If you have questions or concerns, please contact your instructor or the chair. Individuals who believe they have been subjected to harassment should report the incident promptly to their academic dean or to a departmental chair or directly to the university's Affirmative Action officer, legal counsel or assistant vice president for human resources.

**Other Policies:** You should familiarize yourself with all academic policies in your *Student Handbook*.

## **Special Issues:**

**Mental Health:** If, during any point of the semester, you find that personal challenges are keeping you from completing your course work, you may find it beneficial to visit the counseling center. All students are entitled to free, confidential, professional counseling. Please contact the University Counseling Center at 450-3138. They are located in the Student Health Center, suite 327.

**Food Insecurity:** UCA has a Food Bank in Main Hall 108. For more information, check here: <https://uca.edu/foodbank/food-basket-request-form/>

**Health Care:** The Student Health Center provides many medical services that are included in your tuition and fees. For more information, check here: <https://uca.edu/studenthealth/>. They provide:

- General Family Practice services
- Lab
- X-Ray
- Immunizations
- Procedures
- Women's Health services
- Much more

**Plagiarism:** If a student turns in a paper that includes an extended passage that has been a.) written for him or her by someone else for pay or as a favor, or b.) copied from a print or electronic source written by another author, even

if some of the words have been changed, that student will immediately be dropped from the course, receiving a WF grade. In addition, notification will be sent from the Department office to the Office of the Provost documenting the student's academic misconduct. This documentation will be retained permanently at the Office of the Provost.

**Incompletes:** An incomplete (X grade) may be assigned only under extraordinary circumstances, such as a documented medical emergency, a death in the student's immediate family, an unavoidable legal responsibility (e.g., jury duty, military service), a natural disaster that has affected the student's own home or immediate family, or extended university closure. An incomplete grade may also be assigned for courses that extend beyond the regular end of term. However, an incomplete may be assigned only if the student remained in good standing for the first  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the semester.

When assigning an incomplete grade, the instructor should establish a written contract with the student specifying exactly when the missing work must be turned in. However, the student may not turn in the missing work any later than the end of the first month of the following semester—excluding summer. Specifically, any student assigned an X grade for a fall semester class or a winter intercession class may not turn in the missing work any later than the end of the first month of the spring semester. Any student assigned an X grade for a spring semester class, a May intercession class, or a summer term class may not turn in the missing work any later than the end of the first month of the fall semester.

**Disruptive Students:** Any student in a whose behavior regularly interferes with the instructor's ability to foster student learning, or who exhibits a behavior so outrageous as to severely impede the conduct of a class, may be dropped by the instructor after the instructor consults with the department chair. Prior warning will be provided to the student when possible, but under extraordinary circumstances such warning may not always be possible. When dropping a student for disruptive behavior, the instructor will assign a WF grade, specifying on the Drop for Non-Attendance form that the grade is assigned for "disciplinary action." A record of this disciplinary action will remain permanently on file with the university and the instructor will keep permanent record of dropping the student for disruptive behavior. Additionally, when dropping a student for disruptive behavior, the instructor is encouraged to submit to the Dean of Students a list of the problematic behaviors.

## **Academic Integrity**

**The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the university's Academic Integrity Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees as Board Policy No. 709 on February 10, 2010, and published in the Student Handbook. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student's acceptance of this university policy.**

