ENG 281: Creative Writing, Fall 2019

CRN #3239/Hybrid
Course meets once a week on Wednesday, from 11:00-12:30, Chapman Hall, 709C
Course Credit: 3 credits; credit counts toward meeting degree requirements; course fulfills Aesthetic Dimensions and Creativity TAP General Education Outcomes

Instructor: **Christine Ruggiero, Professor of English**
**Office:** Snow, 520; **Office Phone:** (860) 343-5878
Office Hours: Tuesday, 8:30-9:30 & 12:30-2:00; Wednesday, 9:30-11:00; Thursday, 8:30-9:30 & 12:30-1:30; also by appointment or arranged phone conference

The best way to reach me is through E-mail. If you have a question on a specific assignment which I may need to look at Blackboard Course Content in order to answer, then you should e-mail me in Blackboard. However, for inquiries that do not require my looking at Blackboard files, for quick questions and a more immediate response, e-mail me at cruggiero@mxcc.edu E-mails sent to this address go directly to my cell phone which I check often. Expect responses within 24 hours, depending on the time of the e-mail.
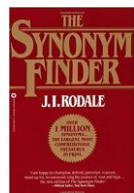
Required Texts:
The Poet's Companion: A Guide to the Pleasures of Writing Poetry (Addonizio & Laux)
What If? Writing Exercises for Fiction Writers (Bernays & Painter)
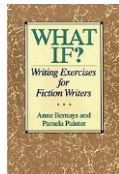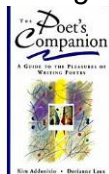
Recommended: *The Synonym Finder*, J.I. Rodale

Course Description:
ENG*281, Creative Writing (3 credits)
Students will learn and practice the craft elements of writing poetry, fiction, and/or non-fiction, examine the works of writers in the genres, and receive and offer critique in workshop setting. Students will submit end of semester portfolio and work for possible publication in *Pegasus* literary journal. *Prerequisite: ENG*101, ENG*101E, or ENG*101ALP.*

Scope of Course:
Students will explore and hone their creative skills in writing poetry, short fiction, and personal narrative while reading, examining, and discussing works in the various genres. Students will use models for understanding and putting into practice the cause and effect relationships of style, form and meaning, while developing voice and technique. As students look to their own lives as a guide or driver for inspiration, they will also aim to reflect in their works recognition of the reader within the writer, expressing the human experience which connects us all.

Students will provide peer feedback, giving thoughtful and critical comments and suggestions. Finally students will not have a comprehensive exam but will be required to submit a final portfolio or host a public reading. Students are also asked to submit 3-5 pieces for possible publication in our college's literary journal, of which I am the faculty editor. Submissions are read and selected by English faculty and student officers in the Creative Writing Club. As this is a partial online course, following directions, reading them more than once, and meeting deadlines are crucial to being successful in the course.

Course Learning Outcomes: Students will demonstrate mastery of the **Creativity** general education core competency by being able to:

- Convey ideas and express aesthetic values with hands-on, creative activities.
- Demonstrate an understanding of practice in a specific medium or genre.
- Present creative projects to an audience.

Course Requirements:
- ❖ Meet all assignment guidelines for both original writing and required "favorites" and other exercises. Remember to meet the number of peer responses for each assignment as indicated on assignment sheets and/or in the descriptions under Blackboard discussion forums.

- ❖ Write five poems; two short stories, and two non-fiction (personal narrative/memoir) pieces, meeting required writing goals.

- ❖ Revise pieces after feedback in workshops. I encourage revision, but it is not required. You may revise three of the five poems, one of the two short stories, as well as one personal narrative piece (time permitting).

- ❖ Submit works for portfolio and or host a public reading; submit works for possible publication in MxCC's creative writing journal, *Pegasus*. Submit 1-2 poems, one short fiction, and/or your memoir piece, any combination of 3-5 pieces. Provide submissions electronically, through this e-mail: MX-Pegasus@mxcc.edu

- ❖ Relinquish the notion of anonymity! In order to succeed in this course, you **must share your work**, supporting one another in meeting writing goals, and reading your work to the group during our once a week workshops on Wednesdays.

- ❖ Regularly and thoughtfully critique others' works (according to suggested guidelines), providing both positive feedback and constructive criticism, starting with what you like about the piece and then explaining what areas may be confusing or alarming or inconsistent before offering suggestions for improvement. Feedback should be as specific as possible. Focus on one or two main areas of each piece for workshops.

❖ Demonstrate a solid command of Standard English and how to manipulate and stylize it. Pay attention to grammar, syntax, and mechanics for stylistic achievement (i.e., know the difference between a sentence fragment and a stylistic fragment).

Grading Criteria:

Poetry: 5 poems, 100 points each	500
Fiction: 2 short stories, 150 points each	300
Memoir: 2 personal narratives, 150 points each	300
Other:	100
Participation:	100
Total:	1,300

Participation points are earned by the following: being present during workshops to review and evaluate peers' work thoughtfully and critically, giving thoughtful and helpful written feedback; and completing discussion postings. This grade is given twice, 50 points at mid-term and 50 points at the end of the term.

Course Withdrawal:
You may withdraw from this class any time by Monday, November 11. A completed and signed withdrawal form (or e-mail) must be on file in the Records Office in order to receive a "W" on your transcript. If you fail to complete this process on time, you will receive a letter grade at the end of the semester, which will include zeroes for any work not submitted. Course withdrawals may affect financial aid and veteran benefits. Please make this decision carefully and with the help of your advisor and/or me. See the College Catalog @ https://mxcc.edu/catalog/ for specific procedures regarding the withdrawal process, and for more information about the college. I encourage you to see me if you have any questions. Also, go to the college calendar for Fall 2019 and note important dates: https://mxcc.edu/catalog/about/calendar/

College Policies:
For information about the college's policies and procedures regarding academic honesty, accessibility/disability services, attendance, audio-recording in the classroom, grade appeals, plagiarism, religious accommodations, weather and emergency closings, and more, please go to the following website: (https://mxcc.edu/catalog/academic-policies/

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT:

Middlesex Community College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religious creed, age, sex, national origin, marital status, ancestry, present or past history of mental disorder, learning disability or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression or genetic information in its programs and activities. In addition, the College does not discriminate in employment on the additional basis of veteran status or criminal record. The following people have been designated to handle inquiries or complaints regarding non-discrimination policies and practices:

Primary Title IX Coordinator Ricardo Barrett, Counselor, Career Development & Counseling Center rbarrett@mxcc.edu; 860-343-5823; Founders Hall Room 121

Secondary Title IX Coordinator Anastasia Pych, Director of Human Resources apych@mxcc.edu; 860-343-5751; Founders Hall Room 115

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"The wastepaper basket is the writer's best friend." *Isaac Bashevis Singer*

"Good writing is rewriting." *Truman Capote*

"The only need is the eye to see." *Willa Cather*

"Let the reader find that he cannot afford to omit any line of your writing because you have omitted every word that he can spare." *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

"The Six Golden Rules of Writing: Read, read, read, and write, write, write." *Ernest Gaines*

"Writing is the only thing that, when I do it, I don't feel I should be doing something else." *Gloria Steinem*

"Reading makes immigrants of us all. It takes us away from home, but more important, it finds homes for us everywhere." - *Jean Rhys*

General Course Information: This is an a hybrid course. Pre-writing readings and exercises will be completed via Blackboard by following Course Content. I will make assignments available one week prior to their due dates. Under course content there are folders that indicate homework due dates and house documents, links when applicable, and directions for readings and writing requirements. Original writing will be posted to discussion boards broken into by groups (Group One and Group Two, after we've met). You will be required to read your peers' pieces in your group, print out their pieces and bring them to Workshop Wednesdays with your comments ready to share. You will be writing your comments on their poems and then handing them to the poet. Again, I'll explain more about this during our first class meeting.

I will be online once or twice per day during the week, checking e-mail, answering any non-technical questions as they arise. If I forget something, such as to make a document available, or unlock a discussion board, please do not panic; that's called human error. And, as soon as I recognize an error or one is pointed out to me, I will work to correct it as quickly as possible and you will never be penalized, in this instance. If you don't hear back from me right away, keep in mind that I am probably teaching, at a meeting, or otherwise indisposed but will check-in again at a later time.

FAQs:

1. **How to title work?:** Titles of your ***word documents for your original writing*** (not discussion board forums or other) should include your first initial, full last name, and the assignment title. For example, if your name is Cindy Johnson and you have completed your first poetry assignment, you will save your document to your computer or wherever you do as: cjohnsonpoemaddressingpoetry and then attach it to your discussion thread.

2. **How to submit work?: Written work for peer review will be submitted as attachments to discussion boards (unless otherwise indicated).** We all need to use the same format, so please remember to **attach as a word document (not as notepad or through google docs link, etc.) If you do not have word, download it for free through your college e-mail by following these instructions:**
http://supportcenter.ct.edu/Service/Office365/Accessing_Student_Advantage.pd

3. **When to submit original writing?:** Most original writing will be due on Mondays, by 11:59 PM. You are not required to post comments prior to class on Wednesday, but you may want to, and I encourage you to. Comments made via Discussion Board postings can then be followed-up on during Workshop Wednesdays. Writers will be able to take notes on their peers' feedback and ask questions during workshops for clarification. It's difficult to repress the urge to explain your work, but rather than tell us what you intended, you will focus on listening to how others analyze your writing, looking for where you might want to revise to achieve your personal goals.

4. **When to submit final drafts?:** You will submit final drafts to assignment drop boxes. These will be open until Friday at 11:59 PM. The idea is to give you feedback during workshops and then for you to have the opportunity to work on your piece more (if you so choose).

5. **When to submit other work?:** Quite a bit of reading to support the writing tasks will be required via discussion forum postings to help support your original writing. It's easy to get the full points for these. Respond to at least three peers (not in your group) and be comprehensive rather than sparse in your comments and analyses on what you've read.

6. **How to boost your grade?:** At one or two points during the semester, there will be poetry readings/events on campus for which your attendance and/or participation will earn you 3 points, added to your final grade at the end of the semester, so look for these announcements and incentive opportunities. Revise according to the opportunities you are provided, as stated in the syllabus. Throughout the semester, I will remind you of when revisions are due.

The course structure will be explained during our first meeting on Wednesday, August 28

Course Schedule Overview:

Specific Assignment Requirements and Guidelines will be provided in Course Content Folders

Poetry: Sept-Oct (All readings that are not in links are in *Poet's Companion*)

POEM #1:   Poem on Poetry (inspired by Alice Walker and Billy Collins, along with web links provided on Blackboard); what kind of relationship do you have with poetry? What would you say to poetry, given the chance? See assignment document/Blackboard and definition.

POEM #2:   Poem using Simile and Metaphor; read "Images," "Voice and Style," and Simile and Metaphor." See assignment document/Blackboard and favorite poem assignment.

POEM #3:   Poem on Diving Down into the Murky Depths: read "Writing and Knowing" (19-28); "The Family," (30-36); and "The Shadow" (56-61), and links and sample poems in the folder. Favorite Poem assignment and poetry assignment (see document/Blackboard).

POEM #4:   Poems centering on form; read "The Music of the Line" (104-112); "Meter, Rhyme, and Form," (138-148); and "More Repetition: Villanelle, Pantoum, Sestina (161-170); and links. Favorite Poem assignment based on Music of the Line or More Repetition and poetry assignment (see document/Blackboard).

POEM #5:   Choose one option -- Option A: Poem a Day OR Poem for an Occasion (see document/explanation/Blackboard folder).

OR

POEM #6:   You choose: Specific memory poem on something you wish you didn't remember; OR a poem of protest, subject matter of your choosing

Short fiction: Oct-Nov (All readings are provided as links, documents, or can be located in *What If?*)

Readings: *What If?* 1-33; 35-58; other readings specified in Blackboard folders
 "Soldier's Home,"
 "Hills Like White Elephants,"
 "The Storm"
 "Everything that Rises Must Converge"

Dialogue: Links/documents specified in appropriate Blackboard folders

Writing: Favorite short story assignment
 What If?   5 opening lines; and 6 opening lines - workshop
 Short Story 1 – workshop
 Writing Two Scenes
 Short Story 2 – workshop

Personal Narrative/Memoir: Nov-Dec

Readings: All samples are links provided in Blackboard folder; differences between personal narrative and memoir

Writing: Memoir/personal narratives assignment
               Personal narrative 1 – workshop
               Personal narrative 2 – workshop

Last Day of Class: Wednesday, Dec. 4; Final Exam time: Wednesday, Dec. 11