



ENGLISH 223

Creative Writing: Fiction, Poetry, and Nonfiction Workshop



Image Credit: detail from *Still Life on Corner of a Mantelpiece* by Vanessa Bell

Course Description

English 223, Mixed Genre Creative Writing, is an introductory course to creative writing, with an emphasis on reading, writing, discussing, and revising both poetry and prose.

In our class, we'll start by reading selections from *Night at the Fiestas* by Kirstin Valdez Quade to discuss fiction. We'll pair our readings of this collection of short stories with provided craft readings and stories by other authors to help analyze individual elements of fiction. Every day in class, we'll also experiment with in-class writing prompts. These prompts will help you work towards submitting a story by the end of the fiction unit. We'll then complete the same process for poetry, using *Bright Dead Things* by Ada Limón, and nonfiction, using *World of Wonders* by Aimee Nezhukumatathil. At the end of each unit, we'll hold workshops to aid you in the revision process for your own submissions and to help us form an effective vocabulary and community for discussing creative writing.

While you work on your Final Portfolio, which will require full revisions of your workshop submissions and annotations on that revision process, we'll discuss how dialogue can create character, rhythm, and conflict by examining provided excerpts of the movie *The Social Network* and the play *Oleanna* by David Mamet. Finally, to discuss the importance of revision, we'll analyze a close read of Elizabeth Bishop's "One Art" before studying various drafts of the poem.

Quick Information

ENG 223 - H002, Spring 2023

Tu/Th 9:30-10:45 in LAB 102

Dr. Rachael Fowler

Rachael.Fowler@usm.edu

Office: LAB 338A

Office Hours: Wed. 10:00-3:00
and also by appointment

Communication The easiest way to contact me is by email. I will do my best to answer within 48 hours on weekdays, but may take longer to reply over the weekend. While you are free to email any day at any time, I also reserve the right to not answer emails after 5:00 pm. To talk in person, my office hours are on Wednesdays from 10:00-3:00 in LAB 338A. If this time doesn't work for you, let me know. We can always schedule an alternative time to meet.

Required Materials

Night at the Fiestas by Kirstin Valdez Quade

Bright Dead Things by Ada Limón

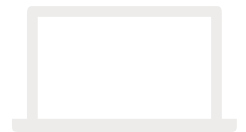
World of Wonders: In Praise of Fireflies, Whale Sharks, and Other Astonishments by Aimee Nezhukumatathil

A **Notebook in Class** to complete in-class writing prompts and take notes on discussions, readings, and workshops for your Final Portfolio

Consistent Laptop/Computer Access to find required readings, type and revise your workshop submissions, and submit all work on Canvas

Online Access To access the online components of this course you must first go to <https://usm.instructure.com/login/canvas>, then follow the log-in instructions. You will need to have your EMPLID and password (the same information you use to access SOAR and register for classes). If you have any questions or run into difficulty accessing the Canvas material for this course, please call the iTech Help Desk at 601-266-4357 or helpdesk@usm.edu. You can also get specific instructions on how to use components of Canvas by visiting www.usm.edu/lec.

Student Learning Outcomes Students will develop a mixed-genre portfolio of creative work by examining published works as models. In addition, students will consider and utilize techniques from craft-based texts and be able to explain reasoning behind employing those techniques in their own works. The class will also explore the importance of a creative community through multiple in-class workshops requiring peer-to-peer feedback. Finally, students will practice, explain, and reflect on revision as a crucial part of creative writing.



Attendance (25%)

To create a collaborative space, we depend on each other to show up prepared and ready to participate. To be counted present, you must be on time to class, be prepared, actively participate, not be distracted by technology or others, and stay the whole class period. Your attendance grade for each class period will be available on Canvas. I will keep in mind that everyone has a different comfort level with types of participation, but if your participation is lacking overall, that will be reflected in your attendance grade. If you're ever unsure about or unhappy with your attendance evaluation, I'm happy to talk one-on-one about ways to help you improve.

For each class period, you should be ready to discuss your homework reading, be ready to discuss provided craft readings and/or additional published works, and have your notebook to complete in-class writing prompts and take notes. On workshop days, you should be ready to discuss your peers' work with constructive feedback and be ready to receive feedback from your peers about your own work. At the end of the semester, you will use your notes from readings, class discussions, and workshops to complete your Final Portfolio annotations (see below).

Workshop Submissions (25%)

At the end of each of our units, you will submit a piece for workshop. These submissions will include a character-driven short story, a small collection of poems, and nonfiction mini-essays. We will complete frequent in-class writing prompts to help you generate work for these submissions. You will also receive prompts for your submissions at the start of each unit so that you have guidelines for what to write and how to present your work. Each of your submissions will receive peer feedback from in-class workshops and instructor feedback on Canvas.

Workshops (25%)

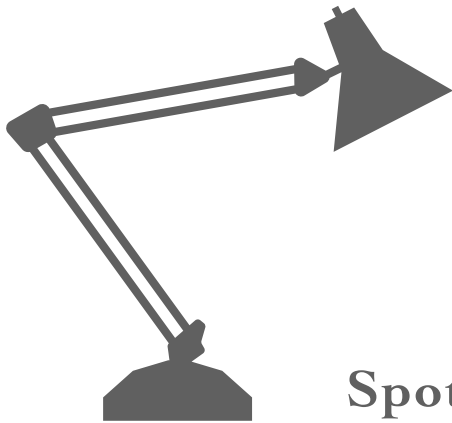
At the end of each unit, we'll hold workshops. In these workshops, we will read each others' creative work, discuss the strengths of the writing, and brainstorm paths for how to strengthen the work even more. These workshops will be guided with information for what to look for in others' work and how to communicate well. We will have both small-group workshops and whole-class workshops meant to help you revise each of your creative submissions. You will utilize your workshop notes to make revisions and annotations for your Final Portfolio (see below).

Final Portfolio (25%)

The Final Portfolio counts as the final exam for our course. In the portfolio, you will assemble the *revised* versions of your fiction, poetry, and nonfiction workshop submissions. You will also add annotations that explain the writing/revising process for each piece. These annotations will include fitting references to in-class writing prompts, homework readings, provided craft readings/published works, in-class discussions/lessons, instructor feedback, peer feedback, your own revision decisions, and reflections on your work. Consistent attendance and participation in class, and completion of all required readings, are crucial for assembling an effective portfolio. We will look at a sample portfolio together.

Grade Breakdown

90-100%	= A
80-89.9%	= B
70-79.9%	= C
60-69.9%	= D
0-59.9%	= F



Spotlight on 2 Class Policies

1. Two Free Absences

You may miss 2 days of class with no penalty to your attendance grade (they'll be marked excused on Canvas). After those first 2 absences, each additional absence will be marked 0% on Canvas. If you are absent on a day when graded, in-class work is due, or when we're holding workshop, you will not receive credit for that work.

2. Late Work

To promote effective student habits, and maintain a healthy workshop community and creative process, late work will not be accepted this semester. Any work turned in late will receive a 0% grade.

In order to receive at least a "C" grade in this course, you must satisfactorily complete *all* of the following:

- Consistently attend class sessions ready to participate in a meaningful and respectful way
- Submit all of your fiction, poetry, and nonfiction pieces for workshop
- Participate in all workshops in a meaningful and respectful way
- Submit your Final Portfolio including your revised work and appropriate annotations about your writing/revision process

Writing Center The Writing Center is a friendly space that provides free, individualized feedback and support to help Southern Miss students succeed with writing assignments for any class. The Center offers one-to-one consultations for any stage of the writing process, from understanding the assignment and brainstorming ideas to revising and editing. To make an appointment, visit usm.edu/writing-center. Select “Schedule an Appointment” and create a WC Online account. The Writing Center is located in Cook Library 112, between Starbucks and the Speaking Center. For more information, visit usm.edu/writing-center or call the center at (601) 266-4821.

Student Accessibility Services (SAS) Student Accessibility Services (SAS) is Southern Miss’s designated office to assist the University in its commitment to protect the civil rights of students with disabilities. SAS protects students from discrimination and offers reasonable accommodations to give them equitable access to university courses and resources. Disabilities covered under the ADA may include but are not limited to ADHD, learning disabilities, psychiatric disabilities, physical disabilities, chronic health disorders, temporary injuries, and pregnancies. If a student feels that they need classroom or housing accommodations based on a disability they should contact SAS by phone at 601-266-5024, by email at sas@usm.edu, in person by visiting the SAS office located in Bond Hall Room 114, or online at www.usm.edu/sas.

Mental Wellbeing USM recognizes that students sometimes experience challenges that make learning difficult. If you find that life stressors such as academic workload, anxiety, depression, relationship problems, difficulty concentrating, alcohol/drug problems, or other stressful experiences are interfering with your academic or personal success, consider contacting Student Counseling Services on campus at 601-266-4829. More information is also available at <https://www.usm.edu/student-counseling-services>. All students are eligible for free, confidential individual or group counseling services. In the event of emergency, please call 911 or contact the counselor on call at 601-606-HELP (4357).

Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create and maintain a safe learning environment on our campus. I also have a mandatory reporting responsibility related to my role as a faculty member. I am required to share information regarding sexual misconduct or information about a crime that may have occurred on USM’s campus with certain University officials responsible for the investigation and remediation of sexual misconduct. The information will remain private and will only be shared with those officials necessary to resolve the matter. If you would like to speak in confidence, resources available to students include Confidential Advisors with the Shafer Center for Crisis Intervention, the Counseling Center, Student Health Services, and Clergy. More information on these resources and University Policies is available at <https://www.usm.edu/sexual-misconduct>.

Academic Integrity Statement Academic misconduct involves deception to improve a grade, earn course credit, complete a degree, or create an unfair academic advantage for oneself or disadvantage to another in the academic community. All students at the University of Southern Mississippi should familiarize themselves with the Student Academic Integrity Policy to become familiar with what actions constitute academic misconduct, a violation of that policy. Southern Miss values “an approach to academics, research, and personal conduct based on integrity and civility” and the Student Academic Integrity Policy supports that University value. Forms of academic misconduct may include, but are not limited to:

Cheating - Cheating is a broad category of academic misconduct characterized by an attempt to gain academic advantage through inappropriate means or impede the academic achievement of others.

Plagiarism - The use of another person's or source's words, creative works, or ideas without appropriate quotation or attribution; claiming or submitting for academic credit the work of another.

Lying - The misrepresentation of one's academic work, lying to an instructor to increase a grade, or lying to an instructor regarding an academic integrity violation.

Acquiring or Distributing Information Inappropriately - The act of distributing or obtaining course assignments or examination questions or answers from sources not approved by the instructor or proctor (includes, but is not limited to, unauthorized use of the Internet, test banks associated with course text and previous student work).

Fabrication or Falsification of Data - Any statement of untruth in any matters related to the academic experience, including but not limited to forgery; false claims of authorship; falsification of information, data, or results derived from or related to research or to laboratory experiments.

Stealing or Defacing - The act of intentionally taking, transferring, defacing, or destroying, without right or permission, any property related to the academic mission of the University, including an attempt to impede others.

Multiple Submissions - The submission, more than once, without authorization by any instructors involved, of substantial portions of the same work, including oral reports or work submitted for retaken courses.

Conspiracy - The act of agreeing or planning with any person to commit any violation of the Student Academic Integrity Policy.

If you commit an act of academic misconduct, sanctions ranging from resubmission of work to course failure may occur to the possibility of receiving a grade of “XF” for the course, which will be on the student's transcript with the notation “Failure due to academic misconduct.” Should you be accused of academic misconduct, please visit the [Academic Integrity Website](#) or email integrity@usm.edu for any questions you may have about your rights and about the academic integrity process. Southern Miss provides many campus resources that are detailed in this syllabus and will be discussed by your professors; please utilize those to help you learn. At Southern Miss, we care about your personal work and learning journey.

Class Schedule

<i>Night at the Fiestas</i> Read, Discuss, Write, Workshop		
Day	In Class	Due on Canvas by midnight
Thursday, 1/19	Discuss Syllabus, in-class writing prompt, goals for the class	
Tuesday, 1/24	Discuss “Nemecia” from <i>Night at the Fiestas</i> , craft reading, prompt for character-driven short story, in-class writing	
Thursday, 1/26	Discuss “The Five Wounds” from <i>Night at the Fiestas</i> , craft reading, in-class writing	
Tuesday, 1/31	Discuss “Night at the Fiestas” from <i>Night at the Fiestas</i> , craft reading, in-class writing	
Thursday, 2/2	Discuss “Jubilee” from <i>Night at the Fiestas</i> , craft reading, in-class writing	
Tuesday, 2/7	Discuss “The Manzanos” from <i>Night at the Fiestas</i> , craft reading, in-class writing	
Thursday, 2/9	In-class writing, guidelines for workshop submissions, guidelines for workshop	Workshop Submission: Character-Driven Short Story
Tuesday, 2/14	Small-group workshop on short stories	

Class Schedule

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Bright Dead Things</i> Read, Discuss, Write, Workshop</p>		
Day	In Class	Due on Canvas by midnight
Thursday, 2/16	Discuss <i>Bright Dead Things</i> Part 1 (pg. 1-24), craft reading, in-class writing	
Tuesday, 2/21	Mardi Gras Break – No Class	
Thursday, 2/23	Discuss <i>Bright Dead Things</i> Part 2 (pg. 25-50), craft reading, in-class writing	
Tuesday, 2/28	Discuss <i>Bright Dead Things</i> Part 3 (pg. 51-76), craft reading, in-class writing	
Thursday, 3/2	Discuss <i>Bright Dead Things</i> Part 4 (pg. 77-101), craft reading, in-class writing	Workshop Submission: Poems (with workshop choice selected)
Tuesday, 3/7	Discuss workshop guidelines, whole-class poetry workshop	
Thursday, 3/9	Out-of-Class Work Day	
Tuesday, 3/14	Spring Break – No Class	
Thursday, 3/16	Spring Break – No Class	
Tuesday, 3/21	Whole-class poetry workshop	
Thursday, 3/23	Whole-class poetry workshop	
Tuesday, 3/28	Whole-class poetry workshop	

Class Schedule

<i>World of Wonders</i> Read, Discuss, Write, Workshop		
Day	In Class	Due on Canvas by midnight
Thursday, 3/30	Out-of-Class Work Day	
Tuesday, 4/4	Discuss Prompt for Nonfiction Mini-Essays, read <i>World of Wonders</i> pg. 1-8 together, in-class writing	
Thursday, 4/6	Discuss <i>World of Wonders</i> pg. 9-68, craft reading, in-class writing	
Tuesday, 4/11	Discuss <i>World of Wonders</i> pg. 69-107, craft reading, in-class writing	
Thursday, 4/13	Discuss <i>World of Wonders</i> pg. 108-137, craft reading, in-class writing	
Tuesday, 4/18	Discuss <i>World of Wonders</i> pg. 138-160, craft reading, in-class writing	Workshop Submission: Nonfiction Mini-Essays
Thursday, 4/20	Small-group workshop on nonfiction mini-essays	

Class Schedule

<i>Final Portfolio</i> Revise and Reflect		
Day	In Class	Due on Canvas by midnight
Tuesday, 4/25	Discuss Final Portfolio Prompt, Final Portfolio sample, revision brainstorming, revision exercises	
Thursday, 4/27	Analyze scenes from <i>The Social Network</i> , revision exercises	
Tuesday, 5/2	Analyze excerpts from <i>Oleanna</i> , revision exercises	
Thursday, 5/4	Discuss a close read of Elizabeth Bishop's "One Art," various drafts of "One Art," and the importance of revision	
Tuesday, 5/9	Final Exam Week — No Class Period	Final Portfolio

Note: The instructor reserves the right to modify course dates/assignments as necessary. All changes will be announced in class, communicated by email, and reflected on Canvas.