SPECIAL TOPICS IN LITERATURE: ADVANCED FICTION WRITING
ENGL 5800-01 (Fall 2014)
(CRN ) TR 3:35-4:50pm—T222 (Clayton Hall)

Dr. Brigitte Byrd  Office: A&S 105E
brigittebyrd@clayton.edu  Office Phone: (678) 466-4556
http://faculty.clayton.edu/bbyrd
Office hours: TR 1:30-2:00, TR 5:00-6:00 & by appointment

Individuals with disabilities who need to request accommodations should contact the Disability Services Coordinator, Student Center 255, 678-466-5445, disabilityservices@mail.clayton.edu.

Course Description:
3.0 semester credit hours (3-0-3)

Catalog Description: ENGL 5800—Selected Topics in Literature and Culture (3-0-3). A graduate-level seminar on special topics important to professional, postgraduate liberal studies. Typical areas of emphasis will include significant literary movements within a particular era of American, British or postcolonial cultures, major authors, and/or attention to a specific genre. Course content will include some attention to historical context, research methods, and applied critical theory.

Topic: Advanced Fiction Writing: A workshop intensive instruction in fiction writing. Students will study the fiction writing craft and technique and produce their own short fiction.

Course Objective:
* Understanding of and practice in fiction writing through a series of exercises focused on specific elements of the craft.
* Familiarization with the work of major international and American contemporary fiction writers as well as with new voices in today’s American fiction through student presentations and discussions.
* Creating and composing a work of short fiction using the fiction technique studied in class in view of building a writing portfolio / sample in creative writing.
* Experiencing literary readings/events by attending the CSU Visiting Writers Reading Series reading and event by our guest fiction writer (TBA)
* Experiencing reading one’s own work in front of an audience by participating in the CSU Creative Writing Student Reading.
* Practice of critical skills.
* Practice of communication skills.
NOTE: I will provide you with a schedule of literary events taking place during the semester. Check the link on the English Department homepage for a schedule of the Clayton State University Visiting Writers Fall 2013.

Computer Requirement:
Each CSU student is required to have ready access throughout the semester to a notebook computer that meets faculty-approved hardware and software requirements for the student's academic program. Students will sign a statement attesting to such access. For further information on CSU's Official Notebook Computer Policy, please go to http://itpchoice.clayton.edu/policy.htm.

Computer Skill Prerequisites:
- Able to use the Windows TM operating system
- Able to use Microsoft Word™ word processing
- Able to send and receive e-mail using Outlook™ or Outlook Express™
- Able to attach and retrieve attached files via email
- Able to use a Web browser.

In-class Use of Student Notebook Computers:
Student notebook computers will not be used in the classroom except for presentations. Students must make sure their computers are compatible with the technology in our classrooms by making an appointment at the HUB. Computers are required to access course materials and to communicate with me.

Program Learning Outcomes: http://www.clayton.edu/mals/Learning-Outcomes
1. Investigate and synthesize research data and ideas from interdisciplinary perspectives.
2. Integrate research methodologies from two or more disciplines in a research proposal.
3. Produce an interdisciplinary understanding of a complex problem or intellectual question.
4. Demonstrate an awareness of the diverse social contexts in which the liberal studies are pursued and debated, including, but not limited to, political, historical, material, cultural, racial, ethnic, national and geographical contexts.
5. Demonstrate advanced critical thinking skills at levels required for effective performance in professional and other social or cultural contexts.
6. Demonstrate advanced communication skills (written, spoken, computer-assisted) at levels required for effective performance in professional and other social or cultural contexts.

Course Learning Outcomes:
This course especially addresses the MALS program outcomes 4 & 6:
4. Demonstrate an awareness of the diverse social contexts in which the liberal studies are pursued and debated, including, but not limited to, political, historical, material, cultural, racial, ethnic, national and geographical contexts.
6. Demonstrate advanced communication skills (written, spoken, computer-assisted) at levels required for effective performance in professional and other social or cultural contexts.

Text Book Information:
Required Texts:
Fiction Writer's Workshop, (2nd edition), Josip Novakovich
The Best American Short Stories 2014, ed. Jennifer Egan and Heidi Pitlor

Love & Trouble: Stories of Black Women, Alice Walker

Bombingham, Anthony Grooms

Additional Required Materials:
A notebook
Manila folders in which you will turn your assignments and portfolios
$25 for copying expenses

Evaluation:
In order to receive a C in this course, you must turn in all the written work below on time and actively contribute to workshops and presentations. Remember that attendance is required and that after 4 absences, your overall grade starts dropping. Attendance is mandatory for all workshops and presentations. Attendance to 2 literary readings/events from the Clayton State University Visiting Writers Reading Series (or from another series, if needed) AND participation in the CSU Creative Writing Students Reading is also mandatory. By “mandatory” I mean that failing to comply with the previous requirements will result in dropping one letter grade from your overall grade.

Midterm Portfolio (40%):
- 6 blogs (reading responses) 10%
- 5 finished & typed exercises 10%
- 1 fiction book presentation (Love & Trouble) 10%
- Participation 10%

Final Portfolio (60%):
- 12 blogs (reading responses) 10%

Note: the last three blogs will be responses to the three events from the Clayton State University Visiting Writers Series (or other reading series, if needed) you are required to attend this semester.

- 1 fiction book presentation (Bombingham) 10%
- 2 Short-stories presentations 10%
- Finished, typed and thoroughly revised short story (or two short-short stories) 20%
- Participation 10%

PLUS mandatory items below:
- Exercise 6 typed and revised
- First draft of short story (or 2 short-short stories) brought to the workshop
- Process memo
- Peer response evaluation sheet

Grading:
A 90 - 100% Outstanding Achievement: Significantly Exceeds Standards
B 80 - 89% Commendable Achievement: Exceeds Standards
C 70 - 79% Acceptable Achievement: Meets Standards
D 60 - 69% Marginal Achievement: Below Standards
F below 60% Failing

Mid-term Progress Report:
The mid-term grade in this course, which will be issued on October 7th, reflects approximately 30% of the entire course grade. Based on this grade, students may choose to withdraw from the course and receive a grade of "W." Students pursuing this option must fill out an official withdrawal form, available in the Office of the Registrar, or withdraw on-line using the Swan by mid-term, which occurs on October 10th. Instructions for withdrawing are provided at this link.
http://www.clayton.edu/registrar/withdrawal
The last day to withdraw without academic accountability is Friday, October 10th, 2014.

Course Policies:
General Policy:
Students must abide by policies in the Clayton State University Student Handbook
http://www.clayton.edu/Portals/46/docs/student-handbook.pdf
and the Basic Undergraduate Student Responsibilities
http://www.clayton.edu/Portals/5/BasicUndergraduateStudentResponsibilities.pdf

University Attendance Policy: Students are expected to attend and participate in every class meeting. Instructors establish specific policies relating to absences in their courses and communicate these policies to the students through the course syllabi. Individual instructors, based upon the nature of the course, determine what effect excused and unexcused absences have in determining grades and upon students’ ability to remain enrolled in their courses. The university reserves the right to determine that excessive absences, whether justified or not, are sufficient cause for institutional withdrawals or failing grades.

Course Attendance Policy: Attendance is expected for all class periods. Attendance is mandatory for all presentations and workshops. Attendance to two literary readings/events from the Clayton State University Visiting Writers Reading Series (or if unable to attend these, to two events from other reading series) AND participation in the CSU Creative Writing Students Reading Series is also mandatory. By “mandatory” I mean that failing to comply with the previous requirements will result in dropping one letter grade from your overall grade. Any absence after 2 excused or unexcused absences will affect your participation grade. After 4 excused or unexcused absences, your overall grade for the course will drop one letter grade. Remember that I do not accept late work (this includes portfolios, group presentations, distribution of work before workshops, comments on works due to workshop, as well as notes, journal responses and exercises before the portfolios are turned in (see “Late Work Policy” below).

**You will notice that I have canceled one class meeting this semester in order to make up for your attendance to the Clayton State University Visiting Writers Reading Series Fall 2014 and the CSU Creative Writing Students Reading as these events are scheduled outside of class meetings.

Tardiness:
Although I understand that circumstances may occur so that a student may be 5 minutes late to class, being repetitively late 15 minutes or more to class disturbs class. Four instances of 15 minutes or more tardiness to class will result in one absence.
Late Work Policy: I do not accept late work. Late work will receive a zero unless arrangements are made between us before a planned absence or immediately after class, in the case of a personal emergency. Once we have made arrangements, you will turn the work in question directly to me.

Academic Dishonesty:
Any type of activity that is considered dishonest by reasonable standards may constitute academic misconduct. The most common forms of academic misconduct are cheating and plagiarism. All instances of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of zero for the work involved. All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Community Standards. Judicial procedures are described in the Student Resource Handbook (Procedures for Adjudicating Alleged Academic Conduct Infractions beginning on page 16).

Plagiarism Detection Software:
Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. You should submit your papers in such a way that no identifying information about you is included.

Disruption of the Learning Environment:
Behavior which disrupts the teaching–learning process during class activities will not be tolerated. While a variety of behaviors can be disruptive in a classroom setting, more serious examples include belligerent, abusive, profane, and/or threatening behavior. A student who fails to respond to reasonable faculty direction regarding classroom behavior and/or behavior while participating in classroom activities may be dismissed from class. A student who is dismissed is entitled to due process and will be afforded such rights as soon as possible following dismissal. If found in violation, a student may be administratively withdrawn and may receive a grade of WF.

A more detailed description of examples of disruptive behavior and appeal procedures is provided at: http://www.clayton.edu/Portals/5/DisruptiveClassroomBehavior.pdf

Writing Assistance:
The Writers’ Studio 224 is located in the A&S building, room 224. There you can talk with trained writing consultants about your writing projects. They are available to work with you at any stage of your paper, from generating ideas to organizing your paper to understanding how to format it correctly. The service is free; you may drop in and wait for a consultant or sign up for a regular appointment. But remember: you, not your consultant, are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the papers you submit.

Aside from meeting with consultants one-with-one, you can also participate in writing workshops. In these workshops, faculty and consultants will guide you in discussions and activities important to academic writing topics. You will be identify, analyze, integrate, and synthesize writing principles through a series of writing exercises. Remember that we are here to collaborate with you as you develop your own experiences as a student-writer.

Visit our website for more information: http://clayton.edu/writersstudio.
There you will find a link to register for appointments online:

http://clayton.mywconline.com
You will need to do a one-time registration. Simply click on the “Click here to register” link once at MYWCONLINE.

**Other Policies (Specific to this Course):**

**Reading Journal Blogs (20%):**
You will create a blog using Tumblr.com. We will talk about this requirement in class, and I will provide individual guidance to students during my office hours when needed. Creating a blog and practicing blogging is a fun assignment and an excellent learning tool. My blog for creative writing classes: [http://byrdology.tumblr.com/](http://byrdology.tumblr.com/)

For the purpose of clarity, I ask you to number your entries on the blog since you are required to post each new journal response blog. Remember that I do not accept late work, so make sure your blogs are posted by the date written on the schedule.

You will respond to each reading assigned. I am looking for an engagement with the text and most particularly for a study of the technique employed by the author (actually, I recommend that you focus on the specific element of technique scheduled for study at the time we read a story). *I do not want a synopsis of the text.* Length: half a page single-spaced.

**Exercises (10%):**

After starting most of the exercises in class, you will finish them at home, type and edit them before placing them in your folder.

**2 Short Story Presentations (10%):**

You will present one of the stories we will study. When presenting a story look at the craft, style, etc. and be ready to lead the class discussion. It may help for you to take notes on setting, viewpoint, characterization, dialogue, plot (and give a plot line), conflict, imagery, structure of sentences, etc.

**2 Fiction Books Presentations 20%:**

You will present a collection of short stories (*Love & Trouble*) and a novel (*Bombingham*). When presenting a book, focus on the author’s work, his/her craft, style, etc. Find out about influences. Remember to read and use reviews of the book.

**Note on presentations evaluation:**

1. Research your topic carefully and provide your sources to the audience.
2. Come prepared for presentation (computer compatibility checked by the HUB, notes in hand, all electronic material tested and ready to project)
3. Professional attire (Your clothes communicate identity, personality, and image. Attire is the first thing your audience will see during your presentation. They will be more open to your message if you carry yourself with confidence. And you’ll feel more certain of yourself if you’re dressed in appropriate yet comfortable clothing. The most important principle is to match your appearance to the occasion and the audience. If you’re giving a presentation to a class, dressing slightly more formally than you do every day is fine. Don’t dress as if you’re headed to a wedding or a nightclub!)
4. Turn in a presentation outline at the beginning of your presentation
5. Speak clearly. If you read from a document, make sure to lift your gaze from your paper regularly and make eye contact with your audience.
6. Use technology to show images and/or film/video excerpts and to play music.
7. If you choose to use a power point, do not read from the screen. Your presentation needs to be entertaining.

8. Involve your audience in the presentation by asking questions.

9. Stay on topic

10. Respect the time frame allotted for your presentation

**Short Story (20%):**
You will write a short story or two short-short stories.

*Note on evaluation of short stories: include each one of the elements of the craft such as setting, characterization, dialogue, point of view, scenes, tension, plot, imagery, word choice, authenticity and voice. The first paragraph will include: a strong first sentence acting as a hook, the main characters, and a sense of tension. The last paragraph will include a strong image that will remain with the reader.*

**Process Memo:**
Write a few paragraphs in which you reflect on the effect of the workshop on your writing and assess your progress in writing (i.e. what you have learned in this course, how it has affected your composition and writing process, and what changes you made to your work as a result).

**Peer Response Evaluation Sheet:**
You will evaluate the comments each one of your peer gave on your work. Obviously, each student is expected to provide constructive comments to his/her peers. This evaluation is not based on personal agreement or disagreement but on the quality of feedbacks.

**Visiting Writers Reading Series:**
Required attendance to 2 literary readings/events (preferably from the Clayton State University Visiting Writers Reading Series) AND participation in the CSU Creative Writing Students Reading. If your school and/or work schedule prevent you from attending the Clayton State University Visiting Writers Reading Series, you need to see me by September 15th so that we may make other arrangements. *Remember to add the list of the readings/events you attended to your final portfolio.*

**Conferences:**
I encourage students to visit me during my office hours. By making appointments in advance during my office hours, you make sure that I have reserved a particular time for our meeting.

* * * * *

**Course Schedule:**
NOTE: I will refer to the following texts as indicated below.

FW for *Fiction Writer’s Workshop*

BASS for *Best American Short Stories 2014*

As most writers do, you will keep a small notebook with you at all time during this term so that you can record thoughts, dreams, observations, and start a list of words. Your notebook then becomes a pool of words and ideas for you to use in your creative work.
ENGLISH MAJORS: REMEMBER TO KEEP YOUR FINAL PIECE (SHORT ESSAY, SHORT SHORT-STORY, OR GROUP OF POEMS) FROM THIS CLASS SO THAT YOU MAY USE IT IN THE REQUIRED CAPSTONE CLASS AND ADD IT TO YOUR PORTFOLIO BEFORE GRADUATING!

Knowing the proper terminology for fiction writing will allow you to use it clearly inside and outside the classroom, and it will prepare some of you to exit exams or GACE, for instance.

**Week 1**
8/19 Course introduction
8/21 Introduction to peers / writing genres review

**Week 2**
8/26 FW “Introduction” and “Sources of Fiction” 4-20
8/28 FW O’Connor 256-65 (reading journal 1), exercise 1 started in class (#3 in FW 21), sign up for individual presentations

**Week 3**
9/02 Exercise 1 due in class
9/04 FW “Setting” 26-39, FW Cisneros 310-13 (reading journal 2), exercise 2 started in class (# 13 in FW 43)

**Week 4**
9/09 FW Ha Jin 266-76 (reading journal 3), exercise 2 due in class
9/11 FW “Character” 45-58, start exercise 3 (#9 in FW 61)

**Week 5**
9/16 FW Hemley 278-84 (reading journal 4), exercise 3 due in class
9/18 bring 1 copy of exercises 1, 2 and 3 finished and typed for small group workshop

**Week 6 (College of Arts & Sciences Reading Series: Pearl Cleage)**
9/23 FW “Plot” 64-80, exercise 4 due in class (#10 in FW 83), * (reading journal 5)
9/26 FW “Point of View” 87-103, exercise 5 due in class (either #1 in FW 103 OR # 8 in FW 106)

**Week 7**
9/30 FW “Dialogue and Scene” 110-24, * (reading journal 6)
10/02 Midterm portfolio due, sign up for workshop and group presentations

**Workshop Groups:**
Group 1: ,
Group 2: ,
Group 3: ,
Group 4: ,
Group 5: ,
Group 6: ,

**Group Presentations:**
Group 1: ,
Group 2: ,
Group 3: ,


Group 4: ____________, ____________
Group 5: ____________, ____________
Group 6: ____________, ____________

**Week 8**
10/07 exercise 6 due in class (# 2 in WF 125), __________ *(reading journal 7) *(bring 2 copies of exercise 6 for small group workshop (remember to keep this exercise for your final portfolio)*
10/09 __________ *(reading journal 8)

**Week 9**
10/14 NO CLASS/FALL BREAK
10/16 FW “Beginnings and Endings” 130-46, __________ BASS/TBA (reading journal 9)

**Week 10**
10/21 FW “Description and Word Choice” 151-65, __________ BASS/ TBA (reading journal 10)
10/23 FW “Voice” 170-84, __________ BASS/ TBA (reading journal 11)

**Week 11**
10/28 FW “Revision” 190-202, __________ BASS/ TBA (reading journal 12)
10/30 __________ BASS/ TBA (reading journal 13), **group 1 distribute short stories to class**

**Week 12 (Visiting Writers Reading Series: Anthony Grooms, Thursday 11/06)**
11/04 Workshop group 1, group 2 distribute short stories to class, BASS/ TBA (reading journal 14)
11/06 Workshop group 2, group 3 distribute short stories to class, BASS/ TBA (reading journal 15)

**Week 13**
11/11 Workshop group 3, group 4 distributes short stories to class
11/13 Workshop group 4, group 5 distributes short stories to class

**Week 14 (Creative Writing Students Reading, Thursday 11/20 at 5pm, Writers Studio)**
11/18 Workshop group 5, group 6 distributes short stories to class
11/20 Workshop group 6

**Week 15**
11/25 No class meeting for CSU literary reading/event (TBA) and CRW Students Reading
11/27 NO CLASS/THANKSGIVING BREAK

**Week 16**
12/02 Work on group presentations, **Final portfolio due in class** *(make sure to include process memo & peer response evaluation & remember that reading journals 8, 9 & 10 are one paragraph each on reading events you attended!), work on group presentations*
12/04 Work on group presentations

**Week 17 (Finals week)**
12/09 Final exam at 2:45pm