

Creative Writing: Introduction to Fiction

Semesters: 1 Grade(s): 9-12

Prerequisite(s): none

In this class students apply the writing process to creative fiction writing. Prepare to investigate, evaluate and demonstrate your understanding of key elements of fiction including plot, theme, character development, dialogue, setting, tone, sensory language, and author's purpose. Introduction to Fiction culminates with the development of a story outline that can later be transformed into a full-length story or novel. Note: credit not granted for both *Introduction to Fiction* and *Writing Across Genres*.

Course Competencies

Creative Writing: Introduction to Fiction	
Competency 1	Understand and engage in the writing process as it pertains to creative writing.
Sub-Topics	1. Learn about the various steps of the writing process, including generating ideas and refining writing. 2. Engage in writing exercises aimed to build skills in specific areas, generate ideas, and build the habit of regular writing. 3. Learn that one must balance creativity with proper grammar, and that rules should only be broken when there is a purpose to do so. 4. Use the "show instead of tell" approach when refining writing, eliminating "info dumps." 5. Know that a large percentage of the editing process involves the delete key, and it is an especially useful tool for dealing with adjectives, contrived plotlines and dialogue, and scenes that do not progress the story. 6. Be able to analyze and refine writing for flow and clarity. 7. Understand common aspects of a writer's life, and that it includes observing, reading, writing, editing, and networking. Most writers hold full-time jobs outside of their writing, and full-time writers tend to engage in full work days dedicated to their craft.
Competency 2	Analyze and apply understanding of the importance of purpose and audience in writing.
Sub-Topics	1. Analyze various works in a variety of media for intended audience and purpose. 2. Write for different audiences and purposes, adjusting for word choice, style, tone, and other aspects of writing.
Competency 3	Understand the elements of plot and theme, including their use as inspiration for writing ideas.
Sub-Topics	1. Understand the different elements of a plot, including exposition, conflict, rising action, climax falling action, and resolution. 2. Analyze how plotlines and subplots can be handled while maintaining a primary story arch. 3. Learn about plot holes and endeavor to avoid them. 4. Understand that everything that is said or done in a story must progress the plot or at least develop a character. 5. Identify and understand the use of flashbacks and foreshadowing. 6. Understand the concept of theme and identify common themes. Know that there are conflicting themes, and analyze how some themes present an ideology. 7. Understand the difference between plot and theme. 8. Understand that plot and theme can be used as inspirations for writing ideas, serving as an initial template.

Competency 4	Analyze and identify character types, understand characterization, and learn methods in character development.
Sub-Topics	1. Analyze and identify characters by their types, both in literature and in own writing. Character types include common archetypes (hero, heroine, mentor, villain, fools, trickster, etc.) and other classifications: round, flat, dynamic, static, protagonist, antagonist, foil, and confidante. 2. Understand that characterization is achieved through narration; a character's actions, words, and appearance; and the words and reactions of other characters. 3. Learn about and apply various strategies in character development, including the creation of back-stories and family trees; using personality types as templates; strategies for name selection; using a characteristics chart; interviewing a character or having characters interview each other; visualizing a character through sketching or collecting pictures or objects representing the character; and putting a character in a situation to analyze how he/she/it would respond.
Competency 5	Understand and be able to identify different points of view, and learn how writing can have a distinct voice that comes through the narration or characters.
Sub-Topics	1. Identify the point of view in various pieces of writing, demonstrating understanding of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd person point of view, including limited and omniscient. 2. Analyze how the point of view impacts other aspects of the writing. 3. Consider how a piece of writing can have a "voice" or personality that comes across, either through narration or through a character's voice.
Competency 6	Analyze dialogue for its effectiveness, and engage in listening and writing activities to develop effective dialogue in one's own writing.
Sub-Topics	1. Engage in listening and writing practice to develop realistic and effective dialogue. 2. Understand that characters are speaking to each other, and not the reader, except in very few types of writing. 3. Be able to properly punctuate dialogue, including the use of commas, quotation marks, paragraph breaks, and dialogue tags. 4. Know how character grammar, dialect, and word choice can be used effectively, and that overdoing grammatical errors and dialect can sometimes interfere in the flow of the writing. 5. Analyze writing for how dialogue is handled, forming opinions of different authors' skills in this area.
Competency 7	Analyze writing for its use of imagery and create strong imagery using sensory language.
Sub-Topics	1. Analyze examples of writing for their use of imagery. 2. Engage in writing using sensory language.
Competency 8	Understand the elements and importance of setting in a story.
Sub-Topics	1. Understand that the setting includes the time, place, and objects as well as situational and demographic details. 2. Understand the importance of setting on the meaning of the story or actions, and that changing the setting would alter the meaning and/or require the changing of other aspects of the story to match.
Competency 9	Understand and identify symbolism and figurative language, and consider their use in one's own writing.
Sub-Topics	1. Understand and be able to discuss figures of speech, metaphor, simile, allegory, personification, and symbolism. 2. Understand that figurative language and symbolism are open to different interpretations due to being contextually based, either within the confines of the story itself and the details it contains, or within the confines of the author's own culture and experiences.
Competency 10	Understand that the tone of a story reflects the author's, narrator's, or character's attitude toward the subject matter.
Sub-Topics	1. Understand that tone or attitude can be neutral, and it is more likely to be strong if the purpose of the writing is to persuade.