

Creative Writing

Mrs. Maryjo Williams – Room A213

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“It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.” –Aristotle

We are committed to providing your student with a well-rounded/diverse educational experience, involving a wide variety of topics and relevant social issues encountered in our pluralistic society. In our classrooms, all opinions are valued and critical thinking is expected. The focus of instruction is centered on both the Dubuque Community School District and Iowa State Standards.

Parents and/or guardians are welcome/encouraged to read, view, and discuss material with their student.

Course Description

This course is for students who have mastered basic composition skills and wish to continue to stretch and challenge themselves as writers. Writing forms that may be explored include memoir, literary nonfiction, essay, poetry, and drama. All students will create a multi-genre research project.

Alignment to the Iowa Core Curriculum: Instruction, learning, and assessment are built primarily on the 11-12th grade-band expectations of the Iowa Core Writing and Language Strands.

Iowa Core Standards

Writing Standards

W.11-12.1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

W.11-12.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

W.11-12.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

W.11-12.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W.11-12.5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience

W.11-12.6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

W.11-12.7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

W.11-12.8. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

W.11-12.10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes.

Speaking and Listening Standards

SL.11-12.2. Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

SL.11-12.3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

SL.11-12.4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

SL. 11-12. 6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (See grades 11-12 Languages standards 1 and 3 for specific expectations).

SL 11-12 IA.5 Prepare and conduct interviews.

SL 11-12 IA. 7 Debate an issue from either side.

Course Emphasis

The primary emphasis of Creative Writing is to connect thinking creatively with writing. This course offers an assortment of stimuli for students whose abilities vary. Class activities include the study of literary selections by recognized artists, the writing and revision of student papers, and constructive evaluation by the teacher and the classmates. Through the workshop process, emphasis is placed on individualizing instruction and providing opportunities for in-class writing.

Required Reading

Teacher-prepared course information – print and electronic

On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft

Crafting a Life in Essay, Story and Poem

Stephen King

Donald Murray

A Few of the Classroom Resources

Room to Write

Bird by Bird

The Call of the Writer's Craft

Dialogue

Writing the Memoir

B. Goldberg

A. Lamott

T. Bird

G. Kempton

J. Barrington

Classroom Expectations

1. Respect yourself, respect others, and respect your surroundings.
2. Confidentiality is a must within a creative writing class. What is written and shared in this classroom must stay in this classroom.
3. Students are required to be present and on time for class sessions. Cutting classes is inexcusable; being justifiably absent is a different matter. It is the responsibility of each student to attend class regularly and to share in the discussions. Senior High School, as well as myself, expects this.
4. Written assignments will be expected on the specified day unless a student is justifiably absent or can justify his/her reasons for presenting an assignment late. All written assignments and drafts must be typed. Any assignments that are handed in late will result in a grade reduction.
5. You are responsible for your own learning and success. I will not chase you down to complete assignments in the event you are absent from class. It is up to you to check my website regularly and contact me with any questions you may have regarding assignments and your grade. All due dates are posted on the creative writing page of my website.
6. Plagiarism or dishonesty on any assignment will result in a zero.

**“The difference between the right word and the almost-right word is
the difference between lightening and the lightening bug.”**

Mark Twain

**“Only when you sit down to write, do you discover what you want to say.
You never know when you are going to arrive.”**

Paul Muldoon

A Note From Your Teacher

Much of the writing you have done up to this point in your career may not have been especially creative - Research papers, lab reports, five paragraph compositions – all follow basic formats from which there is usually little variation.

The next step is to use your imagination – and sometimes that takes practice. The journal writing should give you an almost unlimited supply of ideas about which to write. But creativity also means experimenting, not writing the same kinds of things over and over just because that is all you are interested in or because you always get good grades.

Keep everything that you write, especially an electronic copy! A portfolio will be handed in at the end of the semester. All papers must have their hand-written copies and all typed drafts attached! This class is all about the writing process, and it's important that you can show your growth as a writer.

Mrs. Williams