**English 253: Introduction to Creative Writing, Sec. 3/Spring 2017**

Dr. Patricia Gott

Office: 318CCC Email: pgott@uwsp.edu Phone: 346-4347

Office Hours:

--Tuesdays: 3:30-4:15

--Wednesdays: Electronic Office Hour from 1-2 (I’m online then)

--Thursdays 11:30-12:15

--Other times by appointment mutually agreeable to both of us

\*\**Make sure you check your campus email on a daily basis, as I regularly send out announcements via email. I do check phone messages, but not as frequently as email.*

Class emails:

Section 3: ENG253.3-201620@uwsp.edu

Course Description

This course will explore the ways in which language—sharpened, focused, and refined to the quality of art—helps us navigate the vagaries of the human condition. Reading and writing intensively, we hope to uncover the strengths and limitations of poetry and fiction. We will critique classic examples of each form, take what we learn, and experiment in our own writing. Students will be expected to complete at least one 5-8 page short story, two-three short flash pieces and 5 poems. Roughly half the semester will be devoted to each form. We will share our work in class and regularly open it up to a peer critique. Students must be willing to test their imaginations and improve their work through revision. By semester’s end, you’ll be expected to turn in a portfolio of revised work. Despite the size of the class, everyone should expect to be fully engaged with the material and attentive to their classmates: attendance and participation are mandatory.

UWSP Learning Outcomes – Investigation Level-Arts

Students will:

• Describe, analyze or critique creative works utilizing knowledge of relevant aesthetic criteria or stylistic forms.

Do at least ONE of the following

• Identify and explain the relationship between particular traditions or genres of creative expression and their social, historical or cultural contexts.

• Demonstrate an understanding of creative expression by producing or performing a creative work.

Required Materials:

-One notebook for notes and in class writing assignments

-One pocket folder for collection and of work and presentation of portfolios at the end of class.

**Required texts:**

--*Micro Fiction: An Anthology of Really Short Stories.* Ed. Jerome Stern. **AVAILABLE AS PURCHASE TEXT.**

--Selected texts available on e-reserve (see syllabus)

--Poetry Packets to be distributed and/or emailed

Cell phone/Laptop policy (PLEASE READ AND COMMIT TO MEMORY!): Use of cell phones, unless for a specific class purpose, IS PROHIBITED. I will deduct points from your final grade if I observe you texting during class. I would prefer that you write up your exercises in a notebook so you can share your writing in class with others. See me if you need an exception to this to use a laptop computer.

Recording Policy: Students may not make audio, video, or photographic recordings of lectures or other class activities without written permission from the instructor. Anyone violating this policy will be asked to turn off the device being used. Refusal to comply with the policy will result in the student being asked to leave the classroom, and possibly being reported to the Dean of Students.

**Grade Range:** As far as the grade range, a C represents average but satisfactory development of the above criteria, a B represents above average development, and an A representing superior development and effort towards the criteria above. Work that represents below average development will receive a D. D work suggests that a writer is not involved in his or her writing and is unaware of the contexts, format, and stylistic choices that affect that writing.Work that is not submitted will receive an F**. Note: Incompletes can be given only in the case of a medical emergency**. We will discuss the grading rubric in more detail later.

**SCALE:** A = 94-100 % A- = 90-93% B+ = 87-89%

B = 83-86% B- = 80-82% C+ = 77-79%C = 73-76% C- =70-72% D+ = 67-69%

D = 63-66% D- = 60-62% F = 0-59%

**Attendance Policy:** Students are required to attend all class meetings. **Final course grades may be lowered by one-third letter grade for each absence over two** (i.e., B to a B- with 4 misses, a B to a C+ with five). I make no distinction between excused and unexcused absences except for religious holidays or officially organized and documented UWSP events. In the case of religious holidays and college events, you must notify me in writing one class period in advance of an absence and complete the required work ahead of time. PLEASE NOTE: **I DO NOT NEED TO KNOW WHY YOU ARE OR WILL BE ABSENT—UNLESS YOU ARE DEALING WITH A SEVERE AND/OR CONTAGIOUS ILLNESS THAT NECESSITATES YOU MISSING MORE THAN A CLASS OR TWO\*\*** in which case you should email me about this. You are also responsible for acquiring any handouts or assignments you miss. I cannot reteach the class you have missed for you.

**\*\*If you are missing a lot of class because of health issues or for some other reason, it is incumbent upon you to contact me BEFORE YOUR ABSENCES PILE UP in order to determine whether an accommodation can be made.**

**Participation:**

This course will involve a blend of lecture, workshop, and discussion. It is important that all students come prepared to participate in class activities. For workshops, this includes reading and marking stories for the workshop sessions. Discussions are particularly important in creative writing classes, and students are expected to offer their opinions as both readers and writers. Good participation involves thoughtful responses to the assigned readings and a willingness to share written work (formal and informal). The participation requirement will not be met if you sit quietly through discussion and workshop and fail to engage the material. You are also expected to complete all of the weekly reading. Sometimes, a probing, thought-provoking question can be more useful than an assertion. The essence of discussion is play, trying out new ideas and seeing how they “work.” Art is dynamic, and one line of thinking—even if it seems “wrong” or incomplete—will always lead to something new and potentially beautiful. Art without risk is so often mired down in conventionality; thinking without risk (or, put another way, without play) leads to stagnation.

**Respect:** You are expected to respect your peers. Personal attacks will not be tolerated. Make sure your critiques are geared toward the materials at hand. Learning how to give polite, constructive criticism will improve your own writing more than you can imagine.

**Grading:**

Grades will be based on the following:

Participation: 50%

Major Assignments: 5- 8 page short story

or 2 3 page short shorts 15%

5 poems 15%

Portfolio of revised work 20%

(The portfolio should include revisions of 3 poems and the story/stories)

**Assignment Format**: All assignments must be typed on white paper **double-spaced**, in **12 pt. Times New Roman or Cailibri. Use one inch margins all around**.

At the top of each assignment you should type:

Your name

Date your story is to be workshopped

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**Workshop:** (ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WILL BE PROVIDED AS WE GET CLOSER TO THAT PORTION OF THE CLASS):

Everyone is expected to put their short story up for workshop. This is a chance to hear what other people have to say about the text. Sit back, take notes and watch how people have reacted to your work. This immediate feedback is invaluable and gives you the opportunity to assess the successes and shortcomings of what you’ve hoped to achieve.

**All stories must be emailed to the classlist a FULL 48 HOURS before they are supposed to be workshopped. For example, if your story is up on Wednesday, Week 6, your story is due by Monday, Week 6 at 5 pm. Students are expected to print off a copy, read the story twice, make helpful notes in the margins, present their findingfs to the class.**

**Late Assignment Policy:** All work is due the day indicated on the syllabus. Unless I indicate otherwise, late papers will be docked a letter grade if they are not handed in the day they are due. I will not accept late assignments one week beyond the due date except in the case of a documented illness or family emergency. **Please do not email me your papers unless you have made arrangements with me to do so. In most cases, I only accept emailed papers in extreme emergencies and you will need to contact me for my approval of this.**

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is taking credit for work that is not your own. There will be serious consequences if I find that you have stolen other people’s work and turned it in as your own. You are also expected to turn in new work. Recycling old work is also considered plagiarism. (See the University’s stance on plagiarism below).

**Students with learning differences** may want to visit UWSP’s Office of Disability Services (103 SSC, x 3365) to work with that office.

**Let me know if you have any questions. Looking forward to a good semester of writing, reading and creativity as we share our work together!**

**English 253 Writing Assignment and Reading List**

## VERY IMPORTANT: Make sure you complete the assigned reading (including your peers’ work in the workshop section) for each class period BEFORE you come to class. Also bring the specific text(s) to each class that includes that day’s reading. Most of the shorter writing assignments will be completed in class UNLESS INDICATED OTHERWISE ON THE SYLLABUS. ER stands for e-reserve, available for our class on the library home page.

**Week One/Jan 25: Introduction to the class and one another/First in-class writing assignment and Introduction to poetry/Dove spill piece/Poetry You Tubes**

**Week Two/Feb. 1: How poetry works---Poetry exercises to begin. Line breaks, etc.**

**Week Three/Feb. 8: Poetry exercises continued, List poems/Bring in a poem you’re partial to (search at either poets.org and poetryfoundation.org)**

**Week Four/Feb. 15: Bring in 3 objects to write about and Hand in a poem you’ve been working on**

**Week Five/Feb. 22: Wisconsin Death trip photo exercise in class**

**Week Six/Mar. 1: First three poems due/Introduction to short shorts/Read Short shorts:**

**Read “Popular Mechanics” (Distributed and read in class)/Conflict ex.**

**Week Seven: Mar. 8/Visit from Prof. Ziegenhagen, Northland College/Introduction to the short story/Read**

**Week Eight/Mar 15: Short story continued/Read Bloom’s “Hold Tight” (ER) and short shorts:**

**Dialogue exercise**

**Week Nine/March 22: NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK—HAVE a SAFE and RELAXING BREAK!!!**

**Week Ten/ March 29: Two poems due/ Read O’Connor’s “Good Country People” (ER) and “A Good Man is Hard to Find (xerox)/Workshops of your stories begins/Order will be determined before this date**

**Week Eleven/April 5: Workshop of short stories continues/Read Oates’s “Where are You Going, Where Have You Been?” PDF available here: http://www.cusd200.org/cms/lib7/IL01001538/Centricity/Domain/361/oates\_going.pdf**

**Week Twelve/April 12: Workshopping continues**

**Week Thirteen/April 19: Workshopping continues**

**Week Fourteen/April 26: Workshopping wraps up**

**Week Fifteen/May 3: Part One, Class reading**

**Week Sixteen/May 10: Part II: Class reading**

**Finals Week: ALL PORTFOLIOS Due Wednesday May 17 by 7 pm. Additional drop off times will be announced.**

## *Reminder: A class that is this exercise and workshop intensive CANNOT BE RETAUGHT, so make sure to ATTEND REGULARLY to get full credit.*