

ENG 281: Creative Writing



CRN #1131/Online
Course Runs 1/17- 5/8

Course Prerequisite: ENG 101
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: T, W, 8:30-9:30; TH, 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 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 a more immediate response, e-mail me at cuggiero@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, if not sooner.

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 Text:

The Synonym Finder by 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 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 an online course, following directions, reading them more than once, and meeting deadlines are crucial to being successful in the course.

ENG 281, Creative Writing

This course is important because it will introduce students to various genres of creative writing, such as poetry, fiction, and creative non-fiction, among others, as well as hone their skills in the creation of the works they produce. English 281 meets all general education core competencies but Mathematical Reasoning.

- **Communication:**
The interactive process through which there is an exchange of verbal and/or nonverbal information.
- **Cultural Awareness:**
Acknowledgement that society is diverse with groups of individuals possessing differing beliefs, values, attitudes, and customs that are shared from one generation to the next.
- **Social and Civic Responsibility:**
Behavior that demonstrates adherence to legal/ethical standards established by society.
- **Critical Thinking:**
Modes of reasoning including analyzing data, evaluating alternatives, setting priorities, and predicting outcomes.
- **Mathematical Reasoning:**
Determination of approach, materials, and strategies necessary to solve a problem.
- **Technology Utilization:**
Use tools of the trade to achieve a specific outcome.

These core competencies are important personally, academically, and professionally. The outcomes, as stated in the syllabus, are covered in this course. This course may be used to meet program requirements in General Studies and other select programs.

Course Requirements:

- ❖ Meet all assignment guidelines for both graded writing and required exercises (in My Grades, these exercises will be marked "complete" or "incomplete" and count towards participation, worth 100 points of your grade)
- ❖ Write five poems; two short stories, and two non-fiction (personal narrative/memoir) pieces, meeting required writing goals.
- ❖ Revise pieces according to instructor and peer feedback for a potentially higher grade. Revise and **any three of the five poems and submit within one week from the date I return your first drafts.** You may revise one of the two short stories, as well as one personal narrative piece.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ 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
Participation:		100
Total:		1,200

Participation points are earned by the following: completing the exercises which are graded "complete/incomplete;" reviewing and evaluating peers' work thoughtfully and critically, giving thoughtful and helpful written feedback; completing discussion postings.

Course Withdrawal:

You may withdraw from this class any time by Monday, April 16. 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 Academic Calendar and the College Catalog for specific dates and procedures regarding the withdrawal process. I encourage you to see me if you have any questions.

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: www.mxcc.edu/catalog/syllabus-policies/ or scan the QR code with your smart phone. Also, please become familiar with the policies regarding nondiscrimination, sexual misconduct, and general student conduct at the following website: www.mxcc.edu/nondiscrimination/.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY 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
Dr. Adrienne Maslin; Dean of Students/Title IX and Section 504/ADA Coordinator
amaslin@mxcc.edu; 860-343-5759; Founders Hall Room 123
- **Ms. Anastasia Pych**, Director of Human Resources and Labor Relations
apych@mxcc.edu; 860-343-5751; Founder Hall 115

"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

This is an online course. However, it is not at your own pace. 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.

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 in my ground classes or otherwise indisposed but will check-in again at a later time.

Directions based upon FAQs:

1. **How to title your work:** Titles of your documents should include your first initial, full last name, and the assignment title. For example, if your name is Cindy Johnson and you are submitting your first poetry assignment, you would title your document: cjohnsonpoemaddressingpoetry
2. **How to submit work: Written work should be submitted as attachments to discussion boards (unless otherwise indicated).** If they are not submitted as an attachment when I ask them to be, I will not read them, and you will get a zero for that assignment. I cannot use track changes to make comments when you copy and paste your work into discussion postings or e-mail. Remember to **attach as a word or rich text document (not as notepad, etc.) If you do not**

have word, you can download it for free from your college e-mail by following these instructions:

http://supportcenter.ct.edu/Service/Office365/Accessing_Student_Advantage.pd

- 3. When to submit work:** Most assignments will be given a due date of 11:59 p.m. on whatever day they are due, will be due every two-three days and will include quite a bit of reading to support the writing task.
- 4. 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 3-5 points, added to your final grade at the end of the semester, so look for these announcements and incentive opportunities.

Course Schedule Overview:

All work will be explained and provided in course content in folders by title and due date

Poetry: Jan-Feb (All readings that are not 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).
- 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: March (All readings that are not links or provided in the folders are in *What If?*)

Readings

Overview: *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
Short Story 2 – workshop

Personal Narrative/Memoir: April-May

Readings

Overview: 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

Class ends: May 5

