

**CUYAMACA COLLEGE**  
**COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD**

**English 126 – Creative Writing**

3 hours lecture, 3 units

**Catalog Description**

This course affords students the opportunity to write short prose, poetry and drama in a positive atmosphere. Explore, study, and analyze techniques in the works of professional writers and in the works of students. Ample opportunity will be directed toward publication of students' work.

**Prerequisite**

Placement into ENGL 120 or equivalent

**Entrance Skills**

Without the following skills, competencies and/or knowledge, students entering this course will be highly unlikely to succeed:

- 1) Critically read and analyze a text at the college level.
- 2) Write college level essays, which include an introduction, conclusion, thesis statement, support and information taken from sources; MLA format.

**Course Content**

Reading and discussion of short stories, poems and plays representing a broad sampling of themes, authors and literary periods. The purpose is to enable and motivate students to write considerably in one or more genres. Out-of-class writings with revisions will amount to approximately 40 to 60 pages (10,000 words) per semester. Class time will be largely devoted to discussion and analysis of student writing.

**Course Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- 1) Utilize vocabulary of fiction writing (plot, conflict, characterization, dialogue, point of view, and other fundamentals); of poetry writing (meter, rhyme, imagery, symbolism, line break and stanza, poetic forms and other fundamentals); of drama writing (beats, conflict, motivation, dramatic structure and stage directions) in discussion, writing, and revision.
- 2) Demonstrate an understanding of the major features of and major differences between genres by writing their own organized, coherent, developed short story, play, and poems which are largely free of grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors.
- 3) Respond in writing and class discussion to selected reading assignments by identifying the general purpose of a work regardless of its topic, thematic content, or style of presentation, and articulate how it communicates and offers opportunities for understanding and for enjoyment.
- 4) Utilize appropriate citations in the writing process to avoid plagiarism.

**Method of Evaluation**

A grading system will be established by the instructor and implemented uniformly. Grades will be based on demonstrated proficiency in subject matter determined by multiple measurements for evaluation, one of which must be essay exams, skills demonstration or, where appropriate, the symbol system.

- 1) Creative writing assignments including poetry, short fiction, and drama in which students demonstrate the ability to implement the writing process and demonstrate their understanding of the conventions of each genre.
- 2) Homework and in-class exercises in which students demonstrate command of the fundamental skills of each genre and analyze the use of such techniques by professional writers in preparation for producing their own creative work.
- 3) Participation in small group and/or class peer review sessions where students are required to give positive and constructive feedback on one another's writing. Students will do this by comparing the students' writing to the expectations of the genre in which the work is presented. Students will use the vocabulary of creative writing to express their suggestions and admiration.
- 4) Revision in which students demonstrate the ability to implement peer and instructor feedback to improve their poems, short stories or plays by making them more accurately reflect the expectations of each genre.
- 5) Exams where students demonstrate their understanding of the vocabulary used to discuss creative writing and the conventions of each genre.
- 6) Essays in which students analyze the use of technique in a particular creative work, explore the relationship between a particular author and his/her writing, examine reviews of a particular work in an historical context, explore a subgenre, and investigate the current market trends in publishing.
- 7) Journals where students develop the habits of writing down what they see and hear for later use in projects.

**Special Materials Required of Student**

Dictionary, thesaurus

**Minimum Instructional Facilities**

Smart classroom

**Method of Instruction**

- 1) Lecture and discussion
- 2) Small group discussion, exercises
- 3) Peer commentary
- 4) Journals
- 5) Response papers
- 6) Essays
- 7) Research papers
- 8) Oral presentations

**Out of Class Assignments**

- 1) Annotate poems, dramatic scenes, and short stories for their structural elements
- 2) Write character dialog
- 3) Transform abstract images into concrete images

**Texts and References**

- 1) Required (representative examples):
  - a. Burroway, Janet. *Imaginative Writing: The Elements of Craft*. 4th edition. Longman, 2014.
  - b. Minot, Stephen. *Three Genres*. 7th edition. Prentice-Hall, 2002.
  - c. Jason, Philip and Alan Lefcowitz. *Creative Writer's Handbook*. 5th edition. Prentice Hall, 2009.
  - d. Cron, Lisa. *Wired for Story: The Writer's Guide to Using Brain Science to Hook Readers from the Very First Sentence*. 2012

**2) Supplemental:**

- a. Lamott, Anne. *Bird by Bird*. Random, 1995.
- b. Elbow, Peter. *Writing With Power: Techniques for Mastering the Writing Process* 2nd ed. 1995.
- c. Fulton, Len and James Boyer. *Directory of Little Magazines and Small Presses*. WW Norton. 2015.
- d. Wallace, Robert and Michelle Boisseau. *Writing Poems*. HarperCollins, 1995.
- e. The Writer's and Artists' Yearbook. *The Writer*, 2015.
- f. Writers' Market. *Writer's Digest Magazine*, 2016.

**Exit Skills**

Students having successfully completed this course exit with the following skills, competencies and/or knowledge:

- 1) Understand the vocabulary of fiction writing (plot, conflict, characterization, dialogue, narrative voice and other fundamentals); of poetry writing (experience, perception, imagery, symbolism, sound and sense, form and other fundamentals); and of drama writing (comedy and tragedy, dramatic conventions, dramatic irony, dramatic structure and dramatic personae).
- 2) Experience and describe differences in writing the same piece in the different genres of short story, poetry and play.
- 3) Utilizing the writing process (invention, writing, evaluating, revision, rewriting, editing) sufficiently enough to define or reveal their principles of composition.
- 4) Create, analyze and evaluate a symbol created in at least one piece of writing.
- 5) Create, analyze and evaluate the general purpose one piece of writing regardless of its topic, thematic content or style of presentation. Describe orally or in writing how it communicates and offers opportunities for understanding and for enjoyment.
- 6) Write creatively in a variety of genres such as fiction, poetry and drama.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this class, students will be able to:

- 1) Apply the writing process (including critical reading, drafting, revising, and/or workshopping) to produce polished creative writing, such as poetry, dramatic scenes, and/or short stories.
- 2) Use narrative terminology and an understanding of literary conventions to analyze published and student-produced creative writing.
- 3) Utilize the creative opportunities and/or constraints of different literary genres, forms, and styles to produce original work.