INTRO TO CREATIVE WRITING (online)
HU2110.R02
Summer 2010

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students will study and practice the art of being reader and writer, two states inseparable. You will read daily and purposefully, looking to how language is used on the page by those who do it best. You will write daily and purposefully, both informally (by keeping a writer’s journal) and formally (by creating more exacting works in the literary genres of poetry, short literary fiction, short literary nonfiction and drama). As a writer, you will learn to create little boxes of the world, cabinets of curiosity into which you will place your tarantulas, old newspapers, broken sex toys, jars of pickled mushrooms, sombreros, rolled up tubes of acne cream, tiger lilies, tobacco-stained false teeth, lipstick-stained cigarette butts, crows’ feet, naked Bible salesmen, bloody Band-aids, hairy warts, one-eyed cats and three-legged dogs—details burning angry, mean and bright. Students will learn to craft writing that offers readers of their creations more than the mere suggestion of a reality, but a vision of a world that creates its own.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Creative Writing: Four Genres in Brief (CW).
Kitty Snacks 3 (KS).
McSweeney’s 34 (MS).
Normal School 3 (NS).
PANK 4 (PK).

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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POLICIES

1. Fulfill your responsibilities, seldom early, and never late. Complete all assignments on deadline, read, take notes, participate in online discussions, pose questions, be engaged, and be engaging.

2. Because “attendance” isn’t really an issue for us, the stress will be more on meeting deadlines. Late assignments will not be accepted, under any circumstances (baring bodily injury) and no coursework can be made up without written documentation excusing the absence. Turning work in early is fine. Plan ahead. Written work can be emailed to mbseigel@mtu.edu, attached as a .doc or .rtf file.

4. Integrity and ethics are central to any community searching for truth. Anything less than total commitment to integrity and ethics undermines the efforts of the entire community. Every member is responsible and culpable. Breaking this compact will result in an F for the course. Don’t cheat.

5. Michigan Tech encourages ALL qualified persons to participate in its programs and activities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please contact Professor Seigel as soon as possible and/or visit the Office of Student Affairs or phone 487-2951.

6. Concerning grading, and because of the nature of composing creative works, students can expect the
following point system on all graded course work:

3 = Very good to excellent. Student exceeded most to all course expectations.
2 = OK. Student met course expectations.
1 = Inferior. Student met few course expectations.
0 = Failure. Student failed to make deadline and/or met few if any of the course expectations.

COURSEWORK

Informal Writing, The Discussion Board (10%): Attend to this course every day and take part thoughtfully and conscientiously. Complete each day’s readings (you cannot write if you do not read). Complete each day’s writing assignments (you cannot improve your writing unless you write). Respond both to each day’s discussion prompt on Blackboard as well as to at least one of your classmate’s responses (so that’s 2 posts every day, 4 days a week, Monday through Thursday).

Informal Writing, The Writer’s Notebook (10%): You will be assigned both free writing assignments and writer’s prompts every day (Monday through Thursday). Whatever doesn’t go on the discussion board will go into your “writer’s notebook”. Consider these exercises creative calisthenics. In addition, you are expected to produce words of your own: rants, raves, ideas, sketches, collage, stories, drawings, lists, poems, manifestoes, newspaper clippings, photographs, ticket stubs, late night ramblings, drunken outbursts, graffiti, letters to the dead, epiphanies, religious conversions, political vomit, cartoons, lyrics, travel logs, whatever. Your notebook is the place to work out your theory of the whole, your box of the world, a place where you can pile the detritus for later sifting. Your writer’s notebook is a weapon against writer’s block. You will write in it every single day, seven days a week. Muses are fickle, inspiration sparse – nurse your process, use your notebook. Notebooks can be emailed to mbseigel@mtu.edu, attached as a .doc or .rtffile, subject line “Writer’s Notebook.”

Formal Writing, Poetry (20%): You will write & workshop 6 poems in sequence (meaning the work is somehow related) in whatever form you choose. In addition, you will write a 500-word process introduction (see note below) to be included with the final copy of your poems. Notebooks can be emailed to mbseigel@mtu.edu, attached as a .doc or .rtffile, subject line “Poetry.”

Formal Writing, Short Literary Nonfiction (20%): You will write & workshop a piece of short creative nonfiction—personal essay, memoir, literary journalism, short lyric essay, etc.—1500-word minimum. In addition, you will write a 500-word process introduction (see note below) to be included with the final copy of your essay. Notebooks can be emailed to mbseigel@mtu.edu, attached as a .doc or .rtf file, subject line “Nonfiction.”

Formal Writing, Short Literary Fiction (20%): You will write & workshop a piece of short fiction—1500-word minimum. In addition, you will write a 500-word process introduction to be included with the final copy of your story. Notebooks can be emailed to mbseigel@mtu.edu, attached as a .doc or .rtf file, subject line “Fiction.”

Formal Writing, The One-Act Play (20%): You will write and workshop a one-act play. In addition, students will write a 500-word process introduction to be included with the final copy of the play. Notebooks can be emailed to mbseigel@mtu.edu, attached as a .doc or .rtf file, subject line “Drama.”

COURSE CALENDAR, SPRING 2009

Week 1
M 04/10: Welcome to the course. Familiarize yourself with the syllabus, the course texts, with Blackboard and respond to the first discussion question. Read CW pg. 1-66. Please note, study, and know all of the vocabulary in bold! Do notebook prompts 1 and 2 from CW pg. 64 (“kick-starts”). Begin browsing the assigned magazines for poetry.
T 04/11: Continue studying the “Writing Poetry” chapter in CW. Re-read and study “The short poem: three
models” beginning on page 16 of CW. In your notebook, rewrite each of the three poems (respond to them, re-envision them) in your own words. Begin writing your own poetry in your notebook. Do notebook prompts 3 and 4 from CW pg. 64 (“kick-starts”). Respond to the day’s discussion question on Blackboard.

W 04/12: Continue studying the “Writing Poetry” chapter in CW. Find any three poems that you like from one of your course texts other than CW (any three). In your notebook, rewrite each of the three poems (respond to them, re-envision them) in your own words (just as you did yesterday with the “three model poems”). Continue drafting your own poetry in your notebook. Do notebook prompts 5 and 6 from CW pg. 65 (“kick-starts”). Respond to the day’s discussion question on Blackboard.

R 04/13: Continue studying the “Writing Poetry” chapter in CW. Read the poems on pages 67-90 of CW. In your notebook, rewrite three of the poems (respond to them, re-envision them) in your own words. Continue drafting your own poetry in your notebook. Do notebook prompts 7 and 8 from CW pg. 64 (“kick-starts”). Respond to the day’s discussion question on Blackboard.

Week 2

M 05/17: Have read all of the poetry from the magazines you were assigned, plus whatever reading remains from CW. Like with past exercises, try to find 2 or 3 poems from the magazines that you like, then copy them into your writer’s notebook. Mimic them. Rewrite them. Make them your own. Do prompts 9 and 10 from CW pg. 64 (“kick-starts”) in your writer’s notebook. Respond to the day’s discussion question on Blackboard. Review the assignment sheet for your formal poetry assignment, due Thursday of this week.

T 05/18: Do prompts 11 and 12 from CW pg. 64 (“kick-starts”) in your writer’s notebook. Continue trying to find poetry on your own, online or elsewhere. Continue mimicking what you like. In your writer’s notebook, begin thinking about which of your six poems you’ll be turning in on Thursday. Begin workshopping and rewriting your six poems using the “Checklists” on CW pages 26, 37, 45, 49 and 63 to get your started.

W 05/19: Continue drafting, rewriting, and workshopping your poetry according to the the “Checklists” on CW pages 26, 37, 45, 49 and 63. Continue reading as much as you can.

R 05/20: Continue drafting, rewriting, and workshopping your poetry according to the the “Checklists” on CW pages 26, 37, 45, 49 and 63. Continue reading as much as you can. Poetry and Writer’s Notebooks Due Via Email, Deadline 12am.

Week 3

M 05/24: TBA.

T 05/25: TBA.

W 05/26: TBA.

R 05/27: TBA.

Week 4

M 05/31: Memorial Day, No Class

T 06/01: TBA.

W 06/02: TBA.

R 06/03: Short Fiction and Writer’s Notebooks Due Via Email, Deadline 12am.

Week 5

M 06/07: TBA.

T 06/08: TBA.

W 06/09: TBA.

R 06/10: TBA.

Week 6

M 06/14: TBA.

T 06/15: Literary Nonfiction and Writer’s Notebooks Due Via Email, Deadline 12am.

W 06/16: TBA.

R 06/17: TBA.

Week 7

M 06/21: TBA.
T 06/22: TBA.
W 06/23: TBA.
R 06/24: Drama Due and Writer's Notebooks Due Via Email, Deadline 12am.