Instructor Information

Instructor: Stephanie Carpenter, PhD
Office Location: Walker 342
E-mail: stcarpe@mtu.edu
Office Hours: M 5:00-6:30 and by appointment

Course Identification

Course Number: 83864-HU2110-R01
Course Name: The Writer’s Craft
Course Location: 109 Walker
Class Times: M 7:05-9:35PM
Prerequisites: None

Course Description/Overview

This workshop-style* course is intended to help you grow as a writer and reader of poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction. To this end, we’ll study published works and craft pieces in all three genres. The bulk of the course will focus on development and discussion of original, student-produced work. Every class meeting will include in-class writing prompts, so please always bring writing materials to class.

*Workshop: a group discussion intended to generate productive questions, comments, ideas, and revision/expansion strategies for works in progress. We’ll discuss protocol and expectations for participation in more detail in class.

Course Learning Objectives

Over the semester, you will:

- Read and respond to published creative work;
- Produce original poems, short stories, and short essays;
- Participate actively and constructively in discussions of your peers’ work;
- Revise and develop your own work and reflect thoughtfully on your writing process.

Course Resources

Course Website(s)

- Canvas<http://www.courses.mtu.edu>
**Required Course Text**

All published readings for this course will be accessible through our Canvas site (check the appropriate page for the unit we’re working on). Student work will be exchanged using the Groups feature of Canvas.

You should **always bring the readings with you to class**, whether as hard copies or in electronic form!

**Assignments**

*Writing Exercises:*
Just as student painters learn about technique by copying masterpieces, a student writer can develop her craft by practicing techniques and/or imitating the work of a more established writer. To this end, you will be assigned a number of short exercises in poetry, nonfiction, and fiction. We’ll workshop these in class, and the material can be revised, re-conceptualized, expanded or otherwise transformed as part of your final portfolio.

*Peer Feedback:*
On workshop weeks, you will respond to several pieces of student work in preparation for the class period. Your responses should be typed. Responses to your peers’ exercises should be no less than ½ double-spaced pages in length. Please bring two copies of your responses to class: one for the writer (along with any line comments on the manuscript), and one for me. We’ll talk more about our expectations for peer response in class.

*Final Portfolio*

Your final assignment for the course will be a **portfolio** in which you expand one of your pieces and revise one piece in a different genre. (A poem might be expanded into a series of linked poems and accompanied by a revised micro-essay; a scene from a story expanded into a full story and accompanied by a revised poem; a brief essay could be extended and accompanied by a revised short-short story). More on this to follow.

The rubric I’ll use to evaluate your creative work is appended to this syllabus.

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**Formatting:** All prose work (fiction and nonfiction) submitted for this class must be typed, double-spaced, in Times Roman 12-point font or an equivalent, with 1-inch margins on all sides and no extra spaces between lines or letters. **(Make sure you’ve set up your word processing program according to these guidelines; do not just turn in your work in the default format of your word processing program)**.

In the default format for **poetry**, new lines should be left-justified and stanzas should be single-spaced, with an extra space to signal stanza breaks; variations on this will be interpreted as experiments with form. Think about the form that best suits your content.

All work must have **an original title**.
Late work: ***I deduct 5% per day for late work.*** Thus, if you turn in an assignment two days late, the maximum you can possibly get on it is an AB (90%). Extensions and exceptions will be made in rare circumstances; please TALK TO ME if you foresee a problem completing your work on time.

Multiliteracies Center: It’s your responsibility to submit your work in as polished a state as possible. If you would like feedback on your work before the due date, please consider visiting the Multiliteracies Center (MTMC). This free resource exists to help you with writing projects for any course on campus. For more information about the MTMC or to schedule an appointment, go to the MTMC website at http://www.mtu.edu/humanities/resources/mtmc/ or call (906) 487-2007. The MTMC is located in 107 Walker.

**Attendance and Participation**

Attendance and participation are critical to your success in this workshop-style course. If you must miss a class, you are responsible for obtaining notes from one of your classmates.

Two tardies of five minutes or more will count as an absence; leaving class more than 15 minutes early also counts as an absence.

If you are using your electronic devices for recreational purposes, working on non-course related projects, or texting during class I will count you as absent for the day. (If you have a personal emergency, let me know. Please also let me know if you use your phone as an e-reader).

As this is a once-a-week class, missing a class session is significant. Two absences will bring your overall grade down by half a letter (50 points), three will bring it down by a full letter (100 points), and if you miss four class meetings, you will not pass this class.

Your level of engagement in the class also affects this part of your grade.

- **Always bring the readings to class!** If you don’t have the materials necessary for the day’s work, I may ask you to leave (and mark you as absent for the day).
- Be respectful of me and of your classmates.
- Speak in class. I’d be happy to talk with you about ways to increase your involvement!

I expect you to participate actively and thoughtfully in each of our class discussions. I will determine participation grades at the midterm and end of the semester. Here’s how I evaluate participation:

- Meets attendance requirements; participates thoughtfully and respectfully in every class discussion **100%**
- Meets attendance requirements; participates thoughtfully and respectfully in many class discussions: **90%**
- Meets attendance requirements; occasionally participates or participates superficially: **80%**
- Meets attendance requirements; rarely participates or participates without seeming to have completed the reading assignments: **70%**

And so on…

Under some circumstances, with proper notification and documentation, an absence may be excused (see http://www.mtu.edu/dean/conduct/policy/attendance/ for guidelines).
Grading Scheme

Your semester grade in this course will be determined as follows:

**POETRY**
- **EXERCISES X 3** 15%

**NONFICTION**
- **EXERCISES X 2** 20%

**FICTION**
- **EXERCISES X 2** 20%

**PEER FEEDBACK:** 15%

**FINAL PORTFOLIO:** 15%

**ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION** 15%

Grading System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade Points/credit</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93% &amp; above</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>87% – 92%</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82% – 86%</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>76% – 81%</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>Above average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70% – 75%</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>65% – 69%</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>Below average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60% - 64%</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>Inferior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59% and below</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>Failure</td>
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<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Incomplete; given only when a student is unable to complete a segment of the course because of circumstances beyond the student’s control.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Conditional, with no grade points per credit; given only when the student is at fault in failing to complete a minor segment of a course, but in the judgment of the instructor does not need to repeat the course. It must be made up by the close of the next semester or the grade becomes a failure (F). A (X) grade is computed into the grade point average as a (F) grade.</td>
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University Policies

**Academic integrity:**
Academic integrity and honesty are central components of a student’s education, and ethical conduct fostered in an academic context will be carried into a student’s professional career. Academic integrity is essential in a community of scholars searching and learning to search for truth. Anything less than total commitment to integrity undermines the efforts of the academic community. Both students and faculty are responsible for insuring the academic integrity of the University.

This policy applies to the academic conduct of all persons at Michigan Technological University who have ever matriculated at the University, whether or not the person is enrolled at the time an allegation of academic misconduct is made.

This policy addresses academic misconduct in course work. Allegations of misconduct in research or publication are addressed under the Misconduct in Research, Scholarly and Creative Endeavors (http://www.mtu.edu/research/administration/integrity-compliance/pdf/Misconduct_in_Research_Scholarly_Creative_Endeavors_Policy.pdf) and its

Of these policies, the university’s position on plagiarism is most relevant to HU 2501. Plagiarism or other appropriation of the work of another individual and presenting it as if it were one’s own or without credit to the originator as is required by commonly accepted practices in the community of one’s discipline; plagiarism also includes self plagiarism, for example excerpting or reusing papers written for another class.

**Student disability services:**
Michigan Tech complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. For more information about reasonable accommodation for or equal access to education or services at Michigan Tech, please call the Dean of Students Office, at (906) 487-2212 or go to http://www.mtu.edu/dean/disability/policies/

**Assessment:**
Student work products (exams, essays, projects, etc.) may be used for purposes of university, program, or course assessment—the institution’s efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of its programming. All work used for assessment purposes will not include any individual student identification.
Course Schedule

Week 1, 1/13: Introductions
Introduction to the course, to the study of poetry, to received forms

Homework: Poetry Exercise 1: Pantoum and Ghazal due via Canvas by Friday, 1/17 at 5PM. Readings for 1/27: “Sonnets” chapter (from Wendy Bishop’s Thirteen Ways of Looking for a Poem) and “Images” (from Kim Addonizio’s and Dorianne Laux’s The Poet’s Companion)

Week 2, 1/20: NO CLASS: Martin Luther King Day

Week 3, 1/27: Poetry
Discuss sonnets and other received forms; discuss workshop protocol: how to respond to a peer’s poem?

Homework: Poetry Exercise 2: Two Sonnets due via Canvas by Friday, 1/31 at 5PM. Peer responses due 2/3. Readings for 2/3: “Free verse” chapter (from An Exaltation of Forms) and “Voice and Style” (from Kim Addonizio’s and Dorianne Laux’s The Poet’s Companion)

Week 4, 2/3: Poetry
Workshop sonnets in small groups. Discuss free verse.

Homework: Poetry Exercise 3: free verse poem due via Canvas by Friday, 2/7 at 5PM. Peer responses due 2/10. Readings for 2/10: “Prose Poems” chapter (from Wendy Bishop’s Thirteen Ways of Looking for a Poem) and examples

Week 5, 2/10: Poetry
Workshop free verse poems in small groups. Discuss prose poetry.

Homework: Read “Working with the Elements of Fiction” and “Creating Scenes: A Nuts & Bolts Approach” (both from Michael Kardos’s The Art and Craft of Fiction); Austin Bunn’s “How to Win an Unwinnable War” and Rebecca Curtis’s “Twenty Grand”

Week 6, 2/17: Fiction
Discuss fiction fundamentals.

Homework: Fiction Exercise 1: scene-writing, due via Canvas by Friday, 2/21 at 5PM. Peer responses due 2/24. Readings for 2/24: Valerie Vogrin, “Point of View: the Complete Menu” (from Writing Fiction by the Gotham Writers’ Workshop); Lorrie Moore, “How to Become a Writer” and Tobias Wolff’s “Bullet in the Brain”
**Week 7: 2/24: Fiction**
Workshop Fiction Exercise 1. Discuss the POV spectrum.

*Homework:* Read Kardos’s “Organizing Your Story: Form & Structure” (from The Art and Craft of Fiction); ZZ Packer’s “Brownies” and George Saunders’s “Victory Lap”

**Week 8: 3/3: Fiction**
Discuss plot and other elements of fiction.

*Homework:* Fiction Exercise 2: POV due via Canvas by Friday, 3/14 at 5PM.
Peer responses due 3/17.
Readings for 3/17: Dinty Moore, “Memoir” (from The Truth of the Matter: Art and Craft in Creative Nonfiction); Rachel Riederer’s “Patient”; Jo Ann Beard, “Preface” (from her book-length memoir, The Boys of My Youth)

3/10: NO CLASS: Spring Break

**Week 9: 3/17: Nonfiction**
Workshop Fiction Exercise 2. Discuss memoir.


**Week 10: 3/24: Nonfiction**
Discuss approaches to memoir.

*Homework:* Nonfiction Exercise 1: Memoir due via Canvas by Friday, 3/28 at 5PM.
Readings for 3/31: Dinty Moore, “Personal Essay” (from The Truth of the Matter: Art and Craft in Creative Nonfiction); Eula Biss, “Time and Distance Overcome” and Ian Frazier, “Keeping America’s Trees Safe from Small-Curd Bubble Wrap”

**Week 11: 3/31: Nonfiction**
Workshop Nonfiction Exercise 1. Discuss personal essays.

*Homework:* Read Dinty Moore, “Discovery” from The Truth of the Matter: Art and Craft in Creative Nonfiction; Deborah Thompson, “What’s the Matter with Houdini?” and S. J. Dunning, “For(e)closure”

**Week 12: 4/7: Nonfiction**
Discuss the capacities of the personal essay.

*Homework:* Nonfiction Exercise 2: Personal Essay due via Canvas by Friday, 4/11 at 5PM
Readings for 4/14: Excerpts from graphic memoirs: Alison Bechdel’s Fun Home and David Small’s Stitches.
Week 13: 4/14: Nonfiction
Workshop Nonfiction Exercise 2. Discuss graphic memoirs.

Homework: Read Heather Sellers, “Insight”; Bob Hicok, “A Primer”
Begin working on portfolio revisions, and bring materials with you to class next week for peer-to-peer discussions.

Week 14: 4/21: Revision
Revision exercises and peer-to-peer discussions. Final matters. Individual conferences with instructor TBA.

Finals Week
Portfolios due Monday, 4/28 by 5PM.