

Creative Writing Courses

ENGL 3329: Beginning Creative Writing: Fiction and Poetry

Requirement: ENGL 1304 or equivalent and 3 hours in 2000- or 3000-level literature.

Class Number: 13414 / MW 2:30pm-4:00pm

Dr. Alexander Parsons

Analysis and writing of fiction and poetry. Basic techniques and vocabulary in craft.

ENGL 3330: Beginning Creative Writing: Fiction

Requirement: ENGL 3329 – Beginning Creative Writing: Fiction & Poetry and 3 hours in 2000- or 3000-level literature

Class Number: W 2:30 pm – 5:30 pm

Professor Chitra Divakaruni

Text: Writing Fiction by Janet Burroway

In this course students will focus on learning what makes a good short story, and how to analyze short stories and write them. Class time will be spent in examining published work and discussing its strengths and weaknesses and using it as a model for student assignments; in analyzing student work (both short prompt-based assignments and complete short stories); and in studying craft vocabulary and techniques from our textbook.

ENGL 3330: Beginning Creative Writing: Fiction

Class Number: 12831 / TTH 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Instructor: Wanjiku Ngugi

In this course students will focus on learning what makes a good short story, and how to analyze short stories and write them. Class time will be spent in examining published work and discussing its strengths and weaknesses and using it as a model for student assignments; in analyzing student work (both short prompt-based assignments and complete short stories); and in studying craft vocabulary and techniques from our textbook.

ENGL 3331: Beginning Creative Writing: Poetry

Requirement: ENGL 3329 – Beginning Creative Writing: Fiction & Poetry and 3 hours in 2000- or 3000-level literature

Class Number: 21629 / MW 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm

Professor Tony Hoagland

ENGL 3332: Introduction to Creative Writing: Nonfiction

Requirement: ENGL 3329 – Beginning Creative Writing: Fiction & Poetry and 3 hours in 2000- or 3000-level literature

Class Number: 24258 / TTH 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Professor Pete Turchi

In this course students will read and write a variety of nonfiction, including but not limited to personal essays, profiles, essays about place, narrative essays, and perhaps even lyric essays. This is primarily a discussion class, though students will also respond to each other's drafts. There will be reading, writing, or—most likely—both due for every class meeting.

ENGL 3339: Student Literary Journal Practicum

Requirement: ENGL 1304- First Year Writing II

Class Number: 21630 / MW 2:30 pm-4:00pm

Dr. Audrey Colombe

Literary magazine publication is the primary focus of this course. Glass Mountain Magazine is an international undergraduate literary magazine published by undergraduates at UH during fall and spring semesters. Production and editing are the primary goal of this course, though activities related to running a literary magazine (websites, social media, a reading series, writing contests, fundraising, the Boldface Conference, community outreach, and organizational activities) comprise a significant workload. Practical/theoretical issues related to magazine production are investigated as each activity progresses. The work is collective (most of the activities require small group input and effort) and individual (each member of the course is responsible for applying his/her own talents and interests). Students discuss assigned tasks, engage in editing activities, develop processes for completing stages of production, organize events, and develop communication strategies—as extensions of the central project, running a literary magazine. Effective interpersonal communication is a necessary element. Steady attendance at work sessions is required, along with extensive, separate preparation for in-class group activities and outside events. Discussion, investigation, and revision are constant. The course concludes with each student composing a reflective essay, a detailed observation of the successful activities and the gaps, with suggestions/reminders for future practicum actions.

ENGL 4350: Short Story Writing

Requirement: Admission to the Creative Writing Concentration and 3 hours in 3000-/or 4000-level literature courses in fiction. ENGL 4355 recommended prior to this course.

Class Number: 17213 / TTH 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm

Professor Mat Johnson**ENGL 4351: Poetry Writing**

Requirement: Admission to the Creative Writing Concentration and 3 hours in 3000-/or 4000-level literature courses in fiction. ENGL 4356 recommended prior to this course.

Class Number: 19224 / TTH 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Dr. Martha Serpas

Break-up poems. Death poems. Despair poems. Angry political poems. Sure. But have you written poems of everyday joy? Exuberance? Hilarity? Relief? Ecstatic sex maybe, but what about all those other emotions?

Our focus will be generating new work for that upcoming senior thesis, graduate school

application, or Glass Mountain submission. We will read contemporary poets who excel at including us in the emotional moment: Kenyon, Milosz, Amichai, Clifton, Cole, Olds, Stern, Ostriker, etc., and also encourage and critique each other's poems in a conventional workshop. The semester culminates in final portfolios of original work, including a short reflective statement. Students must have taken a 3000 or 4000-level literature (poetry) class to be admitted.

ENGL 4353: Senior Writing Project: Fiction

Requirement: ENGL 4355 – Fiction Forms

Class Number: 19229 / MW 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm

Professor Giuseppe Taurino

The poet W. H. Auden once called poetry “the clear expression of mixed feelings.” What motivates fiction, literary nonfiction, screenwriting, playwriting and poetry is not a thesis or some logical utterance; instead, creative writing enacts the problem that it cannot explain. It operates from a writer's attempt at recognition, as she tries to voice some severe utterance outside of herself—so that she may more deeply comprehend herself. Perhaps the better (though longer) explanation of this phenomenon comes from Robert Frost's “Education by Poetry,” where he writes:

Every time a poem is written, every time a short story is written, it is written not by cunning, but by belief. The beauty, the something, the little charm of the thing to be, is more felt than known. There is a common jest, one that always annoys me, on the writers, that they write the last end first, and then work up to it; that they lay a train toward one sentence that they think is pretty nice and have all fixed up to set like a trap to close with. No, it should not be that way at all. No one who has ever come close to the arts has failed to see the difference between things written that way, with cunning and device, and the kind that are believed into existence, that begin in something more felt than known.

In this course, we're going to work towards believing things into existence. We're going to create new worlds out of our memories, imagination, and language. We're going to create real people with the power to desire and think for themselves, the power to perform actions we may not have anticipated when we first created them. We're going to strive to make these settings, characters, and plots so credible and engaging that we and others would prefer to spend our time exploring them than do just about anything else in the world.

Towards these ends, students will be asked to think of writing as a process. You will be asked to write extensively, and learn to “read as a writer,” analyzing the use of various craft elements by published writers, your classmates, and yourself.

ENGL 4354: Senior Writing Project: Poetry

Requirement: ENGL 4355 – Fiction Forms

Class Number: 24312 / MW 1:00 pm-2:30 pm

Dr. Roberto Tejada

What is the connection between visual art and contemporary poetry? For the Senior Writing Project we will visit museums and galleries in the city, including the Museum of Fine Arts Houston (MFAH), Contemporary Art Museum Houston (CAMH), Diverseworks, and Project Row Houses, among others. We will look at the performance of literary styles and mixed genres on wide-ranging topics motivated by artworks, and so link the lyric voice to “exhibits” or displays of a self in the sensorium. By means of serial poems, lyrical sketches, painterly triptychs, audiovisual translations, and vocal dioramas, the aim is to make curiosity a method in the dream life of art.

ENGL 4355: Fiction Forms

Requirement: Admission to the Creative Writing Concentration and 3 hours in 3000-/or 4000-level literature courses in fiction.

Class Number: 19425 / TTH 2:30 pm – 4:00 pm

Professor Mat Johnson