

# ***CREATIVE WRITING COURSE OUTLINE***

- 1. Course Name: Creative Writing**
- 2. Course Number:**
- 3. Date Written or Revised: 2012**
- 4. Prerequisites: N/A**
- 5. Level and Number of Credits: CPA Level, 5 Credits**
- 6. Grade Levels Offered To: Open to all students**

**7. Course Description:** Students will read and interpret a variety of poems and short fictional works by a variety of authors (classic to contemporary). Through reading and writing activities, students will gain a sound understanding of the elements of a poem, poetic techniques, and the various forms that a poem can take. Students will also master an understanding of the elements of fiction and apply this understanding to their own written creations. Students will be encouraged to submit at least two “perfected” pieces to *Calliope*, High Point’s Literary and Arts Magazine. Student projects will also include, but not be limited to, perspective poetry, humor writing, and memoir pieces. Aside from broadening students’ literary scope, helping them read with a critical eye, and exposing them to constructive criticism, this class will perhaps most importantly cultivate within them an aesthetic appreciation for the beauty of language. Students will participate in “rough draft workshops” during which their writings will be read, discussed, proofread, and critiqued by fellow classmates and the teacher. In place of a traditional exam, students will be required to create and present a multi-faceted portfolio.

High Point Regional High School’s curriculum and instruction are aligned to the State’s Core Curriculum Content Standards and address the elimination of discrimination by narrowing the achievement gap, by providing equity in educational programs and by providing opportunities for students to interact positively with others regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, affectional or sexual orientation, gender, religion, disability or socioeconomical status.

**8. Course Goals and Objectives:** The student will...

- recognize that reading has many purposes and demonstrate an ability to choose an appropriate approach to fit text and purpose;
- read and interpret a broad range of poetry and short fiction;
- gain a sound understanding of the elements of poetry and prose;
- compose a variety of written responses for different purposes and audiences;
- use a constructive approach to critique his/her own work, as well as work by his/her peers;
- organize, prepare, and present spoken presentations clearly and expressively;

- collaborate by sharing ideas, examples and insights, productively and respectfully in informal conversations/discussions;
- cultivate an appreciation for the aesthetic nuances of language in all its forms;
- connect writings to significant personal, social, and cultural contexts;
- use a variety of analytical operations in the listening process;
- work within the classroom guidelines, policies and procedures set forth by the instructor; and
- take an active role in the classroom in ways that make a positive contribution to the activities and atmosphere of the class.

## **9. CCSS addressed:**

RL.9-10. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9,10

RI.9-10. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

W.9-10. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

SL.9-10.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

L. 9-10. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

## **10. Materials:**

Teacher-generated handouts

Music: “Scarecrow” - Melissa Etheridge; “The Sound of Silence” – Simon and Garfunkel; and other appropriate selections

Art supplies

Teacher and student blog pages

## **11. Evaluation Tools:**

- a. Measures of student progress: completion of homework/rough drafts/journals/final drafts/projects; participation in class discussion/editing/critiques/readings; development of personal style; evidence of growth from September-June; student self-assessments completed each marking period
- b. Measurement of effectiveness of this course: teacher reflection, student success/growth recognized in writing, critical reading, participation, development of personal style
- c. CW midterm – Portfolio Project
- d. CW final exam – Class-wide Anthology

## **12. Course Policies: ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Pupils are expected to be honest in all of their academic work. This means that they will not engage in any of the following acts:

- Cheating on examinations or other school assignments, including but not limited to, the non-authorized use of books or notes, the use of crib sheets, copying from other students' papers, exchanging information with other students orally, in writing, or by signals, obtaining copies of the examination illegally and other similar activities. Cheating through the use of technology to exchange information on any school assignment, examination, etc. is prohibited. Technology is defined as, but not limited to, computers, telephones, text messaging, palm pilots, calculators, cameras or any other hand held device.
- Plagiarism is not permitted in term papers, themes, essays, reports, images, take-home examinations, and other academic work. Plagiarism is defined as stealing or use without acknowledgment of the ideas, words, formulas, textual materials, on-line services, computer programs, etc. of another person, or in any way presenting the work of another person as one's own.
- Falsifications, including forging signatures, altering answers after they have been graded, inserting answers after the fact, erasing of grader's markings, and other acts that allow for falsely taking credit.

A pupil found guilty of academic dishonesty may be subjected to a full range of penalties including, but not limited to reprimand and loss of credit for all of the work that is plagiarized. Disciplinary action may also be a consequence of such behavior. Additional consequences may apply as defined in specific department policies and guidelines.

A teacher who believes that a pupil has been academically dishonest in his/her class should resolve the matter in the following manner:

- Reprimand the student orally and/or in writing. The teacher is also authorized to withhold credit in the work due to academic dishonesty.
- If warranted, the teacher shall file a written complaint against the student with the Administration, requesting a more stringent form of discipline. The complaint must describe in detail the academic dishonesty that is alleged to have taken place, and must request that the matter be reviewed by the Administration.
- The Administration will determine if further discipline of the pupil is appropriate, and will determine the nature of the discipline on a case-by-case basis.
- If the pupil is not in agreement with the disciplinary action of the Administration, he/she may appeal the action first to the Principal and secondly to the Superintendent. If the pupil is dissatisfied with the Superintendent's disposition of the case, he/she may grieve the action in accordance with Policy No. 5710, Pupil Grievance.

### **13. Course Policy: N/A**

## 14. Units

### **FIRST SEMESTER: POETRY**

*18 weeks\**

#### ***Unit I: Foundational Activities (2 weeks)***

Introduction to classroom standards (workshops, peer conferencing, blogging, reading days, etc.)  
Collaborative creation of classroom philosophy  
    Introduction to the writer's notebook  
    Introduction of writing glossary and basic skills  
    Community building

#### ***Unit II: Exploring Poetry (16 weeks)***

Reading, analysis, and discussion of classic and contemporary poetry  
    \*Sample authors: Taylor Mali, Charles Simic, Naomi Shihab Nye, Wallace Stevens, Diane Lockward, Langston Hughes, Lucille Clifton  
Writing (and other) activities to expose students to a variety of poetic forms and techniques  
    \*Sample assignments: perspective poetry, personification poetry, Cliché Wars, guided free-writing, found poetry, exercises from *Voice Lessons and Discovering Voice* by Nancy Dean

#### ***Special Projects***

Making Connections: Poetry and Fine Arts  
On Silence: Poetry of the Holocaust  
Separate but Equal: Music and Poetry  
National Violence Prevention Month Writing Project

\*Submission of at least ONE polished piece to *Calliope*, High Point's Literary and Arts Magazine (\*students may or may not choose to have their work represented)

#### ***Special Activities (subject to change)***

Potential field trips: Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival (every other year - even), Warren County Poetry Festival (every other year – odd), Sussex County Teen Arts Festival, art museum (coordinated in conjunction with the Fine Arts Department)  
Visit from Lynn Panico's 4<sup>th</sup> grade pen-pals (pairing, sharing, and mentoring)  
    Guest speakers (when available)  
    Independent reading days  
    "Coffeehouse" poetry readings  
    "April Madness" poetry competition

## **SECOND SEMESTER: PROSE**

*18 weeks\**

### ***Unit I: Story Building: Elements of Prose (6 weeks)***

What Makes Good Writing? - reading/analysis/explanation/discussion of short pieces/excerpts from a variety of authors

*Sample authors: Sandra Cisneros, J.R.R. Tolkien, Stephen Chbosky, Kaye Gibbons, Harper Lee*

Various activities (character analysis/development, point of view exercises, setting practice, dialogue creation, etc.) to apply understanding of prose elements to students' own writing

*Sample assignments: Fifty-Five Fiction, one syllable prose, Character Olympics, group effort story, prompt sharing, guided free-writing, exercises from Voice Lessons and Discovering Voice by Nancy Dean*

### ***Unit II: Writing the Story (3 weeks)***

Choosing a genre (young adult, horror, mystery, historical fiction, science fiction, etc.)

Setting/plot research

Drafting an original story

Discussion, oral/written critiquing

Editing/revision

Publication/sharing

### ***Unit III: In Your Own Words: Writing the Personal Narrative (3 weeks)***

Memoir: excerpt from audio version of *Teacher Man* by Frank McCourt

Setting/plot research: memory map

Drafting a personal narrative

Discussion, oral/written critiquing

Editing/revision

Publication/sharing

### ***Unit IV: Reading Roots: Writing the Children's Story (2 weeks)***

Various levels of children's books/fairytales

Setting/plot research

Drafting a children's story

Discussion, oral/written critiquing

Editing/revision

Publication/sharing

### ***Unit V: Drama, Drama, Drama: Writing the One Act Play (2 weeks)***

Plays, films: assorted excerpts

Discussion, oral/written critiquing

Performance of a short drama (and/or comedy) of students' choice

Collaborative creation, revision, and performance of original one act plays

***Unit VI: Independent Study: Masterpiece (2 weeks)***

Student work (free choice)  
Discussion, oral/written critiquing  
Editing/revision  
Publication/sharing

***Special Projects/Activities***

\*Submission of at least ONE polished piece to *Calliope*, High Point's Literary and Arts Magazine (\*students may or may not choose to have their work represented)  
Co-curricular connections (with Fine Arts Department and/or Special Education Department)  
Poetry Vacation  
Sharing of original children's stories with local elementary school or daycare center

***Evaluation/Assessment (for both semesters)***

Grades will be determined by using a combination of the following assessment tools:

Individual/group project assessment  
Writer's Notebook assignments (every other week)

*SELF EVALUATIONS* - distributed to students before progress reports each marking period

*TEACHER EVALUATIONS* - completed by teacher at the end of each marking period

Both evaluations are based on the following criteria:

Completion of in-class work  
Completion of homework (journals, rough drafts, additional assignments, etc.)  
Final drafts handed in (on time) /quality of final drafts (typed, neatly organized)  
On-task/appropriate classroom behavior  
Attitude/accountability  
Productivity in a pair/group  
Overall participation (reading, discussion, peer review, etc.)  
Overall effort  
Overall quality of classroom performance  
Willingness to grow

Midterm Exam: Individual Poetry Portfolio  
Final Exam: Cumulative Class-wide Anthology

***\*Throughout the course of the year, a class may or may not get to each of these units. Units may be supplemented with new material as needed.***

## SELECTED CURRICULUM UNITS

**Unit Title:** *Poetry and Prose* – 180 days

**Unit Goal(s):**

To expose students to relevant topics such as structure, punctuation, how to read a poem, how to conduct an effective peer editing workshop, how to conduct an effective poetry reading/critique session, etc.

To expose students to a variety of authors, genres, and styles

To reduce students' anxiety about and self-censorship of their writing

To cultivate sensitivity toward the reality of a diverse classroom setting

To connect to a wider writing community through the use of technology

To create a variety of drafts to add to students' personal portfolios

To deepen students' awareness of/appreciation for classic and contemporary writing

To provide students an opportunity to recognize, practice, and master relevant topics and techniques such as voice, accuracy, plot, setting, character, theme, point of view, dialogue, tone, mood, narration, etc.

To cultivate a deep appreciation for language

**Unit Objectives: The Student will...**

Read, discuss, analyze, and create a variety of poetry and prose pieces;

Participate in a wide variety of (independent and cooperative/long and short-term) classroom activities that involve reading, writing, oral, audio-visual, artistic, and reflective experiences;

Develop confidence in her/his work by participating in and facilitating revision workshops, cooperative learning experiences, oral presentations, and small/large group readings;

Increase her/his sensitivity toward language, others= writing, and her/his own personal growth: as a writer, a listener, a critic, a speaker, and a contributing thinker.

**Integration of Technology:** PowerPoint presentations, usage of ELMO, teacher-created blog page, student-created blog pages, word processing, multi-media-based student-generated projects

**Assignments:**

**Writers' Notebook Entries:** WN entries will be checked every two weeks (**every other TUESDAY**).

You will need to complete a total of **SIX** entries in each two-week period. *You may do more than six if you wish.*

Please date each section of entries and number each entry within each section.

Entries are **YOUR CHOICE** and may take any of the following forms (and then some): rough drafts of poems, story beginnings, song lyrics, bits of dialogue, a list of topics that you'd like to write about, descriptive observations, overheard snippets of conversations that you'd like to integrate into a song, poem, or story, etc.

***Please do not wait until the night before your journals are due to complete them.*** The purpose is for you to be writing on a regular basis, not cramming it all in at the last minute.

Poetry survey

Literary techniques activity

"I am from" poems

"I am for" poems

Free choice poems

Violence in America poems

Found poems

Random word poems

Renga

Haiku

Odes

Perspective poems

**Magnetic Poetry Tournament of Champions: Individually, in pairs, or using some combination thereof, please complete the following magnetic poetry challenges:**

**COMPOSE A 4-6 LINE POEM ABOUT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING TOPICS: MOTHERHOOD, A VISIT TO THE HOSPITAL, PEACE, HISTORY.**

**COMPOSE A 5-10 LINE POEM ABOUT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING TOPICS: HIGH SCHOOL, PHILOSOPHY, A REGRET, THE COLOR GREEN.**

**COMPOSE A 4-6 LINE POEM ABOUT POETRY ITSELF.**

**CREATE TWO METAPHORS FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ABSTRACT CONCEPTS: LOVE, HOPE, CHAOS, BEAUTY.**

**COMPOSE AN ODE TO AN EVERYDAY OBJECT OR PHENOMENON.**

**WRITE ABOUT SOMETHING GOING ON IN THE CLASSROOM RIGHT NOW.**

**FREE CHOICE POEM (AT LEAST SIX LINES)**

**FREE CHOICE POEM (AT LEAST TEN LINES)**

Cliché War poems

Personification poems

Concrete poems

Art-inspired poems

Poetry by African Americans

Everyday beauty/ugliness poems

Poetry of the Holocaust

Music-inspired poems

Free-writing

Rough draft jar poems

**Midterm Portfolio Project, created based on the following criteria:**

**A "Table of Contents"** page including page numbers, titles, etc.

**A collection of poems (at least SIX) by other authors** that you particularly enjoy. At least **two** must include written responses for your preferences. Pick out favorite lines, interpret the language, share your insights, etc.

**A collection of original poems (at least EIGHT, written both in and out of class).** Make sure that these poems are final-FINAL draft quality. Re-edit for spelling, word choice, punctuation, structure, etc. Pick out your **three** strongest pieces and include written responses for your choices (see above).

**A collection of Internet sites and books** that you have found useful (and/or interesting) in your study of poetry; again, include reasons/specific information.

**Drawings, collages, paintings, photographs, etc.** (sculpture? You-name-it: some type of **visual representation**) to accompany at least two of the poems in your portfolio. **Please do not merely download images from the Internet or paste in clip art.**

**Extras:** quotes, poetic song lyrics, thoughts that wish to be placed in the corner of a page, favorite lines from a friend's poem, your favorite grammar school poem, a Cubist drawing of your favorite poet, a cherished piece from last year's issue of *Calliope*, etc. A lot of freedom here!

**Option A:** poet information page

**Option B:** the "performance" of a poem

(Ms. Strout will provide further details -- stay tuned. You may choose **EITHER** "A" or "B.")

**A self-assessment** of your midterm project and your performance in Creative Writing up to this point. Please include the following items in your assessment: 1) a letter grade for your midterm project and an explanation of the grade, 2) your perceived strengths as a writer, 3) your perceived weaknesses, 4) the most significant piece of information you have learned about yourself as a result of this class or as a result of writing in general.

**Presentation:** Each student will be presenting his/her finished product during the two-hour exam period. (Yes, this is a requirement and will count for a portion of your final grade.)

Response journals

Pair/small group/class-wide discussions

Independent reading

Peer editing

Small and large group critique sessions

Readings/open mic days

Writing conferences w/peers and teacher

**Self-assessments, using the following criteria:**

**Completion of in-class work**

**Completion of homework (journals, rough drafts, add'l assignments)**

**Final drafts handed in (on time) /quality of final drafts (typed, neatly organized)**

**On-task/appropriate classroom behavior**

**Respectful attitude to peers and teacher**

**Productivity in a pair/group**

**Overall participation (reading, discussion, peer review, etc.)**

**Effort and accountability**

**Overall quality of classroom performance**

**Willingness to grow**

**Additional comments/input**

Fifty-Five Fiction

Descriptive Observations

“Character-building” activities

“Character Olympics”

**Setting activities: Part I: In-Class Writing Warm-Up:** Close your eyes and visualize a place that has made a lasting impression on you in some way. It could be the kitchen in the house where you spent your childhood, your grandfather's basement, your favorite Cape Cod seashore, your third grade classroom, etc. Spend some time remembering details: what do you see when you look around? What smells are familiar? You reach out and touch the \_\_\_\_\_; it feels \_\_\_\_\_. What do you hear when you listen carefully? Begin by making a quick list of images and associations, highlights, images that define this space. Now, using careful diction, paint a portrait of this place so vividly that you will bring us there, too.

**Part II - Thoughts:** You are what you buy, own, eat, wear, collect, read, and create. You are what you do for a living and how you live. If somebody broke into your home or apartment while you were away, chances are he/she could construct a good profile of who you are just by observing your “setting.” You should be able to do just that for your characters even when they are “offstage.”

**Part II - The Assignment:** Choose **two** of the following characters. Create settings for them; furnish a place with their character (you create the character through observation of the setting). The place can be any kind of locale: a house, a specific room in a house, outdoor grounds, an office, a cell, a bed, a closet, etc. The description must incorporate enough characteristic things so that the reader can visualize the absentee dweller very accurately. TRY TO AVOID STEREOTYPES!

**Part II – The “Characters”:**

- \*a loser who was once a high school quarterback
- \*an empty nest parent with time on her hands
- \*an unmarried teacher nearing retirement
- \*a former student council president heading for college
- \*a teenage girl who's just moved to a new town
- \*a ten-year-old boy
- \*a divorced, non-custodial parent
- \*an unsuccessful artist
- \*a former movie star who still thinks she's famous

- \*a high school senior about to flunk out
- \*a cocktail waitress down on her luck
- \*a blind person
- \*a supermarket checkout clerk
- \*a mother of four with a full-time job outside the home
- \*a failed musician
- \*a four-year-old girl/boy just starting pre-school

Personal narratives/memoir

Two-class writing assignment (plot development, dialogue, tone, etc.)

One syllable stories

Humor writing

Children's writing

Art-inspired piece

Music-inspired piece

Final short story project

Research on genres

Response journals

Class-wide anthologies

## **15. References:**

Classroom library containing a variety of poetry and prose pieces (excerpts, novels, anthologies, collections, etc.) from contemporary and classic authors

*Risking Intensity*

*Voice Lessons*

*The English Teacher's Companion*

*The Poet's Pen*

*Writer's Block*

*Metro: Journeys in Writing Creatively*

*The Creative Writing Guide*

*Poems by Adolescents and Adults: A Thematic Collection for Middle School and High School*

*Steering the Craft*

*Three Genres*

*Writing Poetry with High School Students*

(and other relevant texts)

Teacher website:

[http://www.hpregonal.org/departments/english/hstrout/Creative\\_Writing\\_Page.html](http://www.hpregonal.org/departments/english/hstrout/Creative_Writing_Page.html)

Teacher blog: <http://www.msstroutscw.blogspot.com>