

**Introduction to Creative Writing (INCW)
CTY Course Syllabus**

	Goals	Activities
WEEK ONE		
Monday Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Establish a safe, warm, energetic, imaginative environment; establish standards and expectations. -Reflect on the nature of fiction and "fictional truth," and the role of detail in constructing a credible reality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overview of class and the demands of workshopping, free writing and structured writing. -Administer pre-assessment exercise, where students will be asked to write a short story given a set of prompts. -Read "My Costa Rican Days" and discuss Michael Mercer's point about truth. -Introduce ourselves with "two truths and a lie." -Discuss detail and specificity and read Natalie Goldberg's <i>Writing Down the Bones</i> on "Original detail," etc.
Monday Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Apprehend a whole story in its unity—strong opening, detail, motifs, an unexpected turn, a sense of a dramatic whole. What makes a story "work." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Read and discuss "The N" by Ron Carlson. -Discuss how the brain responds to stories in terms of left and right hemispheres, and how we can make use of this in our own writing.
Monday Evening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Focus on the use of sense-detail to immerse readers in the scene. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Read "Zanzibar" by Beena Kamani Use photos as prompts to get us into a scene, brainstorming all five senses and then working toward incorporating them.
Tuesday Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Begin to focus on character as the central axis around which fiction-writing revolves -Arrive at some sense of what makes a believable, compelling character. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Have students free-write about someone interesting (NOT a celebrity; go over the distinction between "interesting" in tabloid terms versus contemporary fiction). -Read "The Drowning" by Edward Delaney and discuss the complex characterization, Alphonsus's essential contradictions, the way the author puts him to the test. -Develop character sketches.
Tuesday Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Understand the means by which authors can characterize 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Read David Huddle on character. -Read from <i>The Corrections</i> by Jonathan Franzen. -Begin turning character into characterization.
Tuesday Evening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Drafting time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use computer lab to draft a section of Story #1
Wednesday Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Understand and implement the elements of effective workshopping -Comprehend the concept of point of view and its implications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Workshop five stories each in workshop groups, with an emphasis on the use of detail and effective use of characterization.

	Goals	Activities
Wednesday Afternoon	-Continue to explore point of view, insofar as it shapes all of the elements of writing.	-Continue workshops.
Wednesday Evening	-First revision	-Discuss the goals of revision as re-seeing a story. -Spend substantial time revising Story #1.
Thursday Morning	-Focus on showing versus telling	-Discuss the opening of Alex Garland's <i>The Tesseract</i> in terms of implying aspects of character, setting, and plot instead of stating them outright.
Thursday Afternoon	-Continue showing versus telling	-Exercises—take three directly stated sentences and transform them into rich examples of showing -Analyze results: what techniques were effective in accomplishing this?
Thursday Evening	-Second revision	-Spend substantial time revising Story #1 again.
Friday Morning	--Comprehend the concept of point of view and its implications, the distinction between and effects of first person, close third, omniscient, etc.	-Discuss the pros and cons of first person, close third, and omniscient, and examine how these manifest themselves in the stories we've read. -Self-analysis of own story's point of view in terms of the above.
Friday Afternoon	-Smaller workshops	-In groups of four, workshop pieces again with particular emphasis on showing versus telling and point of view
Sunday Evening	-Final revisions due for Story #1	-Based on second workshops, revise for a final draft.
WEEK TWO		
Monday Morning	-Sound as a primary building block of poetry	-Discuss wugs and brephiousness, ie. our instincts for language based on morphology. -Brainstorm liquidy, sharp, crunchy, smooth, billowy, soft, and loud words in groups, seventeen real and three invented. -Read Mary Oliver on sound, alliteration and assonance.
Monday Afternoon	-Sound in action	-Discuss a series of poems which use alliteration and assonance effectively.
Monday Evening	-The performance of poetry	-View "The Language of Life," with live readings from the Dodge Poetry Festival and Bill Moyers interviews of Naomi Shihab Nye, Dekou Sundyata, Gary Snyder, and Jimmy Santiago Baca.
Tuesday Morning	-Imagery and figurative language	-Read Mary Oliver on imagery -Read packet of eighteen poems ranging from Baudelaire to Nathan Graziano and answer questions with respect to how each poem achieves its effects.

	Goals	Activities
Tuesday Afternoon	-Writing from photographs	-Discuss poems in packet in terms of the relationship between form and content -Using close-ups as prompts, capture imagery using figurative language.
Tuesday Evening	-Thread poems	-Select one poem to be a "mentor poem." Isolate seven salient aspects of that poem that are worth modeling in your own. Free write and then eventually shape a poem based on this model.
Wednesday Morning	-Poetry Workshop	-Workshopping of mentor poems as a whole class.
Wednesday Afternoon	-Workshop continued	-Continue workshopping poems.
Wednesday Evening	-Poetry Immersion	-Work on revisions by hand and in computer lab.
Thursday Morning	-Poetry Immersion continued	- Read and discuss Tabloid Poems based on John Leax's <i>Duck Hunter Shoots Angel</i> . Students use tabloid headlines to craft a poem based on an outrageous premise but touching on more serious issues.
Thursday Afternoon	-Using another poem as a model	-Discuss the distinction between formal poetry and so-called "free verse," and why the latter is not free. -Discuss the villanelle, reading four examples and creating a class villanelle. -Practice for class reading next week. Discuss the perils of reading in public (going too fast, not projecting, nerves).
Thursday Evening	-Revisions	-In computer lab, work on revising poems that were workshopped and/or those that you've begun working on in in-class exercises.
Friday Morning	-Smaller workshops	-Workshop one of your poems from the night before in a group of four.
Friday Afternoon	-Fun Forms	-Define surrealism, showing paintings. Surrealist poetry games with unrelated conditional and consequence. Throw causality to the wind on this Friday afternoon!
Sunday Evening	-Introduction to Prose Style	-Play two stylistically-distinct versions of "Anesthesia" (Bad Religion and a folk-rock version). Is it one song or two? -Discuss style by examining clothes, cars, music. Initiate a general discussion of the varieties of style and what makes a style distinctive and recognizable.
WEEK THREE		
Monday Morning	-Minimalism and megaprose	-Read a wide range of excerpts from writers as diverse as Rushdie, Junot Diaz, and Annie Proulx with particular attention to issues of style. -Read "A Small Good Thing" by Raymond Carver and Rick Moody's "Demonology." Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of minimalism and maximalism.

	Goals	Activities
Monday Afternoon	-Writing minimalism and megaprose	-Write a brief story in a minimalist style, and then rewrite it as megaprose. Beware—you are not merely being more descriptive (go over the difference between that and a genuinely amplified sense of language). -Discuss how the style is not just an isolated characteristic but relates to the characters, the plot and climax, and the themes and worldview of the author.
Monday Evening	-Breaking the conventions of style and structure	-Read "The Library of Babel" by Jorge Luis Borges, "The Mysterious Remnant" by James Warner, and Italo Calvino's "All at One Point" and excerpts from <i>Invisible Cities</i> . Discussion of stories that break the rules, are premise-based rather than character and story-driven.
Tuesday Morning	-Structural innovations, combinatorics and constraints, megaprose revisited	-Read stories by Jorge Luis Borges and Italo Calvino. Discuss how the authors construct these stories around a central premise, often a metaphysical one, rather than a character/plot. -Begin working on a second major story, which is a stylistic or formal experiment of some sort.
Tuesday Afternoon	-Stylistic experimentation	-Using Raymond Queaneau's <i>Exercises in Style</i> as a model, take a single anecdotal story and rewrite it in two or three different modes.
Tuesday Evening	-Story #2	-Work on drafting a second story, which must demonstrate thoughtful decisions on style, structure, convention, etc.
Wednesday Morning	-Magical realism and its offspring	-Workshopping of story #2 in groups of five with particular emphasis on the effectiveness of the stylistic and formal experimentation of the piece.
Wednesday Afternoon	-Rehearse for Class reading	-Discuss reading aloud, with reference to the poetry readings that we liked last week. -Listen to effective and less effective readings (Effective: "Bullet in the Brain" read by Wolff; ineffective "The Scarlet Letter" read generically). -Practice reading aloud with a partner, providing feedback.
Wednesday Evening	-Class reading	-In conjunction with Creative Writing B and Crafting the Essay classes, each student will read four minutes of prose and/or poetry.
Thursday Morning	-Comedy and satire	-Read George Saunders's "Pastoralia" and analyze with respect to corporationspeak and dialogue. -Fill out SPEs for class -Work on story #2 in class.
Thursday Afternoon	-Magical realism revisited	-Read from George Perec's <i>A Void</i> and discuss the lipogram and constraints. Students rewrite a passage from their own story draft without "e."
Thursday Evening	-Story #2	-Revise story #2 in the computer lab.
Friday Morning	-Tying up loose ends	-Class party and reading.