**Creative Writing/ Writer’s Workshop Course Outline & Syllabus**

\* Mrs. van Bohemen \* Spring 2016\*

**Instructor Contact Information:**

**Email:** Erin.vanBohemen@cobbk12.org **Blog:** http://creativewritingvanbo.weebly.com/

**Room #:** 114 (extra help is available upon request)

**Course Description:**

This class is proposed for beginners as well as serious writers who want to explore the pleasures and rigors of writing creative non-fiction, fiction, poetry and drama. Throughout the semester completing numerous writing exercises, reading and discussing one another’s writing in workshop format and developing a portfolio of writing will be required. Analyzing examples of published writers’ creative writing and submitting to at least one scholarship or contest will also be required. All students can expect a fun, supportive, hardworking and productive class atmosphere that encourages experimentation and constructive criticism. The emphasis is on literary development as both a reader and a writer. ***Academic Electives:* This course is an elective; it can NOT substitute for one of the four English courses required to graduate. However, as an English elective, it is calculated into the HOPE GPA.**

**Supplies needed for this course:**

* 1 to 2 inch binder with notebook paper
* Pen/pencil/highlighters (various colors)
* Composition notebook (for journaling)
* 3 prong-folder (s) for submissions
* Parallel novels required for the course (you can either purchase or rent these selections)

**Parallel Readings*:*** Students will read one work as a class and **two works of their choosing; one must be a published, well-known author’s work on writing as a craft, and the other must be a novel or collection of short stories, poems, or essays by a published, well-known author(s).** Additional county-approved titles may be added at the teacher’s discretion. Parent signature indicates permission for student to read these assigned works and understanding that the student and parent should choose a text suitable for him/her (please see attached syllabus for titles to choose from).

**Grading Categories:** All assignments will earn points that indicate the degree to which the student has mastered the Common Core Standard addressed. The grading policy is as follows:

* **Daily** (journal writing, oral discussion of readings, participation in workshop, peer conferencing, writing drafts) 60%
* **Major** (parallel readings/presentations, final pieces): 25%
* **Final Assessment** (portfolio with submission for publication): 15%

**Class Policies:**

1. Turn in work on time! A deduction of ten points per day late will be taken off, no matter the total point value of the assignment.
2. When absent, it is the student’s responsibility to get the assignments and arrange time for make-ups. If you are absent, check the blog for class information and downloadable handouts. Make up your work when you are absent, and turn it in on time!
3. All assignments and deadlines will be posted in the classroom and on the blog every day. Copy them down when you first arrive in class daily.
4. You may print in class but NOT on the day of the due date. You may come in early or stay after as needed.
5. Food and drink are permitted; please be courteous to those around you and clean up as needed.
6. Cheating and/or plagiarism are not tolerated and are treated additionally with a discipline referral and failure of the assignment. Please carefully review the attached policy.
7. Classroom behavior should demonstrate maturity, responsibility, and respect.

***Tardy Policy:*** Being prompt is a skill that must be groomed and should be exercised daily. It shows respect for both the individual and those with whom you associate. The strictly enforced school tardy policy is as follows: No students admitted after the bell without a tardy slip, stamped with time.  The first tardy = warning, but upon the second tardy (and this is cumulative, not to EACH class separately) students will serve a half hour detention, followed by two for the third, and more severe consequences for further tardies.

***Responsibilities***

*Teacher*: Come to class prepared to teach. Teach each student fairly. Be available to provide extra help. Provide a positive learning environment. Contact parents when appropriate.

*Students*: Follow classroom rules (indicated below) and classroom procedures (discussed in class).

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| --- | --- |
| Classroom Rules:   1. Bring all necessary materials to class (pen, paper, notebook, handouts, etc.) 2. Come to class on time, prepared to learn 3. Respect the people and furnishings of the classroom – listen when others speak 4. Adjust your voice to suit the activity. 5. Follow directions the first time they are given 6. Observe **all** school and classroom rules   \*Note: You must have permission to leave the room. | Consequences: when rules *aren’t* followed:   1. Verbal warning 2. Phone call to parents 3. Detention 4. Referral (and zero on any assignment where cheating, plagiarism, etc. is involved). (Some offenses may be severe enough that an automatic detention or direct referral is made.)   Consequences: when rules *are* followed:   1. Appropriate acknowledgments for good behavior given to students and their parents. |

***Teacher and Parent Communication***

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled through the guidance offices. If any concerns arise with the teacher or the parent, conferences are encouraged. Since success at school requires a partnership between the parents and the teachers, I encourage parents to call or email me at any time a question or concern arises. The easiest way to contact me is via my e-mail. It is my goal that each student succeeds in the classroom, as well as in extra-curricular activities.

# *Plagiarism and Cheating*

Please review the following information carefully. You will sign that you have read and understand its meaning. Please ASK me for guidance at any time (preferably before turning in an assignment). Plagiarism is the act of using another person’s ideas and expressions in your writing without acknowledging the source. Repeating another’s words, phrases or sentences without quotation marks and proper citation is one form of plagiarism. Restating another’s “apt phrase,” argument or idea without proper citation is also plagiarism as it indicates the work is your own rather than that of the original source (MLA Handbook). Plagiarism is not limited to an amount of material that needs citation. It may be seen as a lack of citation for ONE sentence, one paragraph and/or an entire paper.

*Consequences for plagiarism include receiving an F (0 points) on the assignment and a disciplinary referral to the administrators for disciplinary action. According to the Cobb County Code of Student Conduct plagiarism is, “copying of another person’s words or the expression of an idea and representing it as one’s own.” Cheating and plagiarism includes, but is not limited, tests, quizzes, reports, homework, term paper and thesis writing. All assignments given in this class are individual assignments unless otherwise explicitly stated in writing. Collaboration with peers on individual assignments is considered cheating.*

**TurnItIn.com**

You are required to use TurnItIn.com for the majority of your written assignments. Here is how to access our class:

1. Go to [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com).
2. **If you have an account already**, log in.
   1. Click “Enroll in a Class.”
   2. Use a section code and enrollment password below.
3. **If you are creating an account**, in the top right corner of the screen, you’ll see “Create Account.” Click there.
   1. Under “Create a New Account,” click “Student.”
   2. Enter the section code and enrollment password below, then complete your personal information. **You must use an email address.**
   3. Click “I Agree.”
4. Use the following section code and enrollment password:
   1. 3rd Period Creative Writing:

Class ID: **14322950**

Enrollment Password: vanbo3

**To Submit a Document to TurnItIn.com**

1. Log in.
2. Find our class and click on it.
3. Find the assignment and click “Submit.”
4. Give your submission a title, then choose a file via your computer documents, Dropbox, or Google Docs. If your file is on a flash drive, insert the flash drive first, then click “Choose from this computer” and find your flash drive.
5. Click “Upload.”
6. Review your submission and click “Confirm.”
7. You’ll receive a “digital receipt” via email. Keep this!

**Course Calendar**

This course will be largely student-driven. You will set your personal semester goals, for which you will be held accountable, on day one. Each day following you will work the entire period on achieving one or more of those goals. To become better writers, students must first be good readers. Quality reading often makes quality writing come easier. To this end, you will be required to read two parallel texts in addition to short readings and a long nonfiction text on craft assigned in class. Students must read everything they are assigned. Please be ready to discuss these works in class.

This course will primarily deal with fiction writing but we will also work with other genres such as the essay, creative nonfiction, poetry and drama. Students will be expected to generate approximately 40-50 pages of informal and/or formal writing in the form of writing exercises, journals, pre-writing and drafts, which will end in a final portfolio of approximately 30 pages of writing to include creative non-fiction, fiction, poetry and drama. As a final unit of study, we will look at the business of writing and students will be required to write a query letter and submit a piece of their choice to the publication of their choice. Grades are based on the quality of the query letter and piece submitted, and NOT on if the piece is accepted by the publication.

Students will be expected to contribute in large group workshops throughout the semester by presenting their original work for discussion, writing written responses to peer works, and contributing to oral evaluations of said works. Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to

* understand the importance of elements of craft: image, voice, character, setting and story
* identify imaginative writing genres: creative non-fiction, fiction, poetry and drama
* read and critique examples of published creative writing and student works
* develop skill in writing and revising creative non-fiction, fiction, poetry and drama
* practice and develop discussion and analysis skills through written and oral assignments
* learn self-motivation for developing your writing from an idea into a polished final draft
* appreciate the development and revision processes of creative writing.

**Week at a Glance:** A typical week in Creative Writing will include:

* Every Friday we will have a mini lesson on elements of style using the book *Elements of Style* by Stunk and White (you are given a PDF version of the book and it is also online)
* Daily journaling or creative writing exercises
* “Caption This!” images
* Reading selections to accompany the particular unit of study
* Work shopping
* “Story Starters” quick writes
* “Try This” exercises after lessons (to be kept in journal)

**Presentations & Portfolios**

\*\*You are required to read two parallel works in addition to the assigned short readings in class. You will receive further information about the required presentations; however, **you should begin choosing these works immediately (selections must be made no later than Jan. 20th).** One work must be a novel; a collection of short stories, poetry, or essays; or a play by a well-known, published author. This should be a pleasure read. The other work must be a memoir or other non-fiction work by a well-known, published author that focuses on his/her writing as craft. You may choose from the list below or approve another title with me.

1. *Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writing Within* by Natalie Goldberg
2. *Snoopy’s Guide to Writing and Life* by Barnaby Conrad and Monte Schultz
3. *How to Write Science Fiction and Fantasy* by Orson Scott Card
4. *Escaping into the Open: The Art of Writing True* by Elizabeth Berg
5. *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life* Anne Lamont
6. *Zen in the Art of Writing: Releasing the Creative Genius Within You*  Ray Bradbury
7. *Ernest Hemingway on Writing* Ernest Hemingway
8. *Stein On Writing: A Master Editor of Some of the Most Successful…* Sol Stein
9. *On Writing* Jorge Luis Borges and Suzanne Jill Levine
10. *The Writing Life* Annie Dilliard
11. *On Writing* Eudora Welty
12. *Essays in the Art of Writing* Robert Louis Stevenson
13. *Sometimes the Magic Works: Lessons from a Writing Life* Terry Brooks
14. *Writing Tools* Roy Peter Clark
15. *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft* Stephen King

**Units of Study (\*Tentative and subject to change!!\*)** For each unit of study, we will also have a selection of writings to read and analyze. Lengths of units vary from one to four weeks.

**Introductory Unit: Who we are as writers**

* Introduction to the work shopping process and share time
* Literacy Narrative project and presentation

**Unit #1: Fiction**

* The what, how and why of fiction (creative processes)
* Elements of Fiction (elements of craft)

**Unit #2: Characters & Dialogue**

* Characteristics of effective characters
* Kinds of characters/ types
* Methods of revealing character traits
* Conventions of dialogue (Scene/summary and subtext)

**Unit #3: Plot**

* Structure
* Form vs. Formula
* Versus real life/ versus story

**Unit #4: Point of View**

* Types of POV and how to choose
* Distance (emotionally and physically)
* The “Contract” with the reader

**Unit #5: Description (mini unit on Poetry embedded)**

* Sensory details
* Specificity and word choice
* Figurative language

**Unit #6: Setting & Pacing (mini unit on drama embedded)**

* Grounding the reader in place and time
* Flashbacks and backstory
* Mood/ Setting and characters and details
* “reality” of setting (creating “fantasy” settings)

**Unit #7: Voice and Style (mini unit on creative nonfiction embedded)**

* Four major types of voice (and lesser more complex choices too)
* Finding your voice (narrator vs. writer)
* Tools of style (Importance of consistency)

**Unit #8: Theme**

**A Final Note**

As a public school teacher, I am a mandated reporter, which means that I am required to report any suspected abuse to the appropriate authorities, who will in turn investigate as needed. Be careful what you write for this course. Fiction or not, I am bound to report any potential abuse. Also, please understand that this is a high school writing course. Some topics are simply inappropriate for this audience, and you should explore them elsewhere in your writing if you so desire. Again, fiction or not, what you write must not violate school rules. Any questionable writing will result in a referral to the Office of School Counseling and/or administration, as appropriate.

* Versus plot and story
* Know it
* Find it

**Unit #9: Revision and Editing**

* Drafting
* Big elements to look for
* Small elements to look for

**Unit #10: The Business of Writing**

* Careers in writing
* Query letter writing

**Mrs. van Bohemen’s Creative Writing Class Erin.vanBohemen@cobbk12.org**

Your Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Period:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I have received, read and understand the policy sheet including the information on cheating and plagiarism, and I understand that I will read approved Cobb County parallel selections. Please sign below to indicate that you have read a copy of the course syllabus, understand the policies, and agree to the requirements and the Cobb County approved reading selections. (If you have any objections regarding parallel readings, please indicate in writing what your objections are and include a daytime phone number.) Return this signed portion to your teacher.

Printed Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Class Period:

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Cell Number (not required, but advised):

**Parent Contact Information**

**In order to help all students achieve success, an open line of communication between the parent, the teacher, and the student is critical.** I maintain contact with parents via email for important assignments and class activities. All emails will be addressed in blind copy to ensure privacy of your contact information. Please list below the name and email addresses you wish to be added for class contact:

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(Print Name/Relationship to Student) (Print Name/Relationship to Student)

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(Email/Phone) (Email/Phone)

Home Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's/Guardian’s Signature: \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_