

Creative Writing - Course Syllabus

"You write with ease, to show your breeding, but easy writing's vile hard reading." Richard Sheridan

"Talent alone cannot make a writer. There must be a man behind the book." Johann Von Goethe

"I have come to this resolution-never to write for the sake of writing or making a poem, but from running over with any little knowledge or experience which many years of reflection may perhaps give me; otherwise I am dumb." John Keats

I. CREATIVE WRITING:

I hope you will each enjoy your time in this class, but please understand that it will be challenging. The second word in the class title is *writing*, and there will be quite a bit, every day. Despite the title, the focus is not on creativity. Any grade based wholly on my opinion of your creativity would be subjective and thus unfair. Therefore, there are requirements to be met for each event, placed there much as hurdles would be placed on a track—not to stop the runner, but to make the runner go a little higher, work a little harder.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- A. Identify and analyze narrative techniques, poetic devices, and conventions of written language.
- B. Compose poetry, impromptus and a variety of unique works.
- C. Clarify the meaning and importance of providing an environment, which allows, "the opportunity to fail."
- D. Examine the work of professional writers, thus allowing you to see and understand current professional trends.
- E. Strengthen your ability to conceive, create and develop original ideas, and present them to a group.
- F. Enable you to stand comfortably, maintaining direct eye contact, while projecting audibly to an audience.

III. REQUIREMENTS:

The first half of this class deals with the skills of creative writing. Examples of these are: Dialogue; Plotting; Perspective; Flashbacks; Metaphor; Theme; etc. Your mastery of these will be tested with periodic impromptus. These are timed, in-class writing assignments using an unusual picture as inspiration.

Daily work includes journal writing and all related assignments. Prompts are suggestions; if you wish to write on your own topic, you may always do so, but the expectations are the same.

During the second half of the class you put your skills into practice and produce full projects that may include: an illustrated children's book, a one-act play, a short-story, and a collection of thematic poetry. The due dates for these core experiences are considered **ABSOLUTE DEADLINES**. This means if you are absent on the day these are due you must have a trusted loved-one physically put the assignment in my hand before the end of the school day.

Course Materials-

For **tomorrow** you **MUST** have two (2) **spiral notebooks and/or small folder/binders with paper** – one to start your Journal and one to serve as your Poetry Notebook. You must also bring a **three-ring binder** to collect the weekly assignment sheets. Your Journal and Poetry Notebook must be separate from your **class notes** (in the binder) so that I may collect them as necessary.

IV. GRADING & EVALUATION:

Grading Policy-

- A = Prompt completion of every assignment, consistent improvement and effort, initiative and concern for quality of work above reproach at all times. Participation in class is of vital importance as a means of evaluating your progress.
- B = No more than one zero or incomplete assignment, directions and corrections used and improvements made, consistent effort and initiative above normal.
- C = Less than three incompletes, follows directions, effort at normal level, initiative and concern below expectations.
- D = Three or more unacceptable projects, doesn't take direction, inconsistent effort, excessive tardies or absences.
- E = Work and effort at an unacceptable level.

Significant, personalized feedback is conveyed on a regular basis through individual conferencing, written observations, coordinated assessments and classroom displays. Grades will be available and updated at approximately three week intervals. When an assignment is given, it takes about a week to ensure that everyone has taken, re-worked or made up the task, and from one to five days to accurately reflect and assess it. Only then will I update your effort from the past few weeks. This ensures that your status is indicative of your actual progress - not just a reflection of a single outstanding project or a distressing test. Please see me with questions or concerns.

*** Each one of you can earn an "A" if you are willing to put forth the effort.

B. Make-up/Late work-

When work is missed due to an EXCUSED absence, you have one day for each day absent to make it up. If you fail to take this initiative or fail to turn in an assignment, it receives a "0". Remember, you are responsible for everything that goes on in this course whether you are here or not! **Reminder – absences do not change long-term assignment deadlines!**

An UN-EXCUSED absence means an automatic "E". Unexcused absences and tardies, both forms of disrespect and non-participation, will adversely affect your success in this course. You generally receive 5 points per day for in class work and productive class participation. Tardies are unnecessary and rude; be here!

I DO NOT EXCEPT LATE WORK. Life has time constraints; get used to deadlines now. For extenuating circumstances (accepting a Nobel Prize, unexpected time travel), see me. PLEASE PLAN AHEAD!

Participation is an important part of this class. You will be offering one another support and constructively critical feedback. This will take the form of class discussion, round-table critique and coffeehouse. If you ace every assignment in here, but do not participate in class, the highest grade possible is a B. Extra credit will be given for any of your work that is printed in the school magazine, or other published mediums.

C. Midterm/Final Exam - You must receive passing grades to pass the course. The final counts 20% of your final grade.

D. Approximation of points received for individual assignments -

Attendance/Participation				1 – 5 (negative potential)
Classroom events/Quizzes				5 - 10
Minor Written Assignments/Presentations/Assessments				10 - 25
Major Papers/Projects/Tests				25 - 60
100-99% = A+	89-88 = B+	79-78 = C+	69-68 = D+	
98-93 = A	87-83 = B	77-73 = C	67-63 = D	
92-90 = A-	82-80 = B-	72-70 = C-	62-60 = D-	59 and below = E

*It is your responsibility to save all assignments in order to avoid any grade discrepancy disputes later in the term. Keep everything!

V. CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS:

- * A Positive Attitude and Productive Participation are essential.
- * Approx. ½ - 2 hours of homework each week – plan on it.
- * *Deserve respect; expect respect.*
- * Bring all necessary supplies, attend regularly, punctually, and behave responsibly.
- * **NO gum, unauthorized electronic use or recording - EVER, food, beverages, vulgarity, insubordination, harassment, etc. allowed in class. Infractions will negatively impact your grade.**
- * One trip out of class per semester (restroom, drink, locker, etc.), is available; use it judiciously. If you forget materials, fail to plan ahead, etc., it will affect your grade - see that it doesn't.
- * Do not pack up or get up until the bell; it does not dismiss you, I do.
- * **Plagiarism is the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another, and representing it as original effort.** Research wisely, paraphrase selectively, and attribute accurately; always cite your source. Start early; make it personal; do your own work!

VI. KEEPING IN TOUCH:

I will be available to help with class work Monday, Wednesday & Friday from 7:15 – 7:50 a.m. or after school by appt.; my room # is 401 and my email is dunhamm@gpschools.org, which is the best way to reach me. Please be concerned about your success in this course now. Do not wait until the end of the quarter, ask for help when you get stressed, behind or befuddled. I am not that scary. Please review the information in this syllabus with your parents.

Let's have a great semester!