

Introduction to Creative Writing
Prerequisite(s): EN 115

Class Information		Instructor Information		First day of classes:	Wed., Sept. 9, 2015
Days	Tuesday	Instructor:	Amy Lin, MFA (candidate), BA, BEd	Last day to add/drop, or change to audit:	Sun, Sept 20, 2015
Time:	6:30 – 9:30 PM	Email:	Amy.Lin@ambrose.edu	Last day to request revised exam:	Mon., Oct. 26, 2015
Room:	A2212	Phone:	N/A	Last day to withdraw from course:	Thu, Nov. 12, 2015
Final Exam day		Office:	TBD	Last day to apply for time extension for coursework:	Mon, Nov 23, 2015
No Final Exam		Office Hrs:	TBD, & appointment	Last day of classes:	Mon, Dec 14, 2015

Textbook: Bird by Bird – Anne Lamott
The Vintage Book of Contemporary American Short Stories – Tobias Wolff

Course Description:

This course is an introductory workshop course in the writing of poetry and short prose fiction, emphasizing the centrality of reading and revision to successful literary composition. Students will engage in regular writing assignments and discuss the craft of creative writing. The class will also develop students' literary analytical skills through discussion of both students' own work and that of published authors. There will also be in-class writing exercises.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

This is a course for **anyone who wants to write**. Whether you've written before or not, whether you want to write professionally, whether you think you're a "good writer," doesn't matter here—the only requirement is that you *want* to write, and are **willing to commit your time and energy to learn and grow as a writer**. This means giving your energy and heart to the writing in this course. Most importantly, your creative writing should be writing that you want to do and not drudgery or homework. In other words, I'd rather have brilliant writing that isn't exactly as assigned than perfunctory writing that is cookie-cutter or exactly as directed. **Great writing is, officially, the only thing.**

By the end of this course, students will:

1. Understand methods and craft elements of writing creatively through experience composing and reading fiction and poetry
2. Understand the importance of a regular, sustained writing practice and various stages of the writing process
3. Develop self-awareness as writers by articulating deliberate strategies and techniques they employ in their work
4. Demonstrate effectiveness as critics of writing, responding to the work of others in ways that encourage collaborative learning
5. Generate a portfolio of creative writing, along with an annotation that applies craft to a piece of work over the semester

Course Schedule:

This course will be broken down into two types of class: *Craft* and *Workshop*. We will begin by studying the craft of writing before moving into an alternating schedule of craft lessons and student-writing workshops.

Craft

Each craft-based lecture will be interspersed with related, short, in-class writing exercises and discussions of the week's assigned readings. Discussions are vital to increasing our understanding of how stories and poems work—ensure you have read the pieces at least once, if not several times.

When reading, consider how the author of a work shaped his or her piece and why. Ask yourself what made the piece engaging or disengaging for you? What decisions about point of view, setting, or other elements of craft did the author make that you admire or do not understand? What is the purpose of the work and how does the author use elements of craft to communicate this purpose? By taking apart pieces of literature, we are able to examine the strategies and methods involved in writing and so become equipped to utilize them in our own work.

Overall, we care about HOW a writer constructs a story, not so much about what the theme or context of the work may be.

Workshop

After a few weeks of lectures and writing exercises, we begin workshops! Each week, we will engage with and constructively consider and critique the work of two or three of our classmates who will have turned their work in the week previous. You MUST read your peers' work prior to the workshop and engage with the work critically: make margin notes, jot questions, work as hard as you can to see what the purpose of the work is, what it's striving to communicate. In your one page letter for each work being workshoped, you will discuss what craft elements you thought worked well, what didn't, and any thoughts you have towards how their work could be improved or tweaked in revision.

You must bring one copy of these letters for me on the day of the workshop.

There will be further discourse about workshop guidelines and etiquette but a good guiding principle is that your classmates are entrusting their work to you, which may or may not be highly personal. Either way, they are sharing it with you with the faith that you will read and consider it thoughtfully, deeply, critically, and seriously. If you engage with someone's work in this way, your letters and comments cannot be thoughtless, insincere, slight, or mean. In all things, but especially in workshop, your attentive criticism, compassion, and enthusiasm are treasured.

Important Dates

1. Know the date of when you are being workshoped
2. Oct. 13: Workshops begin
3. Nov. 3: Weeks 1-7 Formal Writing Exercises Due
4. Dec. 1: Annotations Due
5. Dec. 15: Final Portfolios Due

Requirements:

- **Reading:** Each week you will be assigned stories or poems to read. Please come to class prepared to discuss writing from a writer's point of view—which requires that you have read the pieces more than once. The first time you read something, your mind is fully engaged with figuring *what is going on*. The real learning about how a piece works begins with the second reading.
- **Participation:** Your attendance is expected and it is needed. Every week. Because we all get sick at one time or another, you will be allowed one unexcused absence, but after that your participation grade will be seriously affected.
- **Writing:** This course focuses on the *process* of writing; you will be doing lots of writing and not all of it will be graded. We will work to develop the writerly habit of working everyday. Not all pieces will make it past the first drafts. Others will change significantly from the initial piece. The process of developing a piece is a process of constant writing, revising, and remaining hopeful. For writing to develop, the writing and re-writing process has to happen.

Formatting & Length Requirements

- In – class written assignments/journaling (stories, poems, etc.) should be typed, 1 in. margins all around, double-spaced in size 12 font (either Times New Roman or Garamond, no exceptions), with your last name and page numbers on the top right corner.
- Workshop letters are to be typed, single-spaced, 1 in. margins all around, in size 12 font (either Times New Roman or Garamond, no exceptions), with your last name and page numbers on the top right corner.
- Stories submitted for your fiction workshop should fall between 12 and 20 pages typed, with 1 in. margins all around, double-spaced in size 12 font (either Times New Roman or Garamond, no exceptions), with your last name and page numbers on the top right corner.

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- Poems submitted for poetry workshop, should fall between 2 and 4 poems, depending on length. As usual, typed, 1 in. margins all around, double-spaced in size 12 font (either Times New Roman or Garamond, no exceptions), with your last name and page numbers on the top right corner

Please email me with questions, or if you're working on a story or poem that **absolutely** demands a slightly different page count.

Final Portfolio

The lion's share of your final grade is dependent on your Final Portfolio consisting of the work you've completed throughout the semester. This will include hardcopy:

1. A cover page
2. Your fiction workshop submission (full – length story) AND 1 substantive revision of that submission
3. OR Your poetry workshop submission AND 1 substantive revision of that submission
4. Weeks 8-13 weekly writing assignments (NOTE: these are not NOT complete stories; these partial pieces are opportunities for experiment, play, finding your voice, your subject. Make mistakes! Try ridiculous or risky or brand new things here!)
5. A 3-4 page annotation (mini-essay) on craft, applying what you've learned to a story or poem of your own choosing

****All assignments must be emailed to me AND turned in hard-copy.****

Attendance:

Participation is critical to your success in a writing course, so regular attendance is a must.

- You will be allowed **ONE** "unexcused" absence. Any further unexcused absences will seriously harm your participation mark.
- Any unexcused absences on *workshop* days will cost you a full letter grade off your final grade—it's incredibly disrespectful to expect your classmates to spend time reading and responding to your work if you're not present to do the same for theirs.
- Missing your *own* workshop day will be extremely detrimental to your grade in the class overall—if a conflict arises, you must contact me **well in advance** of the scheduled workshop.
- An "excused" absence requires a doctor's note/official documentation. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns regarding the attendance policy.

Grade Summary:

Your grade in this class is not based on your talent as a writer, but rather on engagement with the readings, the class discussions, your application of what we learn to your own writing, the quality of your revisions, and the effort you put forth for both yourself and your classmates.

Percentage Breakdown:

Attendance/Participation: **30%**

Workshop Letters: **15%**

Workshop Submissions: **25%**

Final Portfolio: **30%**

Written Work:

The grading criteria for this class' written work will be as follows:

___ Writing (sentence-level)

___ correctness and sophistication at sentence-level: grammar, mechanics, syntax

___ sophistication of language and style

___ avoiding cliché

___ avoiding wordiness

___ Writing (overall)

___ clarity and sophistication of paragraph structure/line and stanza structure

___ clarity and sophistication of overall argumentative or narrative and poetic shapes (rhetorical)

structures)

___ clarity and sophistication of work with the traditional devices and strategies of creative writing

___ clarity and sophistication of departure from traditional devices and strategies of creative writing

___ Content

___ clarity, sophistication, urgency, and import of ideas and emotions

___ originality

___ risk

Grading Scale:

Percentage	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value
90-100	A+	4.0
86-89	A	4.0
82-85	A-	3.7
78-81	B+	3.3
74-77	B	3.0
70-73	B-	2.7
66-69	C+	2.3
62-65	C	2.0
58-61	C-	1.7
54-57	D+	1.3
50-53	D	1.0
0-49	F	0.0

Other

Note: the Course Outline is subject to change.

If you want feedback BEFORE the Final Portfolio Submission on your revision, I will accept 1 substantive revision of your workshop piece up to TWO weeks after your workshop

Course Outline

Week 1: INTROS & INVITATION
Tu Sept. 15 Introductions
Discuss syllabus & class rhythm
Set workshop schedule
Invitation to the Writer: mini-lecture

Week 2: IMAGE & METAPHOR
Tu Sept. 22 Be prepared to write (bring laptop / journal) and discuss this week's readings
HAVE READ: Lamott pp. 1-32, 39-43; Vintage: "Girl"; hand-outs: "Standing By," "Bullet in the Brain," and "Facing It"

Week 3: VOICE
Tu Sept. 29 Be prepared to write (bring laptop / journal) and discuss this week's readings
HAVE READ: Lamott pp. 33-39, 97-102, 133-144, 195-201; hand-outs: "The End of FIRPO in the World," "The Grad Student Rap," "Guns For Teachers," and "Beauty: When the Other Dancer is the Self"

Week 4: CHARACTER
Tu Oct. 6 Be prepared to write (bring laptop / journal) and discuss this week's readings
HAVE READ: Lamott pp. 44-53, 64-73; Vintage: "Tall Tales From The Mekong Delta" and "Cathedral"; hand-outs "Mr. Fox excerpt," "I Knew A Woman," "Stonecarver," and "God Says Yes To Me"
WORKSHOP DUE: Writer 1 and 2 Submit pieces for workshop next week

Week 5:
Tu Oct. 13

SETTING
Be prepared to write (bring laptop / journal) and discuss this week's readings as well as actively participate in workshop

DUE in class: 1. Copies of the piece(s) up for workshop
2. 1 page critique(s) of the pieces up for workshop

HAVE READ: Workshop pieces; Lamott pp. 74-84; Vintage: "Rock Springs"; hand-outs: "The Werewolf," "The Girl With Glass Feet excerpt," "Nude Interrogation"

WORKSHOP: Today – workshop Writer 1 and 2
Today – Writer 3 and 4 submit pieces for workshop next week

Week 6:
Tu Oct. 20

PLOT
Be prepared to write (bring laptop / journal) and discuss this week's readings as well as actively participate in workshop

DUE in class: 1. Copies of the piece(s) up for workshop
2. 1 page critique(s) of the pieces up for workshop

HAVE READ: Workshop pieces; Lamott pp. 54-63, 85-92; Vintage: "Emergency" and "A Romantic Weekend"; hand-outs "Incarnations of Burned Children" and "A Story About the Body"

WORKSHOP: Today – workshop Writer 3 and 4
Today – Writer 4 and 5 submit pieces for workshop next week

Week 7:
Tu Oct. 27

REVISION
Be prepared to write (bring laptop / journal) and discuss this week's readings as well as actively participate in workshop

DUE in class: 1. Copies of the piece(s) up for workshop
2. 1 page critique(s) of the pieces up for workshop

HAVE READ: Workshop pieces; Lamott pp. 110-116, 145-150, 172-175; hand-out "Anatomy of Disorder"

WORKSHOP: Today – workshop Writer 4 and 5
Today – Writer 6 and 7 submit pieces for workshop next week

Week 8:
Tu Nov. 3

ANNOTATIONS
Be prepared to write (bring laptop / journal) and discuss this week's readings as well as actively participate in workshop

DUE in class: 1. Copies of the piece(s) up for workshop
2. 1 page critique(s) of the pieces up for workshop
3. **Weeks 1-7 Formal Writing Exercises**

HAVE READ: Workshop pieces; Lamott pp. 122-132, 151-171; hand-out "Annotations," "Exemplar 1," "Exemplar 2"

WORKSHOP: Today – workshop Writer 6 and 7
Today – Writer 8 and 9 submit pieces for workshop next week

Week 9:
Tu Nov. 10

POETRY
Be prepared to write (bring laptop / journal) and discuss this week's readings as well as actively participate in workshop

DUE in class: 1. Copies of the piece(s) up for workshop
2. 1 page critique(s) of the pieces up for workshop

HAVE READ: Workshop pieces; Lamott pp. 176-184; hand-outs "Columbia the Gem," "Stillborn," "There Is No Word," "Epithalamium," "High Windows"

WORKSHOP: Today – workshop Writer 8 and 9
Today – Writer 9 and 10 submit pieces for workshop next week

Week 10:
Tu Nov. 17

POETRY
Be prepared to write (bring laptop / journal) and discuss this week's readings as well as actively participate in workshop

DUE in class: 1. Copies of the piece(s) up for workshop
2. 1 page critique(s) of the pieces up for workshop

HAVE READ: Workshop pieces; Lamott pp. 103-109, 202-207; hand-out "Vocabulary," and "Poetry Prompts"

WORKSHOP: Today – workshop Writer 9 and 10
Today – Writer 11 and 12 submit pieces for workshop next week OR Poets 1 and 2

Week 11:
Tu Nov. 24

POETRY
Be prepared to write (bring laptop / journal) and discuss this week's readings as well as actively participate in workshop

DUE in class: 1. Copies of the piece(s) up for workshop

2. 1 page critique(s) of the pieces up for workshop

HAVE READ: Workshop pieces; hand-outs TBD

WORKSHOP: Today – workshop Writer 11 and 12 OR Poets 1 and 2

Today – Writer 13 and 14 submit pieces for workshop next week OR Poets 3 and 4

Week 12: POETRY

Tu Dec. 1

Be prepared to write (bring laptop / journal) and discuss this week's readings as well as actively participate in workshop

DUE in class: 1. Copies of the piece(s) up for workshop

2. 1 page critique(s) of the pieces up for workshop

3. **ANNOTATION DUE IN-CLASS TODAY**

HAVE READ: Workshop pieces; Lamott pp. 93 – 96; hand-outs TBD

WORKSHOP: Today – workshop Writer 13 and 14 OR Poets 3 and 4

Today – Writer 15 and 16 submit pieces for workshop next week OR Poets 5 and 6

Week 13: WRAP-UP & POETRY

Wed. Dec. 9

Be prepared to discuss this week's readings as well as actively participate in workshop

DUE in class: 1. Copies of the piece(s) up for workshop

2. 1 page critique(s) of the pieces up for workshop

HAVE READ: Workshop pieces; hand-outs TBD

WORKSHOP: Today – workshop Writer 15 and 16 OR Poets 5 and 6

Final: PORTFOLIO DUE

Mon Dec. 15 Submit your Final Portfolio via email AND hardcopy by turning it into the envelope taped on my office door

Policies:

Communication

All students have received an Ambrose e-mail account upon registration. It is the student's responsibility to check this account regularly as the Ambrose email system will be the professor's instrument for notifying students of important matters (cancelled class sessions, extensions, requested appointments, etc.) between class sessions. If students do not wish to use their Ambrose accounts, they will need to forward all messages from the Ambrose account to another personal account.

Registration

During the **Registration Revision Period** students may enter a course without permission, change the designation of any class from credit to audit and /or voluntary withdraw from a course without financial or academic penalty or record. Courses should be added or dropped on the student portal by the deadline date; please consult the List of Important Dates. After that date, the original status remains and the student is responsible for related fees.

Students intending to withdraw from a course after the Registration Revision Period must apply to the Office of the Registrar by submitting a "Request to Withdraw from a Course" form or by sending an email to the Registrar's Office by the **Withdrawal Deadline**; please consult the List of Important Dates on the my.ambrose.edu website. Students will not receive a tuition refund for courses from which they withdraw after the Registration Revision period. A grade of "W" will appear on their transcript.

Exam Scheduling

Students wishing to withdraw from a course, but who fail to do so by the applicable date, will receive the grade earned in accordance with the course syllabus. A student obliged to withdraw from a course after the Withdrawal Deadline because of health or other reasons may apply to the Registrar for special consideration.

Students, who find a conflict in their exam schedule must submit a Revised Examination Request form to the Registrar's Office by the deadline date; please consult the List of Important Dates. Requests will be considered for the following reasons only: 1) the scheduled final examination slot conflicts with another exam; 2) the student has three final exams within three consecutive exam time blocks; 3) the scheduled final exam slot conflicts with an exam at another institution; 4) extenuating circumstances. Travel is not considered a valid excuse for re-scheduling or missing a final exam.

Electronic Etiquette

Students are expected to treat their instructor, guest speakers, and fellow students with respect. It is disruptive to the learning goals of a course or seminar and disrespectful to fellow students and the instructor to use electronics for purposes unrelated to the course during a class session. Turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices during class. Laptops should be used for class-related purposes only. Do not use iPods, MP3 players, or headphones. Do not text, read, or send personal emails, go on Facebook or other social networks, search the internet, or play computer games during class. Some professors will not allow the use of any electronic devices in class. The professor has the right to disallow the student to use a laptop in future lectures and/or to ask a student to withdraw from the session if s/he does not comply with this policy. Repeat offenders will be directed to the Dean. If you are expecting communication due to an emergency, please speak with the professor before the class begins.

Academic Policies

It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as stated in the Academic Calendar. Personal information (information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual) may be required as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at privacy@ambrose.edu.

Extensions

Although extensions to coursework in the semester are at the discretion of the instructor, students may not turn in coursework for evaluation after the last day of the scheduled final examination period unless they have received permission for a course Extension from the Registrar's Office. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination time must be submitted to the Registrar's Office by the deadline date; please consult the List of Important Dates. Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise "due to circumstances beyond the student's control."

Appeal of Grade

An appeal for change of grade on any course work must be made to the course instructor within one week of receiving notification of the grade. An appeal for change of final grade must be submitted to the Registrar's Office

in writing and providing the basis for appeal within 30 days of receiving notification of the final grade, providing the basis for appeal. A review fee of \$50.00 must accompany the appeal. If the appeal is sustained, the fee will be refunded.

Academic Integrity

We are committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Academic dishonesty is taken seriously at Ambrose University as it undermines our academic standards and affects the integrity of each member of our learning community. Any attempt to obtain credit for academic work through fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest means is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism involves presenting someone else's ideas, words, or work as one's own. Plagiarism is fraud and theft, but plagiarism can also occur by accident when a student fails or forgets to acknowledge to another person's ideas or words. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university college. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean and become part of the student's permanent record.

Note: Students are strongly advised to retain this syllabus for their records.