

ENGL F270X: Introduction to Creative Writing

University of Alaska Fairbanks, Summer 2020 (May 18–June 26)

Section F61 (51094): TTh, noon–1:55 p.m., Engineering Facility 301 & online

Joseph Holt, PhD; jaholt3@alaska.edu

office hours: W, 10 a.m.–noon and by appointment in Gruening 864

Draft syllabus

Everything is still
subject to change.

Course Description

Forms and techniques of fiction, poetry and creative nonfiction for beginning students; discussion of students' work in class and in individual conferences. Close study of the techniques of established writers. This course fulfills a UAF GER Humanities requirement, and its only prerequisite is first-year writing (WRTG F111X: Writing Across Contexts).

Required Materials

Our course textbook is *Serious Daring: Creative Writing in Four Genres* by Lisa Roney (Oxford UP: 2014). Please bring your textbook to class every day. We'll read most of this 600-page book over the six weeks of our course.

You'll also need reliable access to the internet, since half our course will be conducted online. We'll have a Blackboard site with journaling forums and a few workshop discussions. Next, you'll probably spend about \$10 in printing fees, since you'll print out some poems, stories and essays for workshop. Lastly, please come to each class with a pen and paper.

Learning Outcomes

In this class we'll work toward sharpening our perception as *readers*, with the ultimate goal of improving as *writers*. We'll learn key terminology and apply it to the published works in our textbook. Then we'll also produce our own creative work—poetry, creative nonfiction and fiction—and introduce it to one another in workshops, discussing how to effectively critique and how to utilize criticism. This course is part of the undergraduate curriculum in creative writing at UAF. It should prepare you for intermediate and advanced creative writing courses, which are often specific to particular genres.

Assignments & Grades

Your big project for this class is your **portfolio of creative work**, which will include 4-5 poems, one essay, one story and one flash experiment. We'll accumulate these works over the course of the semester, and you'll submit the portfolio via blackboard or by email after our final class meeting. When time allows, you'll be expected to revise your creative work after presenting it during class. You'll also have **online journal entries** due each Monday and Wednesday. These journals will be in response to assigned readings. Finally, your grade will have a **participation component**, which will include your preparedness for workshops and class discussion, as well as your score on reading quizzes and your completion of informal in-class exercises. Here's how your final grade will shake out:

- Creative portfolio: 50%
- Biweekly online journals: 25%
- Participation, reading quizzes
& in-class exercises: 25%

I'll strive to be transparent in my grading policies. If you have questions along the way, please ask me.

In order to pass this class, you must:

- complete all major writing projects
- read all the assignments
- participate in discussions and workshops
- attend class regularly

Citizenship, Preparation & Attendance

By nature, writers are sensitive, temperamental and vulnerable. Please treat each other's work with respect and compassion. Be patient, generous and open-minded. Give your honest opinion, but listen, too.

Your attendance and participation are expected, and in turn I'll work to make each class meaningful and worthwhile. No in-class activities (freewriting, reading quizzes, discussion) can be made up due to tardiness or absence. Excessive absences might result in reduced grades or failing the class altogether. Absences for university obligations or medical events can be excused. If possible, please let me know ahead of time.

We have a large class, which makes it difficult to conduct workshops and online discussions. To facilitate these things better, I've separated you into two groups. You'll be automatically filtered into these groups on Blackboard, and we might break into them occasionally in the classroom. Although they're subject to change, here are the groups:

<u>Group #1</u>		<u>Group #2</u>	
Student	Student	Student	Student
Student	Student	Student	Student
Student	Student	Student	Student
Student	Student	Student	Student
Student		Student	

Academic Honesty

Scholastic dishonesty, or plagiarism, is a serious offense. Penalties are severe, ranging from a failing grade for an assignment to a failing grade for the course. If you have questions about the use of outside sources, internet sources, or the help you've received from someone else on an assignment, let me know and we'll address it as a learning opportunity. You can also refer to UAF's Academic Misconduct Policy statement: uaf.edu/csrr/academic-integrity.

Resources

The **Writing Center** offers one-on-one help with any kind of writing project, at any stage of the writing process. It's located at 801 Gruening Building. You can contact the Writing Center at 907-474-5314 or visit their website: uaf.edu/english/writing-center. I know guys who work in the Writing Center. They'd love if you came in to discuss a creative project with them.

Disability Services assists students who might experience physical or emotional learning barriers. You can visit their office at 208 Whitaker Building or their website at uaf.edu/disability. I'll work to ensure that all students have equal access and that accommodations are kept confidential. Similarly, the **Student Health and Counseling Center** provides medical care and assessments. The Counseling Center in particular can assist with learning barriers such as relationship stress, anxiety or depression, alcohol or drug problems, and difficulty concentrating or lack of motivation. You can learn more about these services in their office at 203 Whitaker Building or at uaf.edu/chc.

In this class we will strive to create a learning environment that welcomes all viewpoints. We will not discriminate in regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. The **Nanook Diversity and Action Center** is an excellent resource on this subject, and their website is uaf.edu/ndac. Likewise, sexual harassment is not acceptable in the university setting or in this class. That includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Such conduct can interfere with an individual's work or academic performance and create an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or academic environment. The **Department of Equity and Compliance** oversees matters of workplace and classroom inclusion at uaf.edu/equity.

Course Schedule

The following schedule is subject to change. I'll notify you of any revisions during class.

Week	Dates	Out-of-class readings & exercises	In-class topics	Readings for in-class work
1	5-18 to 5-21	Mon: “Serious Daring...” (3–16) <i>Journal #1: What Do You Want?</i> Wed: “Destination: Poetry” (17–19) “Imagery and Fig. Language” (21–40) <i>Journal #2: Poetry Practice</i>	Tue: introductions, genre, reading like a writer, freewrite Thur: workshop procedures, more reading like a writer, freewrite	Tue: “Superman and Me” (279–81) “Ode to My Father” (368–71) Thur: “America” (385–86) “At the Grave of...” (402–04) “Las Papas” (466–70)
2	5-25 to 5-28	Mon: “Sound & Rhythm” (41–56) <i>Journal #3: Obsession & Repetition</i> Wed: “Form” (57–74) <i>Journal #4: More Poetry Practice</i>	Tue: language and form, poetry workshop Thur: poetry workshop	Tue: “To a Penny Postcard ©1911” (419) “Spell for a Traveler” (444) “Apollo (at) Eleven” (509) Thur: “The Children’s Concert” (291) “Four Sonnets about Food” (520–21)
3	6-1 to 6-4	Mon: “Dest.: Creative NF” (75–77) “Memory” (79–93) <i>Journal #5: Self Analysis</i> Wed: “Research” (95–107) <i>Mini-wkshp #1: flash nonfiction</i>	Tue: elements of storytelling, truth and fiction Thur: flash nonfiction workshop	Tue: “No Wonder They Call...” (387–90) “The Drama Bug” (502–08) Thur: “Total Eclipse” (325–35) groupmates’ flash pieces
4	6-8 to 6-11	Mon: “Destination: Fiction” (108–10) “Description and Setting” (111-23) <i>Journal #6: Place & Space</i> Wed: <i>Journal #7: Making a Scene</i>	Tue: techniques of scene and setting, plausibility in fiction and nonfiction Thur: nonfiction workshop	Tue: “Saint Marie” (346–56) “How to Tell a True War Story” (447–57) Thur: “Pirate’s Admonition” (532) groupmates’ NF pieces
5	6-15 to 6-18	Mon: “Character” (125–39) <i>Journal #8: Devil in the Details</i> Wed: “Plot” (141–57) <i>Mini-wkshp #2: flash fiction</i>	Tue: characterization, plot and conflict Thur: flash fiction workshop	Tue: “The Changeling” (307) “Son” (405–13) Thur: “Son of Mr. Green Jeans” (430–35) groupmates’ flash pieces
6	6-22 to 6-25	Mon: “POV and Voice” (159–74) <i>Journal #9: Reading Review</i> Wed: “Action & Dialogue” (177–93) <i>Journal #10: Writing Review</i>	Tue: TBA Thur: fiction workshop	Tue: “Phoning It In” (414–18) “Men’s Intuition” (438–43) “Out of the Woods” (458–65) Thur: groupmates’ short stories
Finals Week		Final portfolio due (TBA)		