

ENG573.001: Graduate Creative Writing
Web-enhanced Course
W 6:00 p.m.-8:45 p.m.
University Center 231
Spring Semester (2016)
Texas A&M University-Texarkana
903-223-3022
brian.billings@tamut.edu

Dr. Brian C. Billings
University Center 222
1:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m. (MW)
(and by appointment)

TEXTS

Butler, Robert Olen. *From Where You Dream: The Process of Writing Fiction*. New York: Grove, 2005. Print.
(978-0802142573)

Cole, Tony, ed. *Playwrights on Playwriting: From Ibsen to Ionesco*. New York: First Cooper Square, 2001. Print.
(978-0815411413)

Dobyns, Stephen. *Best Words, Best Order: Essays on Poetry*. 2nd ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. Print.
(978-1403961471)

Fiske, Robert, and Laura Cherry, eds. *Poem, Revised: Fifty-four Poems, Revisions, Discussions*. Portland: Marion Street, 2008. Print.
(978-1933338255)

Fry, Stephen. *The Ode Less Travelled: Unlocking the Poet Within*. New York: Penguin, 2006. Print.
(978-1592403110)

Gardner, John. *The Art of Fiction: Notes on Craft for Young Writers*. New York: Vintage, 1985. Print.
(978-0679734031)

Hatcher, Jeffrey. *The Art and Craft of Playwriting*. Cincinnati: Story, 1996. Print.
(978-1884910067)

Hirshfield, Jane. *Nine Gates: Entering the Mind of Poetry*. New York: Harper, 1998. Print.
(978-0060929480)

McNally, John. *Vivid and Continuous: Essays and Exercises for Writing Fiction*. Iowa City: U of I P, 2013. Print.
(978-1609381561)

Spencer, Stuart. *The Playwright's Guidebook: An Insightful Primer on the Art of Dramatic Writing*. London: Faber and Faber, 2002. Print.
(978-0571199914)

Wood, James. *How Fiction Works*. New York: Picador, 2008. Print.
(978-0312428471)

Wright, Michael. *Playwriting in Process: Thinking and Working Theatrically*. 2nd ed. Newburyport, MA: Focus, 2009. Print.
(978-1585103409)

DESCRIPTION

This course promotes the development of creative-writing skills by introducing advanced concepts and exercises for writing creative nonfiction, poems, plays, and short stories.

OBJECTIVES

- 1) Discuss representative texts as literary works and productions of craft.
- 2) Examine advanced principles of creative-writing methodology.
- 3) Write and revise essays, poems, scripts, and short stories.
- 4) Read polished works before an audience in a festival setting.

STUDENT-LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 1) Develop a deeper understanding of craft concerns by participating in twelve critique sessions (online workshops) and collectively earning *five hundred and four of a possible seven hundred and twenty points*.
- 2) Analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information about assigned texts by completing twelve text analyses and collectively earning *five hundred and four of a possible seven hundred and twenty points*.
- 3) Analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information about creative-writing methodology by completing fifteen in-class exercises and collectively earning *five hundred and twenty-five of a possible seven hundred and fifty points*.

- 4) Analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information about craft methodology by completing three genre projects (including at least three revisions per genre) and collectively earning *six hundred and thirty of a possible nine hundred points*.
- 5) Demonstrate an understanding of authorial professionalism and craft concerns by presenting a reading of completed work (including a preparation log) and earning *four hundred and ninety of a possible seven hundred points*.

PROJECTS

- 1) Critique Sessions: Participate in twelve online critique sessions (including discussing original work and assigned readings in specific forums). Each participant must respond to each class member and use no fewer than *one thousand and five hundred words* for the responses as a whole. A student will earn extra credit for a critique session by posting extra comments. Collectively, critique sessions are worth *seven hundred and twenty points*.
- 2) Genre Projects: At the conclusion of each unit, choose one work (a batch of three poems, a script, or a story) from the completed unit's exercises to revise at least three times. Submit each genre project (including revisions) to *Turnitin.com* by the appropriate due date. Collectively, genre projects are worth *nine hundred points*.
- 3) Reading: Choose the *two* best revised works from the writings produced during the term and present those works during a public reading. Cut the works so that reading a work aloud requires no more than ten minutes. Remember to rehearse. Before the reading, submit a preparation log to the instructor that includes narrator or speaker analyses (one for each narrator or speaker at two hundred and fifty words apiece), a content analysis (one for each piece at two hundred and fifty words apiece), a statement of authorial vision (no longer than two hundred and fifty words), and a discussion of the challenges encountered and overcome during the writing process (no longer than two hundred and fifty words). This performance is worth *seven hundred points*.
- 4) Short Exercises: Complete fifteen craft-oriented exercises provided by the instructor. Students will complete and discuss these exercises during the face-to-face sessions. Exercises will always involve the examination of representative texts that the instructor will provide *only during class time*, so students *must* attend the face-to-face sessions. Collectively, these exercises are worth *six hundred and fifty points*.

5) Text Analyses: Write text analyses (*no fewer than five hundred words in length*) for all of the assigned readings. Discuss what is effective or ineffective about a particular text. Use the online forums to investigate a text with peers before writing a response. A text analysis may use first-person point of view and a relaxed style, but do not allow grammar and mechanics to become sloppy. Refer to specific moments from the selected text to support points. Collectively, text analyses are worth *seven hundred and twenty points*.

REQUIREMENTS

This course requires numerous readings, fifteen writing-intensive exercises, twelve text analyses, three genre projects, twelve online critique sessions, and a public reading of representative work developed during the semester.

SUBMISSIONS

This class is a Web-enhanced course. Students must be familiar with using *Blackboard* forums and submitting documents using *Turnitin.com*. Students who have difficulties using *Blackboard* or *Turnitin.com* should review the appropriate tutorials or submit technical questions to the IT help desk at helpdesk@tamut.edu. Submit each pertinent assignment to *Turnitin.com* by the appropriate due date printed on the syllabus. (The course's identification number is **11511836**, and the course's password is *craftconcern*.) **The instructor does not accept late work.**
Please discuss unavoidable submission conflicts with the instructor as soon as possible.

ATTENDANCE

A student should miss *no more than one class session* to maintain a passing grade. Dropping the course is the student's responsibility.

DROP DATES (SPRING 2016)

February 3, 2016 This day is the last day to drop without receiving a grade.
April 15, 2016 This day is the last day to drop with a *W*.

CELLULAR PHONES

Please deactivate cell phones or set them to vibrate during class sessions.

CONFERENCES

Students should contact the instructor using *Blackboard* e-mail for assignment clarification or immediate writing feedback. Face-to-face conferences are available during the instructor's office hours or by special appointment, and *Blackboard* Collaborate conferences are available by special appointment. Please arrange a date and a time for a face-to-face or *Blackboard* Collaborate conference by sending a request to the instructor using *Blackboard* e-mail.

UNIVERSITY DROP POLICY

To drop this course after the twelfth class day, a student must complete the *Drop or Withdrawal Request Form* located on the university's Web site (<http://tamut.edu/registrar/droppingwithdrawing-from-classes.html>) or obtained in the registrar's office. The student must submit the signed and completed form to the instructor of each course indicated on the form for his or her signature. *An obtained signature is not an approval to drop but confirmation that the student has discussed the drop or withdrawal with the faculty member.* The student must submit the completed form to the registrar's office for processing in person, by e-mail (registrar@tamut.edu), by mail (7101 University Avenue, Texarkana, Texas 75503) or by fax (903-223-3140). The registrar's office will not accept or process drop or withdrawal forms missing any required information. *Responsibility rests with the student to ensure that the registrar's office receives a properly completed form.* If a student stops participating in class (attending and submitting assignments) but does not complete and submit a drop or withdrawal form, that student will receive a final grade based upon whatever completed work exists.

DROP DATES (SPRING 2015)

February 3, 2016 This day is the last day to drop without receiving a grade.
April 15, 2016 This day is the last day to drop with a *W*.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students enrolled in this course should practice academic honesty. Cheating on examinations, unauthorized collaboration, falsification of research data, and plagiarism (the copying or undocumented use of materials from any source) constitute academic dishonesty and may be grounds for a grade of *F* in this course or disciplinary action. Each student is responsible for reading and understanding the University Policy on Academic Integrity (UPAI).

PLAGIARISM POLICY FOR DRAMA AND ENGLISH CLASSES

Any student who plagiarizes work in an A&M-Texarkana drama or English class will automatically fail that drama or English class.

ADA STATEMENT

Students with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations through the Texas A&M University-Texarkana Disability Services Office (UC255A) by calling 903-223-3062.

E-MAIL STATEMENT

After applying to and being accepted into a program by Texas A&M University-Texarkana, an individual will receive an A&M-Texarkana e-mail account. Instructors and university officials will deliver official university correspondence to this account. Each individual is responsible for information sent and received via his or her university e-mail account, and each individual must check his or her official A&M-Texarkana e-mail account completely and frequently. Faculty members and students must use their university e-mail accounts when communicating about coursework.

GRADING

Each assignment corresponds to a given point value. The instructor calculates grades by dividing a student's accumulated points by the number of points possible.

Points by Assignment

Critique Sessions (Twelve)	720	(sixty points apiece)
Genre Projects (Three)	900	(three hundred points apiece)
Reading	700	
Performance	400	
Preparation Log	300	
Short Exercises (Fifteen)	750	(fifty points apiece)
Text Analyses (Twelve)	720	(sixty points apiece)

Grade Computation (Example)

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points Earned</u>	<u>Points Possible</u>
Critique Sessions (Twelve)	600	720
Genre Projects (Three)	600	900
Reading	600	700
Short Exercises (Fifteen)	480	750
Text Analyses (Twelve)	400	720
Points in Total:	2680	3790

$$\text{Grade} = 2680/3790 = 70.71\% \sim 71\% = \text{C}$$

Scale for Grades

90%-99%	=	A
80%-89%	=	B
70%-79%	=	C
60%-69%	=	D
0%-50%	=	F

Tentative Schedule

- 01/20/16: Introduction
First Exercise (FTF)
- 01/27/16: *Nine Gates: Entering the Mind of Poetry*
Second Exercise (FTF)
First Critique Session (WEB) (*Blackboard*) (01/27/16-02/03/16)
First Text Analysis (WEB) (*Turnitin.com*) (01/29/16)
- 02/03/16: *Best Words, Best Order: Essays on Poetry*
Third Exercise (FTF)
Second Critique Session (WEB) (*Blackboard*) (02/03/16-02/10/16)
Second Text Analysis (WEB) (*Turnitin.com*) (02/05/16)
Last Day to Drop with No Grade
- 02/10/16: *The Ode Less Travelled: Unlocking the Poet Within*
Fourth Exercise (FTF)
Third Critique Session (WEB) (*Blackboard*) (02/10/16-02/17/16)
Third Text Analysis (WEB) (*Turnitin.com*) (02/12/16)
- 02/17/16: *Poem, Revised: Fifty-four Poems, Revisions, Discussions*
Fifth Exercise (FTF)
Fourth Critique Session (WEB) (*Blackboard*) (02/17/16-02/24/16)
Fourth Text Analysis (WEB) (*Turnitin.com*) (02/19/16)
First Genre Project (WEB) (*including three revisions*) (*Turnitin.com*) (02/21/16)
- 02/24/16: *The Art of Fiction: Notes on Craft for Young Writers*
Sixth Exercise (FTF)
Fifth Critique Session (WEB) (*Blackboard*) (02/24/16-03/02/16)
Fifth Text Analysis (WEB) (*Turnitin.com*) (02/26/16)
- 03/02/16: *From Where You Dream: The Process of Writing Fiction*
Seventh Exercise (FTF)
Sixth Critique Session (WEB) (*Blackboard*) (03/02/16-03/09/16)
Sixth Text Analysis (WEB) (*Turnitin.com*) (03/04/16)

- 03/09/16: *How Fiction Works*
(Midterm) Eighth Exercise (FTF)
Seventh Critique Session (WEB) (*Blackboard*) (03/09/16-03/23/16)
Seventh Text Analysis (WEB) (*Turnitin.com*) (03/11/16)
- 03/16/16: Spring Break
- 03/23/16: *Vivid and Continuous: Essays and Exercises for Writing Fiction*
Ninth Exercise (FTF)
Eighth Critique Session (WEB) (*Blackboard*) (03/23/16-03/30/16)
Eighth Text Analysis (WEB) (*Turnitin.com*) (03/25/16)
Second Genre Project (WEB) (*including three revisions*) (*Turnitin.com*)
(03/27/16)
- 03/30/16: *The Art and Craft of Playwriting*
Tenth Exercise (FTF)
Ninth Critique Session (WEB) (*Blackboard*) (03/30/16-04/06/16)
Ninth Text Analysis (WEB) (*Turnitin.com*) (04/01/16)
- 04/06/16: *The Playwright's Guidebook: An Insightful Primer
on the Art of Dramatic Writing*
Eleventh Exercise (FTF)
Tenth Critique Session (WEB) (*Blackboard*) (04/06/16-04/13/16)
Tenth Text Analysis (WEB) (*Turnitin.com*) (04/08/16)
- 04/13/16: *Playwriting in Process: Thinking and Working Theatrically*
Twelfth Exercise (FTF)
Eleventh Critique Session (WEB) (*Blackboard*) (04/13/16-04/20/16)
Eleventh Text Analysis (WEB) (*Turnitin.com*) (04/15/16)
- 04/15/16: Last Day to Drop with a W
- 04/20/16: *Playwrights on Playwriting: From Ibsen to Ionesco*
Thirteenth Exercise (FTF)
Twelfth Critique Session (WEB) (*Blackboard*) (04/20/16-04/27/16)
Twelfth Text Analysis (WEB) (*Turnitin.com*) (04/22/16)
Third Genre Project (WEB) (*including three revisions*) (*Turnitin.com*) (04/24/16)
- 04/27/16: Fourteenth Exercise (FTF)
Fifteenth Exercise (FTF)

05/04/16: Readings (Eagle Hall, 7:00 p.m.)
(*Final*) Preparation Log (WEB) (*Turnitin.com*)