

Proposal for ENG 142 Online Fiction Writing Workshop
Mayterm 2018
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Method of Delivery

There are many different methods for engagement with an online course. On one end of the online learning spectrum there are massive open online courses (MOOCs), asynchronous classes where the instructor is more like a clockmaker setting the course in motion and then allowing it to continue working independently for hundreds of students. On the other end of the spectrum, fully synchronous interactive courses utilize a virtual classroom and function much in the same manner as a physical course. The classes meet at a set time and students interact with each other and the instructor via videoconference. However, there are a few in-between options, namely the asynchronous interactive model.

When done well, this asynchronous model is the method that reflects some of the best of what online education has to offer. It looks like this: the instructor builds out an online course that includes written instruction, readings materials (both online and from physical texts), interactive online resources (videos, lectures, Ted Talks, etc.), assignments, and guided discussion board conversation. The course is organized in modules, so students only have access to one week of content at a time. This helps them stay present, focused, and engaged. A massive dump of content can be very overwhelming for a student, and formatting the course in weekly modules helps them manage and engage with course information in much the same way they would a face-to-face course.

Because the course is asynchronous, students can log in and access the course on their own time. This format works particularly well for students who are heading home to work a full-time summer job with non-traditional hours or for students who have an internship in a traditional business and are not able to take a class during the day. However, the discussion boards allow students the opportunity to engage both with each other and with the instructor.

With a fully online course, there is no “back of the classroom.” Each student has required weekly engagement in the discussion board. More introverted or shy students have the opportunity to process discussion questions and craft responses without being put on the spot. In fact, in my experience, the “back of the classroom” types tend to thrive in the online environment. Additionally, because the course runs exclusively on written communication, the instructor has numerous opportunities to help students further develop their writing skills.

For ENG 142, I propose a fully online course like the one I’ve described here. The students will not only engage in weekly discussion board conversation, but they will also participate in online peer review groups, reading the work of their peers and providing thoughtful constructive critique. In this course style, much of the learning comes from my

feedback, as I will read each of their stories and provide thoughtful, rich feedback that guides them toward revision. The relationship I develop with my students mirrors the writer/editor relationship closely, and this format facilitates a lot of one-to-one learning.

Quality

The benefit of an online course in this format is that it allows Westmont to retain Westmont students through Mayterm. The competition for this course is out there through other online courses, but none of those courses will maintain Westmont's community, culture, or faith integration components.

In order to maintain the quality of interaction and feedback, I suggest limiting enrollment to 18-20 students. If demand necessitates, I would be willing to add in a second course, but I think it's important that this type of course maintain enrollment similar to a face-to-face course.

Experience

I have instructed seven online fiction writing courses at Southern New Hampshire University, similar to the course I'm proposing. Additionally, for the last four and a half years I've been a core member of Southern New Hampshire University's adjunct faculty training team. I've taught 34 online adjunct faculty training courses – onboarding new faculty to the university and training them in online instruction - and have consulted on the curriculum design and development of five iterations of the online faculty training course. Furthermore, I've designed and developed two independent writing courses through Coursesites (Blackboard's independent LMS). I am proficient in Blackboard, Coursesites, and Canvas.

ENG 142: Online Fiction Writing Workshop Provisional Syllabus

Course Description

Students will learn the basic elements of fiction writing, including developing scenes and characters, using dialogue, writing effective voice/prose styles, creating and resolving character conflicts, editing and revising the different developmental stages of a manuscript/story. Students will also learn how to participate in peer review, how to read as writers, and how to contribute to a writing culture.

ENG-142, Creative Writing Workshop, is an elective within the optional Writing Concentration of the English major. It is a single-genre workshop that may be repeated for credit in different genres.

This course also fulfills the General Education component labeled Competent and Compassionate Action: Productions and Presentations. It will provide you with a substantial opportunity for creative production and presentation. All students will be required to locate or to organize some form of public presentation of their own work. Given that this course exists exclusively online, this may come in the form of a course online literary website, but I will let students discuss this element as some may choose to pursue publication elsewhere as well.

Course Outcomes

- Demonstrate knowledge of the basic elements of fiction writing, including developing scenes and characters, using dialogue, and writing effective voice/prose styles
- Create and resolve character conflict
- Edit and revise different stages of creative work
- Read as writers and contribute to a writing culture
- Participate effectively in peer review

Learning Outcomes

My goal for this course is that you become a better writer and a better reader, thinker, and engager of written, fictional material. You will have a strong sense of story and an eye for detail. You will emerge a more confident editor of your own work.

Required Materials

Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft
Janet Burroway, Elizabeth Stuckey-French, and Ned Stuckey-French
Longman

9th Edition
2014
ISBN-13: 978-0321923165

Instructor Availability and Response Time

Your class interaction with me (your instructor) and your classmates will take place in Canvas on a regular, ongoing basis. I will be active in Canvas at least five days a week, and you will normally communicate with me in the open Blackboard discussion forum so that my answers to your questions benefit the entire class. Please email me directly when you need to discuss something of a personal or sensitive nature, and in those cases I will generally provide a response within 24 hours (if not sooner).

Communication

For purposes of security and identity, it is important that you use your Westmont.edu email address for all course communication.

What To Expect

In this course you will write and edit an original short story. Along the way, we'll practice writing different genres, voices, and points of view. I encourage you to dig deep and be brave in this course. Dive into the salty pits of conflict. Don't be afraid to set things on fire or solve big mysteries. As much as I want you to refine your craft, I also want you to have fun with many different elements of story. We have a stellar reading list in our text. You will also have the opportunity to work in peer review groups -- editing each other's work and discussing the short fiction written by members of the class.

English 142 Word-Processing Format: Unless otherwise noted (and let's be honest, I will likely never note otherwise), drafts should be word-processed using **Microsoft Word** or **Google Docs**. All word-processed documents for English 142 should be in the following format, in keeping with MLA guidelines:

- **Times New Roman, 12-point font.**
- **Full MLA-style heading on first page of the document** followed by a **short heading** for each following page (refer to your MLA handbook for examples). *To create headers in MS Word, you typically click **View**, then **Header and Footer**.*
- ****Electronic copies of all ENG 142 documents must be uploaded to Canvas in .rtf, .doc, .docx, or .pdf formats ONLY.**

FILES IN .PAGES FORMAT, ETC., WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED FOR CREDIT.**

Weekly Assignment Schedule

The Learning Modules area in Canvas contains one module folder for each week of the course. All reading and assignment information can be found in the folders. All assignments are due by 11:59 p.m. PST on the last day of the module week (Sunday). All new modules begin on Mondays.

In addition to the textbook readings that are listed, there may be additional required resources within each module in Blackboard. Please make sure that you refer to weekly announcements for updates and additional information.

Week	Assignments
1	Icebreaker Activity The Elements of Story Reading: <i>Writing Fiction</i> , Chapters 1 and 2; “Big Me” Discussion: What Do You Care About? Final Project Review Workshop: Short Story Draft
2	Showing and Telling Reading: <i>Writing Fiction</i> , Chapters 3 and 4; “Every Tongue Shall Confess”; “Bullet in the Brain” Discussion: Your Favorite Characters Critique: Short Story Draft
3	Editing for Writers: Writing is Rewriting Reading: <i>Writing Fiction</i> , Chapter 9; “Keith”; “Notes on Keith” Discussion: Writing Is Rewriting Workshop: Story Draft, Focusing on Characters
4	Plot, Theme, and Conflict Reading: <i>Writing Fiction</i> , Chapters 7 and 8; “What You Pawn I Will Redeem”; “Who’s Irish?” Discussion: Wanted: A Tearjerker Critique: Story Draft, Focusing on Characters
5	Character Development and World Building Reading: <i>Writing Fiction</i> , Chapters 5 and 6; “The Sea Fairies”; “Mrs. Dutta Writes a Letter” Discussion: A Different World Final Project (Workshop): Final Story Revision

A WORD ON THE READINGS

I believe in the power of story. I believe that stories help us understand ourselves, others, and the world around us better and more fully. For this reason, it is paramount that we explore a broad selection of stories. Some of our readings this Mayterm might make you uncomfortable. Some of what you read may hit home in a way that is wholly unexpected. You might disagree with some of the readings. You may surprise yourself with agreement in others. My hope is that you will enter into the words of this Mayterm with an open mind and an open heart, with a willingness to learn and grow, with a desire to see others (and yourself) more clearly.

Attendance Policy

Failure to participate during the first week of the course (12:00 a.m. Monday through 11:59 p.m. Sunday) will result in automatic withdrawal. Participation is defined as posting within a discussion board and/or submitting an assignment. Extended absences, defined as failure to post into the Canvas classroom for more than three days, must be coordinated with the instructor.

Disability Statement: Students who have been diagnosed with a disability (chronic medical, physical, learning, or psychological) are strongly encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) as early as possible to discuss appropriate accommodations for this course. Formal accommodations will only be granted for students whose disabilities have been verified by ODS. For more information, contact Sheri Noble, Director of Disability Services (805-565-6186, snoble@westmont.edu) or visit the Disability Services website

ACADEMIC (DIS)HONESTY POLICY

Westmont College sincerely wishes each student to become a capable scholar with high standards of competence and integrity, able to refer to others' work effectively and responsibly and able to contribute in original ways to influence others. To reach this standard, students must internalize the aims and goals of scholarship, as well as to learn in all courses and situations how to avoid plagiarism. The following examples are intended to help you understand plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. At its worst, plagiarism is an insidious and disruptive form of academic dishonesty. It can violate relationships with known classmates and professors, and it can violate the legal rights of people you may never meet. **Each of the following examples constitutes dishonesty and is prohibited:**

- **Plagiarism:** The appropriation, theft, purchase, or obtaining another's work by any means, and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of that work as one's own. Appropriation includes the quoting or paraphrasing of another's work without giving proper credit.
- **Collusion:** The unauthorized collaboration with another in preparing work offered for credit.
- **Fabrication and falsification:** Unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise. Falsification involves altering information for use in any academic exercise. Fabrication involves inventing or counterfeiting information for use in any academic exercise.
- **Multiple submission:** The submission by the same individual of substantial portions of the same academic work (including oral reports) for credit more than once in the same or another class without authorization. For the purposes of this class, no work that has been turned in or completed prior to May 8, 2017 is eligible for submission for any assignment.
- **Complicity in academic misconduct:** Helping another commit an act of misconduct.

Please familiarize yourself with the entire Westmont College Plagiarism Policy (available [online](#) via the Westmont College homepage). It defines different levels of plagiarism and the disciplinary consequences for each. It also contains helpful information on [strategies for avoiding plagiarism](#). *NOTE: If you have questions pertaining to academic honesty, please make an appointment to see me.*