



Creative Writing Syllabus 2014-2015

Mrs. Dodd

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Creative Writing is a personal, aesthetic, experiential writing course in which students first begin to discover their own artistic voice and progressively inspire their own writing after published works in several genres: poetry, creative non-fiction, short stories, and short plays. The true art of writing includes not only the process of journaling or generating, but also phases of reading, mentoring, experimenting/revising, and editing. All final pieces you will create for this class will reflect the process of writing. Our goal is to become a community of writers who experiment, craft, revise and tinker with our work. Writers see the world as text. The course is conducted as a workshop which provides a forum for discussion of published works as well as their own.

Remember: Write with passion and honesty. All we can ask for is honest effort and diligence in your work as a writer in this community. Make a commitment to your work and take pride in what you write. Do not worry about your creative skills at the beginning of the course; our classroom experiences will be dedicated to improvement no matter what your level today.

There will be two major components to this class: READING and WRITING. One of my largest goals is that you would become a better reader and a better writer. It takes **grit** to accomplish these tasks. I look forward to learning from you and with you, as we aim to improve our skills as readers and writers. It is going to be hard work, but your writing will improve through regular feedback and revision and your reading will improve through practice and exposure. **I can always find time to provide extra help when you need it this year;** we can discuss and read your writing together and think of strategies to help you. **Don't be shy; come see me for help.** We can plan for a time that works in your schedule, either before or after school, or even during your lunch. Bring dark chocolate.

We will be sharing ideas and drafts in writing we care about, which require trust and respect. I expect all students to respect each other. I will work diligently to create a community of learners and teach you how to support and encourage each other as developing readers and writers. I do not tolerate harassment of any kind in my classroom. Don't push me on this.

I expect all students to arrive on time to class with the materials needed. **During class I expect all of my students to work.** We are here to learn; it's an opportunity for all of us to improve by **working together and working hard.** My job is to show you how to read and think and write well; your job is to seize each opportunity.

Supplies:

Writer's notebook and folder, journal, writing utensil, flash drive, planner

Units:

- Pre-Writing Skills
- Poetry
- Creative Non-fiction OR Fiction Writing
- Film as Literature

Grading:

20% Workplace Skills and Attitudes (including workshop participation and overall effort)

15% Creative Writing Website Entries (weekly requirements on your website page)

25% Writing Assignments (both the process and final pieces)

40% Final Portfolio: Students will create a digital writing portfolio using original work from each unit, demonstrating their growth as creative writers and analyzes themselves as writers as the final for the semester.

Grading Scale

A	100-94	C+	79-77
A-	93-90	C	76-74
B+	89-87	C-	73-70
B	86-84	D+	69-67
B-	83-80	D	66
		F	65-0

Workplace Skills and Attitudes

As a member of the class you will be expected to participate in this course as if it were a professional work environment. The *Workplace Skills and Attitudes* grade will reflect your ability to act in a mature, cooperative, responsible, and respectful manner at all times. This grade will take into account:

Skills

- time management
- successfully communicating with both teachers and peers
- setting and completing tasks/semester goals
- asking for and offering assistance
- following directions
- listening to instructions, discussions and lessons
- making thinking visible by speaking up in class

Attitudes

- contributing to a positive classroom environment
- respect for classroom, building and peers
- staying open-minded to all opinions, thoughts and interpretations of classroom material
- willingness to express your own opinions, thoughts and interpretations
- authentic engagement in the learning process

A Word About Homework:

This class is not meant to add extra homework to your plate. With that being said, it is essential for you to be writing on a weekly basis by taking risks and exploring your ideas. You are required to create a post on your personal webpage at least once a week. This is the bare minimum. I am not going to put a time requirement on time spent on posts, but I expect you to be creative and express yourself in writing. This can take a many different forms, and you can include photos, video clips, gifs, song lyrics, quotes etc. You get the picture. My hopes is that you begin to form a habit that will stay with you for the rest of your life and that you would begin to write and express yourself creatively more and more. This is a place where there are no limitations. Be bold. Be creative. You are writing only for yourself. Think of this time as mining for your own gold. You will be surprised at how these posts will inspire ideas that you explore in our writing pieces.

I will assign you a webpage linked to our class website. If you would rather do your entries on paper that is fine, but you will need to purchase a journal or spiral notebook. All posts/entries need to be clearly dated and orderly. I will be checking your webpage/journal frequently to ensure you are keeping up with your required writings. As long as effort is put forth, this is an automatic A. Do not sell yourself short. Make no mistake; you will only get out as much as you put into this assignment.

Your webpage will also be where you create an electronic portfolio of your work at the end of each semester.

Workshop Participation:

- We discuss what the *text/writing* achieved or fell short on (not the author/writer)
- The author doesn't speak until the group is finished critiquing his/her text
- Be respectfully frank & specific (being too nice or too general/abstract is not useful)
- Critique with a text's potential next evolution in mind (avoid negativity)
- Silence is not a friendly gesture in a creative writing workshop – passivity will be taken as evidence of not having prepared for the discussion.

MY CREATIVE WRITING PHILOSOPHY

Beginning writers seem to want rules. We want someone of authority to say, "do this" or "do that" and everything will end up perfectly. But trust me; that is not what happens. Take all the council and advice you can get, but remember, finally, it is you alone in a room with a piece of blank paper staring at you. How then, can you know what advice to take and to whom to listen? That, too, is something you cannot be told. That is something every writer has to discover for himself. Sometimes writers are badly advised, they listen to that advice and are harmed. Yet, even then you are learning. Essentially what you are learning is who you are and how you are different from other writers. Cherish that difference, not in arrogance, but in humility and in gratitude that you are allowed such differences. For wouldn't it be awful if every talent was the same, if we all wrote alike?

Horton Foote, Pulitzer and Academy Award winner

**Please complete, detach, and return this portion of the syllabus to Mrs. Dodd by Friday, August 29th.

Mrs. Dodd
Creative Writing 2014-2015
Liberty Charter High School

We, the undersigned student and parent/guardian, have read and fully understand the expectations and requirements of this course. Further, we pledge to work closely with Mrs. Dodd and the LCHS community in the hopes of mastering the expectations of this course.

Student Name (PRINT): _____ Period: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Name (PRINT): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Phone Number: _____ Best time to be reached: _____

Parent/Guardian e-mail address (this allows me to easily update you on important due dates, progress, etc.): _____

