

ENGL F270X: Introduction to Creative Writing

University of Alaska Fairbanks, Summer 2020

Section F61 (51094): online

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office hours: TBA via Zoom

Tentative syllabus

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).

Don't wait to get *Serious Daring*, our textbook. We'll begin using it on day one.

Required Materials

Our course textbook is *Serious Daring: Creative Writing in Four Genres* by Lisa Roney (Oxford UP: 2014). We'll read most of this 600-page book over our work this semester. Because we're an online course, you'll also need reliable access to the internet. We'll conduct all our work on a Blackboard site, which will have forums for freewriting, reading responses and workshop.

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 final grade will be divided among four assignment categories. First, there's the **reading responses** and **pathway freewrites**, smaller-scale forums conducted each week or so. Next is your **workshop participation**—the feedback you'll provide on your classmates' poems, stories, essays and flash prose. Finally, to conclude the semester you'll revise your own creative works (the poems, story, essay and flash prose from workshops) into a **final portfolio**, which will also include a personal reflection. (We'll have one extra-credit opportunity: attend a public literary reading and write a reflection.)

The table to the right shows how our assignments are weighed; the table on the next page shows how I'll determine your final grade. All your scores will be available on our Blackboard site. I'll strive to be transparent in my grading policies. If you have questions, please ask me.

Assignment	Point value	Percentage of final grade
Reading responses (8)	64 points	~21%
Pathway freewrites (10)	80 points	~27%
Workshop participation	96 points	32%
Final portfolio	60 points	20%
Public reading reflection (ex. cred.)	(15 points)	(5%)
Total	300 points	100%

Late projects submitted within one week of the due date will be penalized at least one full letter grade (10% of the assignment point total); those submitted within two weeks will be penalized at least two letter grades (20% of the assignment point total); and so on. It's your responsibility to know and honor all deadlines. I'm willing to grant extensions if you notify me of your circumstances before the deadline. You can work ahead on the reading responses and pathway freewrites, but please don't get more than a week

or two ahead of the course schedule; doing so might put needless pressure on your classmates and prevent you from collaborating in our forums.

Citizenship, & Participation

By nature, writers are sensitive, temperamental and vulnerable. Please treat each other's work with respect and compassion. Be patient, generous and open-minded. You can be an accountable literary citizen in this online course by giving your full attention to the work (e.g., not multi-tasking while reading, or merely skimming your classmates' writing) and by addressing your classmates with tact and clarity (e.g., editing your feedback before posting it).

A	94 – 100%	≥ 281 points
A-	90 – 93%	270 – 280
B+	87 – 89%	261 – 269
B	84 – 86%	252 – 260
B-	80 – 83%	240 – 251
C+	77 – 79%	231 – 239
C	74 – 76%	222 – 230
C-	70 – 73%	210 – 221
D+	67 – 69%	201 – 209
D	60 – 66%	180 – 200
F	59% and below	≤ 179 points

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. Anyway, it doesn't really make sense to plagiarize in creative writing, where we learn through the process of writing and revising, trying and trying again.

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

Our semester is organized into three units: poetry, nonfiction and fiction. We'll have roughly four weeks for each, with some extra time to discuss revision and the literary life. All assignments will be due on either Tuesday or Friday, as indicated in the far-right column. I'll notify you of any revisions to the schedule on our Blackboard site.

Week	Dates	Topics / Learning Activities	Readings	Assignments
1	TBA	introductions & expectations genre	“Serious Daring...” (3–16) “Superman and Me” (279–81) “Ode to My Father” (368–71) “The Changeling” (307)	Pathway #1: What Makes You “You”? (F)
2	TBA	sensory description	“Destination: Poetry” (17–19) “Imagery and Fig. Language” (21–40) “America” (385–86) “At the Grave of...” (402–04) “Las Papas” (466–70)	Pathway #2: Poetry Practice (T) Reading Response #1 (F)
3	TBA	language & rhythm	“Sound & Rhythm” (41–56) “The Golden Shovel” (383–84) “To a Penny Postcard ©1911” (419) “Spell for a Traveler” (444) “Apollo (at) Eleven” (509)	Pathway #3: Rhythm & Repetition (T) Reading Response #2 (F)
4	TBA	verse & meter poetic forms	“Form” (57–74) “The Children’s Concert” (291) “The Out-of-Body Experience” (344–45) “The Orange Cat” (471) “Four Sonnets about Food” (520–21)	Pathway #4: More Poetry Practice (T) Reading Response #3 (F)
5	TBA	poetry workshop critical reading workshop etiquette	“Reading as a Writer” (215–31) “After Brainstorming” (233–46) “On Not Bringing...” (293–95)	Workshop #1: Poetry (T / F)
6	TBA	elements of storytelling truth & fiction	“Destination: Creative NF” (75–77) “Memory” (79–93) “No Wonder They Call...” (387–90) “The Drama Bug” (502–08)	Pathway #5: Self Analysis (T) Reading Response #4 (F)

This schedule reflects a 15-week section of ENGL F270X. I'll adapt it later for our six-week course.

7	TBA	flash nonfiction workshop forms of nonfiction	“Research” (95–107) “Total Eclipse” (325–35) groupmates’ flash pieces	<i>Pathway #6: True Stories (T)</i> <i>Mini-wkshp #1: flash nonfiction (T / F)</i>
8	TBA	techniques of scene & setting plausibility in narrative	“Saint Marie” (346–56) “Son of Mr. Green Jeans” (430–35) “Pirate’s Admonition” (532)	<i>Pathway #7: Midterm Reflection (T)</i> <i>Reading Response #5 (F)</i>
9	TBA	nonfiction workshop	“Destination: Fiction” (108–10) “Description and Setting” (111–23) “Letter to a Young Lady in Paris” (308–14) “Letter from Venice” (393–401) groupmates’ NF pieces	<i>Workshop #2: Nonfiction (T / F)</i>
10	TBA	characterization	“Character” (125–39) “Night Visits” (357–63) “Son” (405–13)	<i>Pathway #8: Place & Space (T)</i> <i>Reading Response #6 (F)</i>
11	TBA	plot & conflict flash fiction workshop	“Plot” (141–57) “Hiding” (420–29) “How to Tell a True War Story” (447–57) groupmates’ flash pieces	<i>Pathway #9: Plot Points (T)</i> <i>Mini-wkshp #2: flash fiction (T / F)</i>
12	TBA	voice & style	“Point of View and Voice” (159–74) “Edison, New Jersey” (315–24) “Out of the Woods” (458–65)	<i>Pathway #10: Says Who? (T)</i> <i>Reading Response #7 (F)</i> <i>Public reading reflection due; extra cred. (F)</i>

13	TBA	scene & dramatization fiction workshop	“Action & Dialogue” (177–93) “Phoning It In” (414–18) “Men’s Intuition” (438–43) “Critical Care” (522–27) groupmates’ short stories	<i>Workshop #3: Fiction (T / F)</i>
14	TBA	next steps	“Literary vs. Genre Debate” (247–59) “The Writing Life” (261–72) “Peril” (436–37) “Your Feet” (446)	<i>Reading Response #8 (F)</i>
15	TBA		“Connie May is Going to Win...” (364–67)	
Finals Week		Final portfolio due Wednesday, June 1 at 11:59 p.m.		