

## Course Syllabus

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## Course Information

### Course Description

Creative Writing is a special Internet-based course designed to help you explore the art of writing stories, either stories that are fictional or stories based on real experiences. You will be required to complete six fiction-writing exercises. You will write a complete short story. In addition you will complete work aimed specifically at each competence for which you have enrolled. Last, you will write a Final Essay in which you reflect on your learning and experience in the course. Throughout all of this activity, you will be expected to share your own efforts, and read and comment on the work of others in the class. The writing we do in this course is public writing and requires an audience. You will become that audience for each other.

Unlike other college writing courses, there are no class meetings. During this course, you and the instructor will use Internet tools like e-mail, Google Docs and the online discussion forum to exchange assignments, work collaboratively, have class "discussions" and conduct workshop sessions sharing and critiquing the work produced in the course. In this environment it is especially critical that you actively seek answers to your questions.

### Course Learning Goals

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Differentiate between narrative and exposition (telling and showing)
- Apply the fundamentals of fiction writing- including elements of plot, character and setting to the development of a story
- Exercise the options involved in selecting a narrative point of view
- Apply narrative techniques to shape and create a story that is either wholly fictional, comes from your own life, or derives from the experiences of others
- Work to revise, rewrite, edit, and proofread your own work and help others with this crucial process
- Participate in online discussions and other forms of sharing the work generated by members of the class
- Explore those resources of the World Wide Web that are of interest to creative writers

- Reflect on your experience and production in the course and assess your own learning.

## Course Competencies

This course presents you with the option of working on one or two of the following competences related to our central creative writing activity.

Competence	Competence Statement and Criteria
A2A	Can create an original work of art, explore its relationship to artistic form and reflect on the creative process
A1C	Can analyze artistic or textual works in terms of form, content and style
A5	Can define and analyze a creative process

If you choose A1C, then you should be especially active in the workshop sessions of our course, providing analysis, comments, and guidance to your peers.

If you choose A5, then you will be doing some research and reading on the topic of "creativity."

Everyone will be involved in creating "an original work of art" (A2A) to some extent. More precise guidelines for your individual work will be developed in the Course Q & A course discussions and in email consultation with the instructor.

## Course Resources

To buy your books, go to <http://www.mbsdirect.net> . Type "DePaul" for name of the school.

[Click here for help buying your books](#)

### Required Text:

Bernays, Anne and Pamela Painter. *What If?* 3rd ed. New York: Harper Collins College Publishers, 2009.

### Recommended reading (not required):

Minot, Stephen. *Three Genres*. 7th ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2003.

Ruszkiewicz, et. al. *SF Writer*. 2nd ed. New York: Longman, 2002.  
(or – other Handbook of English.)

## Course Grading Scale

### 920-1020 Possible Points

Grades will be based on the following percentages.

- A = 100-90%
- B = 80-89%

- C = 70-79%
- D = 60-69%
- F = 0-59%

Please note: Grades lower than a C- do not earn credit or competence in the School for New Learning.

## Course Structure

This course consists of ten modules. Each module contains a Discussion topic. During these discussions, you will have the opportunity to exchange ideas with your virtual classmates about work in-progress. There is a Final Essay at the end of the course (Module #10). The criteria used to obtain a letter grade are described in the Course Grading Criteria section found below. You can check your grade at any time online or by e-mailing the instructor.

To see course due dates, click on the Checklist link on the top navigation bar. This page contains module-specific checklists and due dates for the work due in the course.

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## Assessment

### Course Grading Criteria

#### Module #1 - 30 points total

Unit #1 – Assignment: using the Discussion Forum = 20 points

- Find the Discussion Forum and leave a posting (3 to 5 paragraphs) there introducing yourself to the class

Unit #2 –Assignment: Using Google Docs = 10 points

- Find Google Docs
- Log in
- Leave comments on the document posted there.

#### Module #2 – Exercises One and Two - 130 points total (50 for each exercise and 15 for each discussion)

For each exercise:

- Complete the exercise
- Post is to the appropriate discussion forum
- Read and comment on the work of three or more classmates.

Bringing Abstract Ideas to Life (due Tuesday)

Person, Place, & Song (due Thursday)

#### Module #3 – Exercises Three and Four - 130 points total (50 for each exercise and 15 for each discussion)

For each exercise

- Complete the exercise
- Post it to the appropriate discussion forum
- Read and comment on the work of three or more classmates.

Oh! That Sort of Person (due Tuesday)

Creating a Character's Background (due Thursday)

**Module #4 – Exercises Five and Six - 130 points total (50 for each exercise and 15 for each discussion)**

For each exercise

- Complete the exercise
- Post it to the appropriate discussion forum
- Read and comment on the work of three or more classmates.

From Situation to Plot (due Tuesday)

Verbal Dance (due Thursday)

**Module #5 – Begin A Major Work of Fiction (a short story of 2000 to 6000 words)**

By week's end (Friday) submit some evidence of progress on your story to the instructor. This can be a detailed outline for the story, and abstract (statement summarizing the story, naming characters, and presenting major themes), or a collection of sample pages (parts of a first draft - along with an explanation of what is intended for the rest). **(50 points for acceptable evidence, submitted on time).**

**Module #6 – Full first draft of the Major Work is due on Friday**

This draft should be a complete early version of the story, suitable for your peers to read and comment on. An appropriate length is 2000 to 6000 words. The spelling and grammar should be in good order (we are not proofreaders!). **(50 points for an acceptable draft that is submitted on time).**

**Module #7 – Begin work in your group on preparing a demonstration of Competence (100 points for competence you are taking.)**

Begin reviewing the stories of your classmates on Google Docs. **Your comments to others over Module Seven and Eight are worth a total of 100 points.**

Select an exercise to do for one of your competences. Do the reading and prepare a paper to submit for discussion.

Go to Google Docs and read the stories posted there. Give the authors comments that will help them revise. Be as specific as you can. You may highlight the document and embed comments in it or put comments in the margins. Do not delete text. The goal of your review is to help the author make decisions about how to revise the story so as to improve it. Look for stories with few comments to start so that everyone gets about the same amount of feedback.

**Module #8 - Begin work in your group on preparing a demonstration of Competence (100 points for competence you are taking.)**

This second week is for those taking two competences. Continue reviewing the stories of your classmates on Google Docs. Your comments to others over Module Seven and

Eight are worth a total of 100 points.

If you are registered for two competences, select an exercise to do for the second one. Do the reading and prepare a paper to submit for discussion. Revise the paper submitted last week for the first competence and turn it in.

Go to Google Docs and read the stories posted there. Give the authors comments that will help them revise. Be as specific as you can. You may highlight the document and embed comments in it or put comments in the margins. Do not delete text. The goal of your review is to help the author make decisions about how to revise the story so as to improve it. Look for stories with few comments to start so that everyone gets about the same amount of feedback.

**Module #9 – Thoroughly revise your story based on the comments you have been given and your own thinking. The revision is due on Friday. Spelling and grammar should also be in good order. Hint: do a Google search on the phrase "revision process creative writing." (100 points for an acceptable revision turned in on time).**

If you did a second competence exercise, revise it and turn it in this week.

### **Module #10 – Final Reflective Essay – 100 points total**

An Essay Reflecting on your learning in the course = **100 points**

- The Final Essay asks you to think about the course and the various things which you have learned and created, including your participation in discussion. This is an exercise in thinking about what you have learned and how, and that's called metacognition, thinking about thinking. The assignment asks you to assess the big picture and to use specific experiences and assignments as detail and example in your essay.

### **Grading Policies and Practices**

To complete the course, you must complete each of the assignments as described and submit them to your instructor by the assigned deadline. In addition, you must participate in the course discussion forums, respond to all instructor requests and interact with fellow classmates.

Points are deducted for late work.

### **General Assessment Criteria for All Writing Assignments**

All writing assignments are expected to conform to basic college-level standards of mechanics and presentation.

Consider visiting the Writing Center to discuss your assignments for this course or any others. You may schedule appointments (30 or 50 minutes) on an as-needed or weekly basis, scheduling up to 3 hours worth of appointments per week. Online services include Feedback-by-Email and IM conferencing (with or without a webcam). All writing center services are free.

Writing Center tutors are specially selected and trained graduate and undergraduate students who can help you at almost any stage of your writing. They will not do your work for you, but they can help you focus and develop your ideas, review your drafts, and polish your writing. They can answer questions about grammar, mechanics, different kinds of writing styles, and documentation formats. They also can answer questions and provide feedback online, through IM/webcam chats and email.

Obviously, the tutors won't necessarily be familiar with every class or subject, but they

are able to provide valuable help from the perspective of an interested and careful reader as well as a serious and experienced student-writer.

Schedule your appointments with enough time to think about and use the feedback you'll receive. To schedule a Face-to-Face, Written Feedback by Email, or Online Appointment, visit [www.depaul.edu/writing](http://www.depaul.edu/writing).

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## Discussion Forums

Discussion Forums are an important component of your online experience. This course contains discussion forums related to the topics you are studying each week. For requirements on your participation in the Discussion Forums, please see "Course Expectations" in the syllabus.

A Course Q & A discussion forum has also been established to manage necessary, ongoing social and administrative activities. This is where the management and administrative tasks of the course are conducted, and where you can ask 'process' questions and receive answers throughout the course. Please feel free to answer any question if you feel you know the answer; this sharing of information is valuable to other students.

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## Policies

### Academic Integrity

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas.

Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit <http://sr.depaul.edu/catalog/catalogfiles/Current/Undergraduate%20Student%20Handbook/index.html> for further details.

### Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is a major form of academic dishonesty involving the presentation of the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following:

- The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's.
- Copying of any source in whole or part with only minor changes in wording or syntax, even with acknowledgement.
- Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab

report or other assignment that has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency.

- Resubmitting one's own previous work from a different course or college, without permission from the current instructor.
- The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgement.

Plagiarism, like other forms of academic dishonesty, is always a serious matter. If a instructor finds that a student has plagiarized, the appropriate penalty is at the instructor's discretion.

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### **For Students Who Need Accommodations Based on the Impact of a Disability**

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussion will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most reasonable accommodation based on your needs, contact your instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week or two of the course). Please be sure to contact the following office for support and additional services:

Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD)  
#370, Student Center, LPC, 773.325.1677

### **Description of Pass/Fail Grading Options**

Students have the option of taking all SNL undergraduate courses as Pass/Fail even if a class is initially structured for a letter grade assessment. In these cases a Pass is awarded when competence is demonstrated at a level that would otherwise earn a grade of C- or higher.

In deciding to select Pass/Fail grading students should be aware that competencies assessed in a course as Pass will earn credit hours toward degree completion but *will not* be included in computing grade point averages. Attempted competence demonstration assessed within a class as Fail will not only be recorded as credit hours attempted but *will* also be included in computing a student's grade point average.

For SNL students, competencies awarded for Independent Learning Pursuits and in the Lifelong Learning Domain do not count toward the university's specification that only twenty credit hours may be earned through the Pass/Fail assessment option.

**Please note:** *There are four SNL courses within the BA curriculum that are always assessed on a Pass/Fail basis: Learning Assessment Seminar (course number LL 102; competence L-1), Foundations of Adult Learning (course number LL 250; competences L-2 and L-3), Advanced Project (course number FA 303; competences F-11 and F-12) and Summit Seminar (course number LL 390; competence L-12). These classes may not be taken for a letter grade assessment. Therefore, work that might otherwise be assessed at grades A through C- will earn a Pass in these classes.*

*There are an additional four SNL courses within the Lifelong Learning Area of the BA curriculum for which instructors regularly use a Pass/Fail grading system which may, instead, be taken for a letter grade assessment if this is a student's preference. These classes are: Academic Writing for Adults (course number LL 150; competence L-4), Critical Thinking (course number LL 155; competence L-5), Research Seminar (course number LL 300; competences L-8 and L-9) and Externship (course number LL 302; competences L-10 and L-11). In addition, SNL's undergraduate Writing Workshop*

*(course number LL 140; competence H-3-J) regularly uses Pass/Fail although students may request a letter grade assessment. In these instances SNL offers undergraduate students the opportunity to request a letter grade assessment from their instructor. Students who need a letter grade for tuition reimbursement may wish to consider this option, as well as those who wish to raise their GPA. Students planning to attend graduate school may also prefer letter grades to Pass/Fail assessments.*

If a student wishes to switch the method of assessment, either to or from the Pass/Fail option, this must be requested from the instructor in writing during the first two weeks of the quarter. The assessment style may not be changed after this period, with no exceptions.

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## **Protection of Human Subjects**

For more information see: <http://research.depaul.edu/>

Demonstrating the acquisition of competencies in this course can involve "interactions"—interviewing and or observing other people—discussing those interviews or observations with other class members and writing them up in one or more final report(s). As such, these activities qualify as "research" with "human subjects" and are subject to University and Federal guidelines. Because it takes place in the context of this course, your research is exempt from approval by the School for New Learning's Local Review Board only under the following conditions:

- The information you collect is EXCLUSIVELY for the purpose of classroom discussion and will NOT be used after the term is over. If there is any possibility that you will EVER use it in further research or for publication, you must obtain approval from the Local Review Board before you begin.
- You assess and ensure that no "harm"—physical, mental, or social—does or could result from either your interviews and/or observations or your discussion and/or reports.
- The privacy and confidentiality of those that you interview or observe must be protected. Unless you receive specific permission, in writing, from the person(s) you interview or observe, please change their names, and make sure that their identity cannot be readily ascertained from the information you provide.
- If you want to use real names and relationships, they must sign an "informed consent" document. For information on creating an "informed consent document" see, for example, <http://www.research.umn.edu/consent>

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## **Course Expectations**

### **Time Management and Attendance**

SNL's online courses are not self-paced and require a regular time commitment EACH week throughout the quarter.

You are required to log in to your course at least four times a week so that you can participate in the ongoing course discussions.

Online courses are no less time consuming than "face to face" courses. You will have to dedicate some time every day or at least every second day to your studies. A typical four credit hour "face to face" course at SNL involves three hours of classroom meeting

per week, plus at least three to six hours of study and homework per week.

This course will require at least the same time commitment, but your learning activities will be spread out through the week. If you have any problems with your technology, or if you need to improve your reading or writing skills, it may take even longer.

The instructor should be notified if your life events do not allow you to participate in the course and the online discussions for more than one week. This is particularly important when there are group discussions or you are working as part of a team.

If you find yourself getting behind, please contact the instructor immediately.

### **Your Instructor's Role**

Your instructor's role in this course is that of a discussion facilitator and learning advisor. It is not his/her responsibility to make sure you log in regularly and submit your assignments. As instructor, s/he will read all postings to the general discussion forums on a daily basis but may not choose to respond to each posting. You will receive feedback to assignments.

The instructor may choose to designate "office hours" when s/he will be online and available and will immediately respond to questions. Depending on the instructor, this response may be by e-mail, instant messenger or telephone. Otherwise, you will generally receive a response to emailed or posted queries within 48 hours.

### **Your Role as a Student**

As an online student, you will be taking a proactive approach to your learning. As the course instructor's role is that of a learning guide, your role is that of the leader in your own learning.

You will be managing your own time so that you can complete the readings, activities and assignments for the course, and you will also be expected to take a more active role in peer learning.

### **Credits**

This course was designed and produced by Thomas H. Sullivan and staff at SNL Online of the School for New Learning of DePaul University.

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