

**Mansfield University**  
**ENG 2202(W) - 190 - Creative Writing - ON-LINE**  
**Summer Session I-B 2009**  
**June 8-June 25**  
**Professor Louise A. Sullivan-Blum**  
**email: lblum@mansfield.edu**

**Course Description:** This is a multi-genre 3-credit introductory creative writing class that combines reading, writing, workshopping, and revising. Although you will be writing and revising finished pieces, the emphasis is on the creative process – on cutting to your truth as a writer and as a human being. You will begin with freewriting and short assignments and progress to writing longer pieces. Some of your writing will be personal and private, some will be shared in peer workshop groups, and some will be evaluated by me. In addition, we will spend a great deal of the semester reading. Part of becoming a good writer is learning to write regularly; another part is becoming a good reader. All writers write not just with inspiration, but with intent. When we read the writing of others, whether it is published work or the drafts we workshop in this class, we will focus not just on the content, but also on the choices and techniques of the writer. The fact that you signed up for this class means not just that you like to write, or want to write, but that you're ready to show your work to others. The first step in writing is to write for ourselves. The next step is to write for others. Just as in life, the most important aspect of writing is reaching out to others.

Because no piece of literature is the product solely of solitary activity by the writer, it is crucial for you and your fellow writers to receive a close reading and thoughtful, constructive feedback from each other.

Because this class compresses the work of an entire semester into three short weeks, the pace will be fast and furious. There is a tremendous amount of reading (most of a 412 page textbook, to begin with, as well as the writings of your classmates). You'll have numerous writing practices and projects due every day. But of course, you're a writer, so you live for this kind of thrill. Just don't try to do anything else.

**Required Text:** *The Practice of Creative Writing: A Guide for Students*, by Heather Sellers, Bedford/St. Martins, ISBN: 978-0-312-43647-6

In addition to this, you're going to need paper, pens, pencils, several highlighter pens of varying colors, and, of course, access to a computer. See specific requirements below.

## **A Message from IT regarding Specific Computer Requirements**

**and Responsibilities for On-line Students:** Students must have easy access to a web-connected computer that operates on an updated platform, including at least Windows XP, Vista (or greater), Internet Explorer and Microsoft Word. Likewise, students must be knowledgeable enough with these programs to use them as a primary means of exchanging information with both me and other students in the class. Since Blackboard will serve as the primary platform for the class, students must exhibit familiarity with its various tools. All submissions should be submitted in MS Word 97-2003 format (.doc) as everyone may not have the latest version of Word. Tutoring in or troubleshooting for any aspect of the technological requirements for the course will not be the responsibility of the instructor. Students who need assistance in either of these areas should contact the Help Desk at 570-513-5806. Assistance with questions that involve technology and research should be directed to the library's Information Desk, 570-662-4671. The University's Learning Center can also provide assistance with technical and logistical aspects of on-line learning.

Students who enroll in on-line courses need to be self-motivated, organized and diligent. Though strict deadlines and weekly discussion board expectations will keep you involved with the course, it will be up to you to log-on and complete the assigned work before the deadlines. Many students find that setting up a daily schedule works best. In other words, set aside specific times each day when you will complete the homework and log-in; create a “class time” for yourself, even though there isn't a set time or place when you must meet, as there is in a traditional, face-to-face academic setting. Establishing a structure or routine to your learning process for this course will help you achieve success. Use the **Calendar**, accessible from the Blackboard home page under the **Syllabus** button, as a tool for keeping on schedule.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

**Attendance:** My expectation is that you will submit assignments on time via Blackboard. You are expected to do the following during each session:

- ❖ Check the **announcement** field for important information regarding the course and coursework.
- ❖ Follow the instructions contained in the **syllabus** for activities and readings.
- ❖ Read and post thread responses on the **Discussion Board** each session by 11:59 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time) on the due date.
- ❖ Submit completed writing assignments via **Submit Assignments**.
- ❖ Post threads to the **Group Work** discussion board by 11:59 p.m (EST) on the due date. Post all replies with constructive comments and suggestions by 11:59 p.m. (EST) the following night.

- ❖ Read any newly posted notes on the discussion boards from me or other students.

Timely completion of all assignments is crucial to your success in this course. Official university policy states that documented excuses because of illness, serious mitigating circumstances, or official university representation will be accepted by all faculty members and will permit students to make up missed tests and/or graded assignments in a reasonable manner at a time agreeable to instructor and student. Students must provide documentation before absences can be excused. If you fail to submit threads or replies on time it will lower your overall grade.

**Office Hours/Getting Help:** The fastest way to get assistance at any time is to post a message in the **Help Each Other** forum on **Discussion Board**. This should be your first approach for asking questions of a general nature. One of your classmates will likely help you within a short period of time, and I will read unanswered questions every day and may respond if appropriate. Mike Salitrynski, who is enrolled in the class as a graduate student, is also available for help, both through email (see **Your Classmates** student profiles) or through the **Help Each Other** forum.

**Plagiarism:** You have plagiarized when you represent someone else's words or ideas as your own. Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty. If you plagiarize in this class, your offense will be reported to the Provost's Office. The student handbook, *The Mountie Manual* for upperclassmen, or *The Student Planner* for freshmen, outlines the procedures faculty will use to initiate disciplinary action in cases of plagiarism. Consequences may range from failure of the course to expulsion from the university.

**Academic Integrity:** You are expected to turn in original work. Dishonesty in academic work, including cheating, academic misconduct, fabrication, or plagiarism is unacceptable. When information from outside sources is used, proper credit must be given to the original source. The student handbook, *The Mountie Manual* for upperclassmen, or *The Student Planner* for freshmen, outlines the procedures faculty will use to initiate disciplinary action in cases of academic dishonesty.

**Exceptionalities:** If you have a documented psychological or learning disorder or other significant medical condition, please consult with Mr. William Chabala in the Department of Academic and Human Development (141 South Hall, (570) 662-4798, [wchabala@mansfield.edu](mailto:wchabala@mansfield.edu)) to make sure your professors are properly notified of your situation.

**Learning Outcomes:** ENG 2202: Introduction to Creative Writing is an approved course in the Block 2: Languages and Literature section of our general education program. As such, this course includes outcomes consistent with those of our general education program. In particular, students who successfully complete this course will demonstrate the following:

- familiarity with the concepts of literature, particularly the elements of poetry and fiction,
- the ability to employ the concepts of literature to analyze the texts of selected authors,
- the ability to employ the concepts of literature to write their own original manuscripts,
- the ability to employ the concepts of literature to evaluate critically the quality of their own manuscripts and the manuscripts of others,
- and the ability to revise manuscripts based upon the critical evaluations received in writing workshops.

The final project may be used to assess the effectiveness of our general education program.

**Writing Across the Curriculum:** ENG 2202 is approved as a "W" course and may therefore be used to satisfy part of the Writing Across the Curriculum requirement in the general education program. As a "W" course, the ENG 2202 outcomes are consistent with the stated outcomes of the Writing Across the Curriculum program:

- Focus on a purpose
- Demonstrate appropriate conventions of format, structure, and citation methods for the academic discipline
- Adopt appropriate voice, tone, and level of formality
- Revise written assignments in order to produce a polished product

## Guide to the Blackboard Home Page:

**ANNOUNCEMENTS** - Here is where you will find any important information regarding the course and coursework.

**SYLLABUS** - Here you will find links to each section of this syllabus. A downloadable copy of this syllabus is also available if you want to print it out. An attractive and downloadable calendar of readings and assignments for your reference is also available in the **Syllabus** section.

**MEET YOUR PROFESSOR** - Information about the instructor

**INTRODUCE YOURSELF** - Use this button to create your home page. This will be available to your classmates and your instructor. Use it to tell us something about yourself, including:

- ❖ Your name & major
- ❖ your hobbies and interests
- ❖ What drew you to take this class?
- ❖ When did you begin to write, and what kind of writing do you like to do?
- ❖ What writers do you like?
- ❖ (optional) Please post a photograph of yourself.

**YOUR CLASSMATES** - Click this button to meet the other students in the class, get email addresses, and see what kind of writing your classmate are interested in.

**SUBMIT ASSIGNMENTS** - Every assignment on this syllabus (except the Final project) must be submitted by the dates specified in the course schedule. You may submit assignments early if you like, but once the due date has passed, you will no longer be able to submit assignments. Here's how:

- 1) Label each assignment with the **Session #, Practice or Writing Project #, and the Page #**.
- 2) Save your assignments in a single Word document (.doc). Title this document with your name, and Week 1 (or 2 or 3) assignments.
- 3) Click on **Submit Assignments**.
- 4) Click on **View/Complete Assignment** for the appropriate week.
  - a. Sessions 1, 2, and 3 go under **Week 1 (12 total)** by Saturday, 6/13
  - b. Sessions 4, 5, 6, and 7 go under **Week 2 (12 total)** by Saturday, 6/20
  - c. Sessions 8, 9, 10, and 11 go under **Week 3 (7 total)** by Saturday, 6/27
- 5) Attach your file
- 6) Click **Submit**.

**DISCUSSION BOARD** - Here you will find a forum for each session. Everyone has to post, once per session, a question, comment, or reply on the **Discussion Board**. The point of this is to have a lively conversation, just as if we were in the classroom together. Here's how it works:

- 1) For each session, read the chapter.
- 2) Think about what you've read. If it's not clear to you, read it again. Free-write about it.
- 3) When you're ready, click on the **Discussion Board** button.
- 4) Read the forum I've posted for each session.
- 5) Read any threads posted by your classmates.
- 6) Participate in the discussion by posting a thread or reply of your own by 11:59 p.m.
- 7) Enjoy yourself. Don't be afraid to ask or respond to questions. Additional threads and replies are encouraged. Though this will not affect your grade, they will help your writing and your reading.

This is also where you will find the **Help Each Other** forum. Use this to ask questions of your classmates. Check it regularly to see if you can offer any answers or suggestions. Mike will also check this forum. I will check it daily and respond to any unanswered questions when needed.

**GROUP WORK** - Each of you has been placed in a small group of 5 students. This is where you will post your work and reply to the work of the other group members. There are 5 groups: Atwood group, the Emerson group, the Gaiman group, the Kingsolver group, and the Rowling group. Be sure to check this discussion board regularly, both to post assignments and to read replies from your classmates, as well as from Mike and from me.

**FINAL PROJECT** - This is where everything you have learned in this class will come into play. For this final project, choose one of your pieces (prose or poetry), and revise it to hand in. You are to revise it twice - the first time for content, and the second time for grammar. Use the questions on pp. 378, 379, and 380 as a guide. Submit this as a Word document (.doc). Your final project should be no longer than 10 pages. If your piece is longer, pick a 10 page excerpt and submit as your final project.

**GRADES & FEEDBACK** - This is where you will find your grades on submitted assignments, as well as my feedback on random assignments.

## GRADES

### Types of Assignments:

- 1) **Practices and Writing Projects:** Note that most of the practices and writing projects will direct you to particular stories, poems, essays, or plays in the book. Reading these is essential to completing the assignment successfully. You should complete these assignments by the due dates listed on the course schedule. They must be submitted to me no later than 11:59 p.m. each Saturday. There are 31 of these altogether.
- 2) **Discussion Board:**
  - 1 thread per session for sessions 2 through 12 - 11 total
- 3) **Group Work:**
  - You will post 4 writing projects and your 1<sup>st</sup> final project revision here for group feedback and discussion - 5 total
  - You will provide feedback to the other 4 members of your group by posting 1 reply to each member for each piece of writing they post - 4 replies per post, 20 total
- 4) **Final Project:** For session 11, you will submit one revised piece of your choice.

### Breakdown of Grades:

- ✚ **Participation (46 points: approximately 40 % of your grade)**

1 Introduce Yourself post (1 point)	1 point possible
10 Discussion Board threads & replies (1 point per post)	10 points possible
5 Small Group Posts (3 points per post)	15 points possible
20 Small Group replies (1 point per post)	20 points possible
- ✚ **Practices & Writing Projects\* (46 points: approximately 40% of your grade)**

Week 1: 12 assignments	18 points possible
Week 2: 12 assignments	18 points possible
Week 3: 7 assignments	10 points possible

*\*Two of these will be chosen and graded randomly for Week 1, two for Week 2, and one for Week 3.*

- ✚ **Final Project (24 points: approximately 20% of your grade) 24 points possible**

### **TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE: 116**

105-116 points = A, 93-104 points = B, 82- 92 points = C, 70- 81 points = D, 0- 69 points = F

## Getting and Giving Feedback on Writing

### A. On-line & General Workshop Etiquette for Small Group discussion board:

- 1) **Review every document in your group.** Doing so will sharpen your critique skills, which will eventually help your own work. Not doing so is rude and damaging to the workshop spirit of the class.
  
- 2) **Give each one**
  - a) **one thing you like.** Always start with your positive comments. As a rule of human nature, it's easier for us to hear the critical comments after we've heard something nice.
  - b) **one suggestion**
  
- 3) **You can respond to someone else's suggestions as well.**
  
- 4) **In general:**
  - a) Don't repeat previous comments. It's fine if you refer to a previous comment, but make sure you are also contributing fresh comments. It's challenging to keep coming up with new comments, but worth the effort. This will give the writer a wider range of feedback.
  - b) Being specific is key. While it may be nice to tell the writer you "loved it," this isn't much help unless you explain *why* you loved it. Give specifics and, when appropriate, back up your comment with a note from the work itself.
  - c) Don't let yourself off the hook by saying "What do I know?" Even if you are very much a novice, you have insights and opinions that will be useful to the writer.
  - d) Show every student's work the same respect that you would like them to show your work.

### B. Example of a Workshop critique for a short story:

Sarah, this is a great story! I love your description. These lines in particular stood out: "The day was so damp and cold he could feel it in his bones, feel it seizing his brain the way the wind seized the branch outside his window, shaking it until the last of its leaves fell off. He thought he would never be

warm again.” Not only did you help us see and feel the setting, but you used it to further explore the depression he’s been feeling throughout the story. I also like the way you contrast John and Kyle in the opening paragraphs by showing their clothing and hairstyles – I got a good sense of how different they are from each other.

I did, however, find myself wishing for more dialogue between John and Kyle. I really wanted to hear them in their own words. Will Kyle’s be more upbeat and spirited than his chronically depressed brother’s? Dialogue would be a great way not just to tell, but also SHOW these characters. Also, Kyle is awfully perfect. He sounds handsome, smart, sophisticated, funny... Readers might find it hard to empathize with him. Some sort of flaw might make him more human and believable.

### **If you have questions about a particular assignment or reading:**

- 1) use the **Discussion Board** forum for that session to ask questions of the whole class
- 2) use the **Help Each Other** forum on **Discussion Board**. I will check this every day and respond to unanswered questions.
- 3) use your **Small Group** discussion board to ask questions of your group members
- 4) email Mike Salitrynski, the grad student (check **Your Classmates** for contact info)

### **Ways to Get Feedback on your work (and give feedback on other people's work)**

- ❖ use your **Small Group** discussion board

- ❖ Throughout the session, I will choose random assignments from the ones that you submit on **Submit Assignments** and give you feedback on them. Go to the **Grades & Feedback** button and click on View Comments.
- ❖ I will also respond to selected assignments you post on the **Small Group** discussion board. I may respond to your replies as well.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

**For each session\*, you will:**

- 1) read the assigned chapter
- 2) do the assignments
- 3) on your **Small Group** discussion board, post either:
  - a. one thread by 11:59 p.m. This thread is either the required Practice or Writing Project, as indicated on your syllabus. Label it with **Session #, Practice or Writing Project #, and the Page #.**
  - b. one reply by 11:59 p.m. Read the posts from the other members of your small group and reply to each thread posted by the other group members. In each reply, tell the writer:
    - i. one thing you liked about the piece, and
    - ii. one suggestion, question, or thought that you have about it
- 4) post a thread to Discussion Board by 11:59 p.m.
- 5) Submit all assignments by the end of each week. You may submit assignments early if you like, but **once the due date has passed, you will no longer be able to submit assignments.** Here's how:
  - a. Label each assignment with the **Session #, Practice or Writing Project #, and the Page #.**
  - b. Save your assignments in a single Word document (.doc). Title this document with your name, and Week 1 (or 2 or 3) assignments.
  - c. Click on **Submit Assignments.**
  - d. Click on **View/Complete Assignment** for the appropriate week.
    - Sessions 1, 2, and 3 go under **Week 1 (12 total)** by Saturday, 6/13
    - Sessions 4, 5, 6, and 7 go under **Week 2 (12 total)** by Saturday, 6/20
    - Sessions 8, 9, 10, and 11 go under **Week 3 (7 total)** by Saturday, 6/27
  - e. Attach your file
  - f. Click **Submit.**

*\*Note that Sessions 10, 11 and 12 differ - see the course schedule for instructions.*

### **Submission Guidelines:**

- 1) All submissions should be submitted in **MS Word 97-2003 format (.doc)** as everyone may not have the latest version of Word.
- 2) Every submission must be labeled and dated as follows with the **Session #, Practice or Writing Project #, and the Page #.**

**WELCOME - June 7:** After you read my announcement, post your profile, read your syllabus, familiarize yourself with the Blackboard site, and start working.

## WEEK 1

### **Session 1 - Monday, June 8: FINDING OUR FOCUS**

- + Read Introduction: How Creative Writing Works, pp. 1-8
- + Read Chapter One: Finding Focus, pp. 11-26
- + Do Practices on pp. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21.
- + Post 1 thread or reply on the Discussion Board by 11:59 p.m.
- + Submit assignments (**6 TOTAL**) no later than Saturday 6/13 by 11:59 p.m.

### **Session 2- Wednesday, June 10: WRITING AND READING**

- + Read Chapter Two: Writing & Reading, pp.27-36
- + Do the following Practices: p. 34 and 36.
- + Do Writing Project #1 or #6 from p. 49.
- + Post either Writing Project #1 or #6 from p. 49 on your Group Work discussion board by 11:59 p.m.
- + Post 1 thread or reply on the Discussion Board by 11:59 p.m.
- + Submit assignments (**3 TOTAL**) no later than Saturday 6/13 by 11:59 p.m.

### **Session 3 - Saturday, June 13: ENERGY**

- + Read Chapter Three: Energy, pp. 69-91
- + Do Practices on pp. 79 and 80.
- + Do Writing Project #7 or #8 on p. 92.
- + Post one reply to each of the posts from your small group members (a total of 4) by 11:59 p.m. When posting your reply, answer at least 2 questions from p. 33.
- + Post 1 thread or reply on the Discussion Board by 11:59 p.m.
- + Submit assignments (**3 TOTAL**) no later than Saturday 6/13 by 11:59 p.m.

## WEEK 2

### **Session 4 - Sunday, June 14: IMAGES**

- + Read Chapter Four: Images, pp. 101-113
- + Do Practices on pp. 105 and 113.
- + Post either Writing Project #7 or #8 on p. 92 on your Group Work discussion board by 11:59 p.m.
- + Post 1 thread or reply on the Discussion Board by 11:59 p.m.
- + Submit assignments (**2 TOTAL**) no later than Saturday 6/20 by 11:59 p.m.

### **Session 5 - Monday, June 15: TENSION**

- + Read Chapter Five: Tension, pp. 141-147
- + Do Practices on pp. 144 (the first one) and 145.
- + Use a formula from the first practice on p. 144 to write a short piece on your own.
- + Post one reply to each of the posts from your small group members (a total of 4) by 11:59 p.m. When posting your reply, answer at least 2 questions from p. 93.
- + Post 1 thread or reply on the Discussion Board by 11:59 p.m.
- + Submit assignments (**3 TOTAL**) no later than Saturday 6/20 by 11:59 p.m.

### **Session 6 - Wednesday, June 17: PATTERN**

- + Read Chapter Six: Pattern, pp. 199-218.
- + Do Practices on pp. 201 (the first one), 208, and 213.
- + Do Writing Projects #4 or #5 on p. 217.
- + Post either Writing Project #4 or #5 on p. 217 on your Group Work discussion board by 11:59 p.m.
- + Post 1 thread or reply on the Discussion Board by 11:59 p.m.
- + Submit assignments (**4 TOTAL**) no later than Saturday 6/20 by 11:59 p.m.

### **Session 7 - Saturday, June 20: INSIGHT**

- + Read Chapter Seven: Insight, pp. 229-242.
- + Do Practice on p. 235.
- + Do Writing Projects #1 and #2 from pp. 241-242.
- + Post one reply to each of the posts from your small group members (a total of 4) by 11:59 p.m. When posting your reply, answer question #6 from p. 218.
- + Post 1 thread or reply on the Discussion Board by 11:59 p.m.
- + Submit assignments (**3 TOTAL**) no later than Saturday 6/20 by 11:59 p.m.

## **WEEK 3**

### **Session 8 - Sunday, June 21: STRUCTURE: ELEMENTS**

- + Read Chapter Eight: Structure: Elements, pp. 279-296.
- + Do Practices on pp. 284 and 285 (first one)
- + Do Writing Projects #4 and #8 from pp. 294-295.
- + Post Writing Project #8 from p. 295 on your Group Work discussion board by 11:59 p.m.
- + Post 1 thread or reply on the Discussion Board by 11:59 p.m.
- + Submit assignments (**4 TOTAL**) no later than Saturday 6/27 by 11:59 p.m.

### **Session 9 - Monday, June 22: STRUCTURE: FORMS**

- + Read Chapter Nine: Structure: Forms, pp. 314-324
- + Do Practice on p. 323.
- + Do Writing Projects #1 and #4 on pp. 343-344.
- + Post one reply to each of the posts from your small group members (a total of 4) by 11:59 p.m. Before posting your reply, read the poem out loud to yourself or anyone else nearby. When replying, answer at least one of the questions from pp. 295-296.
- + Post 1 thread or reply on the Discussion Board by 11:59 p.m.
- + Submit assignments (**3 TOTAL**) no later than Saturday 6/27 by 11:59 p.m.

### **Session 10 - Wednesday, June 24: REVISION**

- + Read Chapter Ten: Revision, pp. 367-381.
- + Now is your chance to take all those suggestions (both formal and informal) that your classmates have made about your pieces, and pick one to revise and submit as your Final Project. Choose your best piece and revise it, using the questions on pp. 378-379 and p. 380.
- + Post your revised piece on your Group Work discussion board by 11:59 p.m.
- + Post 1 thread or reply on the Discussion Board by 11:59 p.m.

### **Session 11 - Thursday, June 25: REVISION**

- + Post 1 informed reply to each of the posts from your small group members (a total of 4) by 11:59 p.m. When posting a reply, use the following rubric, and number your responses.

#### Rubric for Replying to Revised Pieces

(focus on content in reading each others' pieces)

- 1) What is this piece about?
  - 2) What kind of writing is this? What other writing does it remind you of?
  - 3) What is the most interesting thing about this piece?
  - 4) What is the strongest image?
  - 5) What insights does it offer?
  - 6) What do you like most about this story?
  - 7) What is one thing that you think the writer should change before submitting this piece?
- + Begin the 2nd revision of your Final Project. Now that you've reviewed the content and considered the suggestions of the other students in your group,

clean your piece up grammatically before you submit it. Use the questions on pp. 378, 379, and 380 as a guide.

## Session 12 - Saturday, June 27: MOVING ON

- ✚ Submit your Final Project no later than 11:59 p.m. by clicking the **Final Project** button. Instructions: having workshopped your piece and revised it twice, once for content and once for grammar, submit it as a Word document (.doc). It should be no longer than 10 pages. If your piece is longer, pick a 10-page excerpt and submit that as your final project.
- ✚ Post 1 thread on the Discussion Board by 11:59 p.m. telling me:
  - a) one thing you liked best about the class, or found the most helpful
  - b) one suggestion
- ✚ Now, if you like - read the final chapter (Publication) on your own and keep working. The writing world is waiting for you - writing groups, public readings, literary magazines, chapbooks, portfolios. I encourage you to write your artist's statement (see p. 393), and assess where your writing is going. Chapter 12 gives you helpful information on Resources for Writers. And Mansfield University, of course, offers a complete series of courses in the Creative Writing Minor:
  - ❖ Intro to Fiction Writing,
  - ❖ Intro to Poetry Writing,
  - ❖ Creative Nonfiction Prose,
  - ❖ Advanced Fiction Writing,
  - ❖ Advanced Poetry Writing,
  - ❖ Novel Writing,
  - ❖ Nature Writing

You've now completed the prerequisite - keep going! If this textbook was not helpful to you, throw it out and start over - there are tons of writing books out there. Or forget the books. Pick up a pen, grab your notebook, and just write. Only you can tell your story.