

Creative Writing at Indiana State University

Introduction

Creative Writing at Indiana State University (CWISU) is the official document of the Department of English concerning the creative writing program at ISU. This document contains descriptions, rationales, goals, and policies adopted by the Department of English on December 1, 2008.

The main purpose of the document is to define the general nature and scope of creative writing courses, while leaving the specific planning and teaching of the courses to faculty members.

The Creative Writing Committee

The Creative Writing Committee is appointed by the Chairperson of the Department. It is chaired by one of the creative writing specialists and includes faculty who teach fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction, as well as other interested members of the Department. The Committee is responsible for devising and revising the creative writing curriculum, reviewing course proposals, and preparing rationales and policies for teaching the courses.

When the Creative Writing Committee proposes curricular changes to the program, the changes are subject to review and approval by the Department faculty before being submitted for review by College and University committees.

Objectives of the Program

The central goal of the Creative Writing program is to help students develop in both the craft and art of creative writing. To this end, students explore writing in multiple genres—fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, and drama—and then direct their attention to their genre specialties. The courses described in *CWISU* offer

opportunities for ISU students to develop skills as readers, writers, editors, and critics of creative works.

A Foundation Course

219 Introduction to Creative Writing—(*This course is part of the “Transfer Indiana” [TransferIN] initiative. For additional information, link to www.transferin.net/ctl.)*) A workshop course for beginning writers that provides practice in writing fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, and drama, with attention to both the creative process in general and particular techniques and models of each genre. General Education Credits [GE2000: *Literary, Artistic, and Philosophical Studies-Literature and Life*]

English 219, Introduction to Creative Writing, examines the techniques of fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, and drama. Students encounter rhetorical explanations of these techniques and then examine how professional writers have mastered them. Students exhibit their understanding of the techniques by producing original examples of each assigned genre and by analyzing the work of their peers. This course provides a foundation for further studies in creative writing.

In addition to creating original works in several genres, students will be introduced to the workshop classroom. The format of workshops will provide the opportunity for students to read, to discuss, and to critique each other’s creative writing. Critiques consist of critical and thoughtful analyses of students’ writing, employing the techniques of each genre learned in the class. The ultimate goal of writing critiques is to provide students with potential directions to take their work as they revise each piece.

After students complete English 219, they should be able to

- analyze professional models of fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, and drama.
- demonstrate knowledge of the elements of each genre.
- demonstrate knowledge of the terminology and mechanics associated with each genre.

- illustrate an understanding of imaginative writing by producing original examples of each genre.
- demonstrate an ability to rethink and revise earlier drafts, with an emphasis on the difference between revision and editing.
- articulate responses to classmates' drafts, integrating an understanding of the elements and mechanics of each genre.

A Techniques Course

329 Contemporary Literature for Writers—Representative works of primarily fiction and poetry and secondarily drama, creative nonfiction, or both, with an emphasis on studying creative writing techniques. Prerequisite: at least one creative writing course or consent of instructor.

English 329, Contemporary Literature for Writers, introduces students to the elements, terminology, and mechanics of each genre of imaginative writing. By applying Practical Criticism to professional examples each genre, students gain insight into the writing process and consider how a creative text is constructed. Students illustrate their understanding of creative writing techniques through the writing of analytical essays.

After students complete English 329, they should be able to

- demonstrate knowledge of the Practical Criticism approach to contemporary literature.
- apply Practical Criticism to contemporary fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, and drama.
- analyze professional models of each genre.
- demonstrate knowledge of the elements, terminology, and mechanics of each genre.
- demonstrate an understanding of the techniques of professional writers of each genre through analytical essays.

Genre Workshops and General Goals

Genre courses are offered in multilevel groups:

- English 220 (Writing Fiction) is taught in conjunction with English 324 (Fiction Writing Workshop) and English 424 (Advanced Creative Writing Workshop).
- English 221 (Writing Poetry) is taught in conjunction with English 325 (Poetry Writing Workshop) and English 424 (Advanced Creative Writing Workshop).
- English 227 (Writing Creative Nonfiction) is taught in conjunction with English 327 (Creative Nonfiction Workshop) and English 424 (Advanced Creative Writing Workshop).

While these grouped courses in fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction have genre-specific goals (see below), they also have shared goals for the 200–400 level grouped sections.

After students complete courses in the creative writing, they should be able to

- produce multiple drafts that exhibit the basic elements of the assigned genre.
- develop critical reading skills in the assigned genre.
- objectively critique the work of fellow students and professional writers, through discussion and written analysis.
- develop the ability to revise, by considering the critiques of the professor and fellow students, and by exhibiting individual initiative.

Fiction Workshop Courses and Goals

220 Writing Fiction—A workshop course for beginning writers of short stories or novels.

324 Fiction Writing Workshop—An intermediate workshop course for writers of short stories or novels. May be repeated once for credit. Prerequisite: 220 or consent of instructor.

424 Advanced Creative Writing Workshop—Intensive training in writing fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, or drama. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: 324 or 325 or 326 or 327 as appropriate or consent of instructor.

In fiction workshops (220, 324, 424), students will learn to describe, discuss, and develop in their own writing the basic elements, and advanced craft elements (character psychology and motivation, advanced moral dilemma, internal dialogue, gestures) of fiction. We will discuss the different forms (character study, epistolary, fable, allegory, etc.) and lengths (flash fiction, short story, novel) of fiction. By semester's end, students will be able to illustrate an understanding of the different forms of fiction by producing original stories and chapters of larger works.

In addition to creating original works of fiction, students will be introduced to the workshop classroom. The format of workshops provides the opportunity for students to read, to discuss, and to critique each other's creative writing. Critiques consist of critical and thoughtful analyses of students' writing, employing the fictional techniques learned in the class. The ultimate goal of writing critiques is to provide students with potential directions to take their work as they revise each piece of fiction.

After students complete a course in the fiction writing group, they should be able to

- describe the basic elements and advanced (character psychology and motivation, advanced moral dilemma, internal dialogue, gestures) craft elements of fiction.
- discuss the different forms (character study, epistolary, fable, allegory, etc.) and lengths (flash fiction, short story, novel) of fiction.
- illustrate an understanding of the different forms of fiction by producing original stories and chapters.

Poetry Workshop Courses and Goals

221 Writing Poetry—A workshop course for beginning writers of poetry.

325 Poetry Writing Workshop—An intermediate workshop course for writers of poetry. May be repeated once for credit. Prerequisite: 221 or consent of instructor.

424 Advanced Creative Writing Workshop—Intensive training in writing fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, or drama. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: 324 or 325 or 326 or 327 as appropriate or consent of instructor.

In poetry workshops (English 221, 325, 424), students will gain an understanding of various types of poetry, including narrative and lyric; they will also study and practice various verse forms including free verse, metrical verse (such as the sonnet, the ballad, the haiku, the limerick), and prose poetry. Students will also learn about various basic and advanced poetic elements and techniques including imagery and metaphor, sound and voice, line arrangement and enjambment, rhyme and stanzaic patterning. By semester's end, students will illustrate their understanding of poetic techniques and different forms and types of poetry through their own original poetry.

In addition to creating original works of poetry, students will be introduced to the workshop classroom. The format of workshops provides the opportunity for students to read, to discuss, and to critique each other's creative writing. Critiques consist of critical and thoughtful analyses of students' writing, employing the poetic techniques learned in the class. The ultimate goal of writing critiques is to provide students with potential directions to take their work as they revise each piece of poetry.

After students complete a course in the poetry writing group, they should be able to

- describe various forms and types of poetry (narrative, lyric, satiric; sonnet, haiku, limerick, ballad; free verse and metrical verse, prose poems and shaped poems).
- discuss various techniques and poetic elements (imagery, metaphor, sounds, line arrangement and enjambment, rhyme, stanza).
- illustrate an understanding of the different forms and types of poetry by producing original poems.

Creative Nonfiction Courses and Goals

227 Writing Creative Nonfiction—A workshop course for beginning writers of creative nonfiction.

327 Creative Nonfiction Workshop—A workshop course for writers of creative nonfiction. May be repeated once for credit. Prerequisite: 227 or consent of instructor.

424 Advanced Creative Writing Workshop—Intensive training in writing fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, or drama. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: 324 or 325 or 326 or 327 as appropriate or consent of instructor.

In creative nonfiction workshops (227, 327, 424), students study the different forms of the genre, including memoir, personal essay, literary journalism (travel writing, nature writing, sports writing, etc.), and the nonfiction novel. Through the production of multiple drafts of original essays, students demonstrate a knowledge of the basic elements of the genre (dialogue, imagery, figurative language, etc), as well as various structural techniques, including narrative, expository, and segmented. Students exhibit their knowledge of the genre through analysis of professional models and essays produced by their peers.

In addition to creating original works of creative nonfiction, students will be introduced to the workshop classroom. The format of workshops provides the opportunity for students to read, to discuss, and to critique each other's creative writing. Critiques consist of critical and thoughtful analyses of students' writing, employing the techniques of creative nonfiction learned in the class. The ultimate goal of writing critiques is to provide students with potential directions to take their work as they revise each piece of nonfiction.

After students complete a course in the creative nonfiction group, they should be able to

- describe the different forms of creative nonfiction, including memoir, personal essay, literary journalism (travel writing, nature writing, sports writing, science writing, etc.), and the nonfiction novel.
- discuss the various structural techniques of creative nonfiction, including narrative, expository, and segmented.

- illustrate an understanding of the different forms of creative nonfiction by producing original essays.