

ENGL 2250-007: Introduction to Creative Writing

Spring 2025

Class Time: Tu/Th, 12:25 PM-1:45 PM

Class Number: 11915

Location: AEB 360

Instructor: Kent V Hale**Email:** kent.v.hale@utah.edu**Office Hours:** Tu, 2:00PM-3:30PM: UMFA Cafe; Th, 3:00PM-5:30PM: Zoom; and by appointment***Course Description***

This course introduces students to creative writing in two primary genres: poetry and fiction. We will focus on developing the necessary language—spoken and written—to explore, analyze, and deploy the craft elements that help create strong imaginative writing. We will read various conventional and experimental texts across genres to work toward our goal, considering the utility and strangeness of genre boundaries and labels along the way. The course requires students to write critical analyses, participate in lively in-class discussions, and complete writing exercises centered around the readings. Students will produce original creative work in each genre and respond thoughtfully to their classmates' writing during workshops. The semester will culminate in a final portfolio that compiles the student's work, including substantial revisions of workshoped pieces and a reflective letter that offers an overview of the student's growth as a writer. This is a writing intensive course. It requires students to write creatively and/or critically in some form for every class period.

Course Catalog Description: Introduction to the writing of fiction and poetry.

Requirement Designation: Fulfills the General Education Fine Arts Exploration requirement.

My Course Goals—the stuff that's essential yet difficult to describe

I have three main goals for this course: (1) encourage curiosity, (2) promote generative failure, and (3) facilitate collaborative learning. These goals are intentionally broad and perhaps frustratingly vague. My aim is that they parallel your experience with the material you'll write and encounter over the course of the semester: a cross-genre spread of language that may baffle and inspire. By the end of the semester, I hope you'll have learned how to find guidance in texts that challenge your writerly sensibilities and how to discover new complexities in your foundational texts, those works that led you to take an interest in writing in the first place. I also hope you'll have learned how to write more effectively about and through your obsessions. Creative writing is a fruitful way to ask questions about and obsess over emotional, creative, social, environmental, and political concerns (among other things). This class should provide a space to examine what haunts you. We're not here to answer questions through art, but fumbling with a question in a new way is often rewarding and revealing to author and audience.

You already have a well-developed relationship with reading and writing. I'm certain of this. This course intends to provide a tool-set of vocabulary, concepts, and discourses surrounding craft that will help you articulate and broaden your analytical and creative practice. The best way to develop your practice is to write recklessly and often. Take formal risks. Write to explore. Fail

spectacularly and with purpose. Interact and learn from your peers on the page and off. This course provides ample opportunity for experimentation in the form of frequent in-class writing exercises, informal reflections, two analytical craft essays, two major workshop submissions, and a final portfolio. Success in this course depends on completing the readings and assignments on time and with a clear display of effort. Your work should take you to unknown territory and (at least loosely) resonate with the discussions we have in class.

Collaboration with your peers is essential to shaping this course into an experience that most benefits the development of your writerly voice. We will workshop frequently. This means that your peers (and you) will often be put into the awkward, vulnerable space of being in a room with other people discussing their work. Empathy is key. Building and spreading empathy in a creative space is essential to becoming a better writer. By thinking about our peers' work deeply and offering constructive criticism, we learn more about ourselves as artists, what we like and don't like, how we want our work to be treated, and how we want to offer language to the world. Writing is strange. It's an isolating pursuit, but the writer often works to be read. Creative writing courses offer the rare circumstance where writer and initial audience are all in the same space. As you continue to write imaginatively after this semester—and I hope you all do—opportunities to write within a community like ours will likely shrink. Use this course as an opportunity to discover and shape what kind of creative community member you want to be. Doing so will help you learn who you want to write to and how. I will do my best to create a comfortable environment that encourages you to make the course and your writing what you want it to be.

Course Objectives—in a far less abstract sense

By the end of this course, you will:

1. Develop a writing tool kit, including craft vocabulary, techniques, and ways to experiment with and generate original material.
2. Articulate your understanding of the readings, your peers' work, and your own writing using the craft-oriented language.
3. Draft and revise based on peer feedback, instructor input, and shifting personal interests.
4. Display the ability to be an engaged, supportive member of a creative community.
5. Offer constructive, generative, and generous commentary on your peers' submissions.
6. Learn different ways to address, question, and articulate personal, professional, social, ecological, and/or political concerns.

Notes on the Syllabus

- The syllabus, including the schedule, is subject to change.
- Many of the questions you have are probably answered in the syllabus. This document includes assignment descriptions, submission instructions, and a course calendar with all important due dates and readings listed.
- Please check the syllabus and ask a peer logistical questions before contacting me. I'm happy to answer questions that are not answered here or on the Canvas page.

Required Materials

- Access to Canvas
- Access to a printer

- A notebook or journal
- *The Hour of The Star*, Clarice Lispector: New Direction Publishing, ISBN: 9780811219495
- *Here*, Richard McGuire: Knopf Doubleday, ISBN: 9780375406508

Assignments and Grading

Workshop (30%)	
1. Workshops	150
a. One Informal Poetry	
b. One Formal Fiction or Poetry	
2. Workshop letters	150
Craft Essays (15%)	
1. Poetry unit essay	75
2. Fiction unit essay	75
Writing Prompts (15%)	
1. 6 prompts (25 points each)	150
Final Portfolio (20%)	200
Both original workshop drafts	
One revised poetry draft and one revised fiction draft, each including a brief revision note	
Two Craft Essays	
Three prompts of your choosing	
Ten workshop letters	
Final reflection letter	
Attendance and Participation (20%)	
1. In-class participation	125
2. In-class exercises	75
Total Points	1000

Preliminary Course Schedule

Please note that this schedule is subject to change. I will inform you of any changes in advance.

Unit 1: Poetry

Week 1	1/7 Intro to class Read: Syllabus, Workshop Etiquette, etc. In-Class Exercise: Ice-breaker
	1/9 Poetry

Read: “Writing off the Subject” – Richard Hugo
 “Happiness” – Raymond Carver
 “Altruism” – Molly Peacock

Bring in: First Lines

Due: Introduction and Obsession Letter

Week 2

1/14 Poetry – Images

Read: *The Poet’s Companion*, “Images,” “Simile and Metaphor”
 “Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird” – Wallace
 Stevens

“Manhattan is a Lenape Word” – Natalie Diaz

“Meditation on a Grapefruit” – Craig Arnold

“Metaphors” – Sylvia Plath

In-Class Exercise 1: Literal and Figurative images.

Due: Triggering Well, Words/Lines (in journal)

Workshop Group Sign-up

1/16 Poetry – Sound and Language

Read: *The Poet’s Companion*, “Music of the Line”

“The Colossus” – Sylvia Plath

“Usher” – Kevin Young

“Self-Portrait as Mae West One-Liner” – Paisley Rekdal

“Bang” – Hannah Sanghee Park

In-Class Exercise 2: Nonsense Poem (Rhythm, enjambment,
 endstop)

Due: **Prompt 1 – Place and Image**

Week 3

1/21 Poetry – Sonnets

Read: *The Poet’s Companion*, “Meter, Rhyme, and Form.”

Sonnet Packet – Robert Hayden, Terrence Hayes, William
 Shakespeare, Rainer Maria Rilke, Wanda Coleman, Diane
 Seuss, Dorothy Chan, Jasmine Khaliq

In-Class Exercise 3: Form and Constraint

1/23 Poetry – Lineation

Read: “You Can Take Off Your Sweater, I’ve Made Today Warm”
 – Paige Lewis

“Calling on All Silent Minorities” – June Jordan

“June 30, 1974” – James Schuyler

“The Hereafter” – August Kleinzahler

“A Measure of Light” – Aaron Shurin

“Litany in Which Certain Things are Crossed Out” –
 Richard Siken

“The Fish” – Marianne Moore

In-Class Exercise 4: Dismemberment

Due: **Prompt 2 – Formal Poem**

Week 4 1/28 Poetry – Prose Poem, Narrative, Experimentation
 Read: “Melt Water” – Claire Wahmanholm
 “[Kills bugs dead.]” – Harryette Mullen
 “Information” – David Ignatow
 “Avian Nights” – Sherman Alexei
 In-Class Exercise 5: Experimental Transformation

Transition: Moving toward fiction – Hybrid Forms and Film

1/30 Hybrid Forms
 Read: “The Glass Essay” – Anne Carson
 In-Class Exercise 6: Lyrical Life
 Due: **Prompt 3 – Fragmentation/Hybridity**

Week 5 2/4 Hybrid Forms – Between Genres
 Read: “Boy and Dog” – Larry Brown
 “Dreamtigers,” “Borges and I” – Juan Luis Borges
 “No Matter Which Way We Turned” – Brian Evenson
 (A couple more short readings TBD)
 In-Class Exercise 7: Shifting Genre

2/6 Fiction – Film and Beats, an introduction to Scene
 Watch: *No Country for Old Men*, Coen brothers
 In-Class Exercise 8: Work on Workshop Submissions
 Due: **Craft Essay 1**

Week 6 2/11 Fiction – Flash
 Read: “Girl” – Jamaica Kincaid
 “Her Mother’s Mother,” “Insomnia,” “The Actors”
 – Lydia Davis
 “Popular Mechanics” – Raymond Carver
 “55 Miles to the Gas Pump” – Annie Proulx
 In-Class Exercise 9: Beginning, Middle, End in a very short frame
 Workshop groups A, B, and C submit

2/13 Talk Workshop
 Read: “The School” – Donald Barthelme
 “Rise, Baby, Rise!” – George Saunders
 Sample Workshop Letters
 In-Class Exercise 10: Informally workshop a prompt
 Workshop groups D, E, and F submit
 Due: **Prompt 4 – Write a Scene (or a Flash Piece)**

Week 7 2/18 Informal Workshop 1: Groups A, B, C
 Read: Workshop submissions

Due: Peer feedback

2/20 Informal Workshop 2: Groups D, E, F

Read: Workshop submissions

Due: Peer feedback

Unit 2: Fiction – Shift to More Traditional Workshop Format

Week 8

2/25 Fiction – POV/Shadow Story

Read: “The Black Cat” – Edgar Allan Poe

In-class Exercise 11: Shadow Story.

2/27 Fiction – Setting

Read: “Bloodchild” – Octavia E. Butler

In-Class Exercise 12: Create a World

Due: **Prompt 5 – Ways of Seeing**

Workshop Group A Submits

Week 9

3/4 Fiction – Tension

Read: “Under the Black Water” – Mariana Enriquez

“Gómez Palacio” – Roberto Bolaño

In-class Exercise 13: Suggest and Withhold

3/6 Workshop A

Read: Workshop submissions

Due: Peer feedback

Workshop Group B Submits

Week 10

SPRING BREAK

Week 11

3/18 Fiction – Character

Read: *The Hour of the Star* – Clarice Lispector

In-class Exercise 14: How do you make your character speak?

3/20 Workshop B

Read: Workshop submissions

Due: Peer Feedback

Workshop Group C Submits

Week 12

3/25 Fiction – Dialogue

Read: “Emergency” – Denis Johnson

“What We Talk About When We Talk About Love” –

Raymond Carver

In-class Exercise 15: Behind the conversation

Due: **Prompt 6**

- 3/27 Workshop C
 Read: Workshop submissions
 Due: Peer Feedback
Workshop Group D Submits
- Week 13 4/1 Fiction – Experimentation
 Read: *Here* – Richard McGuire
 In-Class Exercise 16: The Simultaneous Story
Due: Craft Essay 2
Workshop Group E Submits
- 4/3 Workshop D
 Read: Workshop submissions
 Due: Peer feedback
Workshop Group F Submits
- Week 14 4/8 Workshop E
 Read: Workshop Submissions
 Due: Peer feedback
- 4/10 Workshop F
 Read: Workshop Submissions
 Due: Peer feedback
- Week 15 4/15 Revision
 Read: “Performing Surgery Without Anesthesia” – Chris Offutt
- 4/17 Class Reading
- Week 16 4/22 **Final Portfolios Due**

University of Utah Grading Scale

Letter Scoring

A	100% - 94%
A-	93.9% - 90%
B+	89.9%–87%
B	86.9%–84%
B-	83.9% - 80%
C+	79.9%–77%
C	76.9%–74%
C-	73.9% - 70%
D+	69.9%–67%
D	66.9%–64%
D-	63.9% - 60%

E 59.9%–0%

University Policies and Resources:

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities.

All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the [Center for Disability & Access](https://disability.utah.edu/) (CDA) (<https://disability.utah.edu/>). CDA will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. Prior notice is appreciated. To read the full accommodations policy for the University of Utah, please see Section Q of the [Instruction & Evaluation regulations](https://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-100.php) (<https://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-100.php>).

In compliance with ADA requirements, some students may need to record course content. Any recordings of course content are for personal use only, should not be shared, and should never be made publicly available. In addition, recordings must be destroyed at the conclusion of the course.

If you will need accommodations in this class, or for more information about what support they provide, contact:

Center for Disability & Access:

801-581-5020

disability.utah.edu

65 Student Services Building

201 S 1460 E

Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Department of English Anti-Racism Statement

The Department of English at the University of Utah stands with our students from underrepresented populations, including Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Pacific Islander, Asian/Asian American, LGBTQ+, and students with disabilities. We believe English classes expand our capacity to imagine the experiences of others and can help us to identify the organizing frameworks that structure racism, but we recognize that textual interpretation is most powerful in tandem with the real work of racial justice. Therefore, we commit to promoting greater equity and inclusion in our teaching, mentorship, hiring, and research practices. We pledge to be more cognizant of the diverse student experience and to help all of our students plan for the future of their choice.

Academic Misconduct

It is expected that students comply with University of Utah policies regarding academic honesty, including but not limited to refraining from cheating, plagiarizing, misrepresenting one's work,

and/or inappropriately collaborating. This includes the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools without citation, documentation, or authorization. Students are expected to adhere to the prescribed professional and ethical standards of the profession/discipline for which they are preparing. Any student who engages in academic dishonesty or who violates the professional and ethical standards for their profession/discipline may be subject to academic sanctions as per the University of Utah's Student Code: [Policy 6-410: Student Academic Performance, Academic Conduct, and Professional and Ethical Conduct](https://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-410.php) (<https://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-410.php>).

Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and may be punished by failure on an individual assignment, and/or failure in the course. Academic misconduct, according to the University of Utah Student Code:

"...Includes, but is not limited to, cheating, misrepresenting one's work, inappropriately collaborating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of information...It also includes facilitating academic misconduct by intentionally helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic misconduct."

For details on plagiarism and other important course conduct issues, see the U's [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](https://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php) (<https://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>).

Addressing Sexual Misconduct

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status, or genetic information.

If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to university officials:

Title IX Coordinator & Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action

801-581-8365

oeo.utah.edu

135 Park Building

201 Presidents' Cir.

Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Office of the Dean of Students

801-581-7066

deanofstudents.utah.edu

270 Union Building

200 S. Central Campus Dr.

Salt Lake City, UT 84112

To file a police report, contact:

Campus Police & Department of Public Safety
801-585-COPS (801-585-2677)
dps.utah.edu
1735 E. S. Campus Dr.
Salt Lake City, UT 84112

If you do not feel comfortable reporting to authorities, the U's Victim-Survivor Advocates provide free, confidential, and trauma-informed support services to students, faculty, and staff who have experienced interpersonal violence.

To privately explore options and resources available to you with an advocate, contact:

Center for Campus Wellness
801-581-7776
wellness.utah.edu
350 Student Services Building
201 S. 1460 E.
Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Religious Observance

If you have a conflict between a religious holiday and a scheduled class or graded assignment, please contact me **in advance** so that we can make appropriate arrangements for homework and classwork.

Safety at the U

The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more safety information and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit safeu.utah.edu.

To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, contact:

Campus Police & Department of Public Safety:

801-585-COPS (801-585-2677)
dps.utah.edu
1735 E. S. Campus Dr.
Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Required In-Class Attendance Notice

Given the nature of this course, attendance is required and adjustments will only be permitted as required by [Policy 6-100, Section III.O](https://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-100.php#a.III.O) (<https://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-100.php#a.III.O>). If you need to seek an ADA accommodation to request an exception to this attendance policy due to a disability, please contact the [Center for Disability and](#)

[Access](#) (CDA). CDA will work with us to determine what, if any, ADA accommodations are reasonable and appropriate.

Drop/Withdrawal Policy

Students may drop a course within the first two weeks of a given semester without any penalties. Students may officially withdraw (W) from a class or all classes after the drop deadline through the midpoint of a course. A “W” grade is recorded on the transcript and appropriate tuition/fees are assessed. The grade “W” is not used in calculating the student’s GPA.

For deadlines to withdraw from full-term, first, and second session classes, see the U's [Academic Calendar](#) (<https://registrar.utah.edu/academic-calendars/index.php>).

Content Accommodations

All content provided has been carefully selected to guide you toward achievement of the learning objectives established for this course. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your personal knowledge and engagement. With that, there may be some content some students find to be in conflict with their sincerely-held core beliefs.

If applicable, you may choose to request a content accommodation to modify the reading, writing, viewing, listening, or performance requirements in the course. **Be aware that instructors are not required to grant content accommodations.** As per [Policy 6-100, Section III.Q.3](#) (<https://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-100.php#a.III.Q.~:text=Students%20are%20expected,not%20be%20granted.>):

“Students are expected to take courses that will challenge them intellectually and personally. Students must understand and be able to articulate the ideas and theories that are important to the discourse within and among academic disciplines. Personal disagreement with these ideas and theories or their implications is not sufficient grounds for requesting an accommodation. Accommodations requested on such grounds will not be granted. The University recognizes that students' sincerely-held core beliefs may make it difficult for students to fulfill some requirements of some courses or majors. The University assumes no obligation to ensure that all students are able to complete any major.”

It is your responsibility to determine if the course content is in conflict with your sincerely-held core beliefs. If so, please consider dropping the course. If you choose to drop the course, please be aware of the drop/withdrawal deadlines listed on the [Academic Calendar](#).

Basic Needs Collective

Success at The University of Utah includes learning about and using available resources.

The [Basic Needs Collective](#) (BNC) is a coordinated resource referral hub. They educate about and connect students to campus and community resources to help them meet their basic needs. As a central location for resource referrals related to food, housing, health insurance, managing finances, legal services, mental health, etc., any student experiencing difficulties with basic needs is encouraged to contact them. Drop into their office located in the Union basement, or schedule with them online for an in-person or virtual visit through their webpage: basicneeds.utah.edu.

Mandatory Reporting for Sexual Harrassment

Responsible employees are required under University policy to inform the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) of all reports of discrimination or sexual misconduct. Some employees (e.g. campus security authorities, those classified as confidential) are not required to report to OEO, but may have other reporting obligations. [Learn more about how the OEO reporting process functions.](#)

Lauren's Promise

Lauren's Promise is a vow that anyone— faculty, staff, students, parents, and community members— can take to indicate to others that they represent a safe haven for sharing incidents of sexual assault, domestic violence, or stalking. Anyone who makes *Lauren's Promise* vows to:

1. Listen to and believe those individuals who are being threatened or experiencing sexual assault, dating violence or stalking;
2. Represent a safe haven for sharing incidents of sexual assault, domestic violence, or stalking, and;
3. Change campus culture that responds poorly to dating violence and stalking.

By making *Lauren's Promise*, individuals are helping to change campus cultures that respond poorly to dating violence and stalking throughout the nation.

Student Wellness

Your personal health and wellness are essential to your success as a student. Personal concerns like stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, or cross-cultural differences can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive in this course and at the University of Utah. Please feel welcome to reach out to your instructor or TA to handle issues regarding your coursework. For helpful resources to manage your personal wellness and counseling options, contact:

Counseling Services

801-581-6826

counselingcenter.utah.edu

Student Services Building

201 South 1460 East, Rm 426

Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Center for Student Wellness

801-581-7776

wellness.utah.edu

2100 Eccles Student Life Center

1836 Student Life Way

Salt Lake City, UT 84112