

Syllabus for Introduction to Creative Writing: December 26th-January 14th

***There are twenty Journal Assignments (each listed and numbered throughout the syllabus).** All Journal Assignments should be posted on Discussion Board; I will grade each post. Each Discussion Board will close at midnight on the date due. Late Discussion Board submissions are not accepted. Where indicated, you will post under Assignments on bb.

Thursday, December 26th:

Read intro thru pg. 20 (pay attention to the basic checklist of elements you should be acquainted with by the end of the Poetry unit).

Post a copy of a favorite poem by a living poet. Why do you think this is a “good” poem?

Some opening poems to set us straight: "The Waking;" "The Love Hat Relationship;" "Tell All the Truth, but Tell it Slant;" Stanley Kunitz's "The Portrait."

Listen to my discussion: What is Poetry?

Friday, December 27th:

Read pgs. 23-29

Also read the following extended metaphor poems (under Course Materials): TS Eliot's "The Winter Evening Settles Down;" John Berryman's "The Ball Poem," William Shakespeare's "Shall I Compare Thee to a Summers Day," Emily Dickinson's "My Life Had Stood, A Loaded Gun"; Metaphor and Extended Metaphor.

Journal Assignment #1: When Forest Gump says, “Life is like a box of chocolates,” he is comparing a concrete thing (box of chocolates) to an abstract thing (life) in order to explore and prove how complex (life) can be. Come up with 5 such metaphors in which the “tenor” or object being compared is abstract (such as Love, Hate, Life, Time, Death, etc.) and the “vehicle” or comparison object is concrete (such as battlefield, loaded gun, prison, etc.). Bring these comparisons to class as well. **Writing three of these combinations, write an extended metaphor poem.**

Journal Assignment #2 Use Starkey's checklist on “Images, Symbols, and Figurative Language” and apply it to one poem in the book. How does the poem measure up? Why? Use examples.

Monday, December 30th:

Read pgs. 30-49

Comment on the extended metaphor poems in your group.

Under Course Materials: IMAGISTS; CONSIDERING THE IMAGE.doc.

Journal Assignment #3: Do exercise #3 on pg. 71. Select one of your metaphors from yesterday's exercise (or make a new one if you'd like) and write an extended metaphor poem of at least 10 lines. Be sure you are choosing an abstract tenor and a concrete vehicle (for instance, Tenor=Life and Vehicle=loaded gun, etc.). Try to make use of concrete and vivid sensory images, strong verbs, and clear language. Remember, NO RHYMING yet! Be sure to bring at least five copies for your classmates, as we will be reading aloud and discussing technique.

Journal Assignment #4: Use Starkey's checklist on "Images, Symbols, and Figurative Language" and apply it to ANOTHER poem in the book. How does the poem measure up? Why? Use examples.

Tuesday, December 31st:

Read pgs 49-71

Respond to the Extended Metaphor poems posted by your group;

Post: Write a Villanelle adhering to the form outlined in the book.

Journal Assignment #5: Go back to the poem you wrote yesterday and discuss the choices you made in terms of LINE formation and LINEBREAKS. Pick three of your linebreaks and explain how breaking each of these lines affects the poem in terms of the rhythm, the sense of surprise for the reader, and the emphasis placed on the word as it appears at the end of the line. What is the overall effect of breaking lines in poetry? What, if anything, did you use to govern your initial choices? Bring two copies to class.

Journal Assignment #6: Use Starkey's checklist on "Lines and Stanzas" and apply it to one poem in the book. How does the poem measure up? Why? Use examples.

Wednesday, January 1st: HAPPY NEW YEARS!

Thursday, January 2nd:

Go to Course Materials: Read Tone exercise; Considering TONE in Poetry.doc

Turn in a revised version of your FORMAL POEM.

Sentiment vs Sentimentality; Stanley Kunitz's "The Portrait;" "Franz Wright's "Request" and Ed Ochester's "For My Daughter; Cliché and poetry; LOVE and poetry; Goals for The Not Hallmark

poem:

Journal Assignment #7 NOT HALLMARK POEM: Find/buy/memorize/or photograph the inside of a Hallmark or other such greeting card. Determine the relationship between the sender and receiver of the card. Determine the occasion. Identify where the message of the card veers into sentimentality. For example, what is the real truth of mother/daughter or father/son relationships? Are they always as "rosy" as these cards suggest?

Re-write this card to work against the clichés. Surprise us. Deliver a poem about *a real* relationship. NO RHYMING!

Friday, January 3rd:

Journal Assignment #8: Write another free-verse poem, but with and focus on eliminating sentimentality and cliché. Try to write a poem that captures a moment, such as Stanley Kunitz's, "The Portrait." Using a "WE" or "I" speaker, write about a specific shared/experience that captures the nuances of everyday relationships of loved ones. Feel free to LIE! Remember, NO RHYMING yet! Comment on the poems of those in your group.

Journal Assignment #9 Use Starkey's checklist on "Diction, Syntax and the Language of Poetry" and apply it to one poem in the book. How does the poem measure up? Why? Use examples.

Monday, January 6th:

POETRY PORTFOLIO DUE under Assignments

Select three of the poems you wrote: Villanelle, free verse poem, your extended metaphor poem, and your Not Hallmark poem.

I'm asking that you include your three drafts (you must include the drafts that contain my comments/draft returned to you during the unit) and final drafts of each poem (*Free Verse*, *Extended Metaphor*, *Not Hallmark*, and *Villanelle*). In addition to your revised poems, you must post a 2-page process narrative that explains what feedback (from your classmates and professor) you used to revise your work and what feedback you did not use and why. Be specific in your explanations. For example, you may wish to describe one major edit made to one of your poems. What led you to make that edit? Why is the poem now more effective? You may also choose to discuss feedback that you considered but ultimately did not use. Why did you decide not to use that feedback? What changes did you consider but then reject? You may also discuss ways in which you might continue to revise. Again, please be specific.

Revise all of your poems based on what we have learned about poetry thus far, and based on my comments and those given to you by your group peers. Return to STARKEY'S CHECKLISTS.

Tuesday, January 7th: FICTION SECTION

Write the absolute worst beginning to a story that you can possibly write. Supply a paragraph afterwards explaining why it is so "bad".

Attach with this the best example of a beginning to a story that you can find and explain what makes it so effective.

Wednesday, January 8th:

Read pgs. 125-139

In your text, Starkey writes, "You will want to make the conflict immediately apparent. 'Where's the trouble?' James Gordon Bennett used to say in his fiction workshops. Bennett felt that a story didn't really begin until we knew the crisis afflicting the main characters, and most fiction writers would agree: *conflict* in some form is at the center of every good story."

Journal Assignment #10: Select one of the stories we read for today and describe what the conflict is. In addition, describe how one or more of the characters is different in the end of the story than he/she was in the beginning.

Journal Assignment #11: Exercise #2 on pg. 153.

Thursday, January 9th:

Read pgs. 139-153

Read "Popular Mechanics" by Raymond Carver on pgs. 145-146 and "Reunion" by John Cheever on pgs. 146-148.

Journal Assignment #12: Do exercise #4 on pg. 154. Using the characters you wrote about yesterday, freewrite by exploring different story ideas.

Journal Assignment #13: Do exercise #8 on pg. 154. Try out different openings for your stories.

Friday, January 10th:

Read pgs. TBA.

Read “A Kind of Flying” by Ron Carlson

Read “Girl” by Jamaica Kincaid and “Wolf’s Head Lake” by Joyce Carol Oates.

Journal Assignment #14: Be sure to edit and revise your work before posting on Discussion Board.

1) Using the stories from our text as examples, write a short-short. Your **complete story** may be three to five pages long. Be prepared to explain why it qualifies as a “story”.\

Wednesday, January 9th:

Journal Assignment #15: TBA

Monday, January 13th: Work on your fiction portfolio.

Tuesday, January 14th: Fiction Portfolio due.