INTRODUCTION TO CREATIVE WRITING-ENGL 3800-03 (CRN 83640)  
(Fall 2005— MW 6:00-7:15pm--G131 (Arts & Sciences Bldg)

Dr. Brigitte Byrd  
Office: A &S 210M  
brigittebyrd@mail.clayton.edu  
Office Phone: (770) 961-3622  
http://a-s.clayton.edu/bbyrd/  
Office hours: TBA and by appointment

Texts:
Tell It Slant, ed. Brenda Miller and Suzanne Paola  
Short Fiction by 33 Writers, ed. Mark Winegardner  
Poemcrazy, Susan Goldsmith Wooldridge

NOTE: I will use these texts again, along with others, in Advanced Creative Writing courses, so you might want to hang on to them.

Additional Required Materials:
Floppy disks  
2 manila folders in which you will turn your midterm and final portfolios  
$25 for copying expenses

Notebook 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.

In-class Use of Student Notebook Computers:
Student notebook computers will not be used in the classroom except for presentations if needed. Computers are required to access course materials and to communicate with me.

Catalog Description:
Introductory study in imaginative writing emphasizing both selected readings in poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction and student writing in these genres.

Course Objectives:
In this course, you will be introduced to the craft of writing creative nonfiction, fiction, and poetry. We will start with the study of the basics of good writing in any form, with an emphasis on prose writing, first: scene versus exposition, specificity and detail, developing character, dialogue, point of view, the rhythm of sentences, and image and metaphor. As we study each one of these elements of prose writing, we will read from a series of selected creative nonfiction and fiction pieces. This reading will provide you with models for your own prose writing.
As the semester progresses, we will focus on poetry writing, especially on the concepts of concreteness (vs. abstraction), image, sound effects, rhythm, and shape. There again, we will read from a selection of poems which will serve as models for your poetry writing.

Through a broad array of exercises, you will write in all genres during the semester. The final portfolio will be a body of work including your favorite piece (nonfiction, fiction, or poetry), which you will revise thoroughly (we will workshop this piece).

In order for you to spend time on your revisions, the last week of class will be devoted to group presentations/performances. Each group will select a piece of either creative nonfiction, fiction, or poetry we have not read over the semester, distribute it to the class, and perform it creatively.

NOTE: I will provide you with a schedule of literary events taking place during the semester.

**Reading Response Journals:**
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 (rather maybe of one particular aspect of it) employed by its author. I do not want a synopsis of the text: we all read the text thus know what it is about. Length: half a page single-spaced.

**Exercises:**
After starting most of the exercises in class, you will finish them at home, type and edit them before placing them in your folder. These exercises are designed to prompt you into writing a longer piece eventually.

**Late work Policy:**
I do not accept late work. Late work will receive a 0 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 paper in question directly to me.

**Presentation / Performance:**
Presentations will occur at the end of the semester. These are group projects. Each group will choose a text we have not read in class—make sure to run it by me beforehand—make copies of the text for the rest of the class and perform this text using another medium.

**Conferences:**
Although I encourage students to visit me during my office hours, I also required 2 mandatory conferences. Not showing up at a scheduled conference is the equivalent of 2 absences.

**University Policies:**
Students must abide by policies in the Clayton State University Student Handbook, and the Basic Undergraduate Student Responsibilities.

**Attendance:**
Attendance is expected for all class periods. Attendance is mandatory for workshops and presentations. An excused absence is an absence for which you provide me with a note from your doctor or other competent authority. Any absence after 2 excused absences will affect your participation grade. After 6 excused or unexcused absences, your overall grade for the course will drop one letter grade then one additional letter grade for each additional absence.

**Plagiarism:**
Any type of activity that is considered dishonest by reasonable standards may constitute academic misconduct. Plagiarism is one of the most common forms of academic misconduct. It will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is a counterproductive, non-writing behavior that is unacceptable in a course intended to aid the growth of individual writers. Plagiarism is representing another’s work or part thereof, be it published or unpublished, as one’s own. 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 Student Life/Judicial Affairs. Judicial procedures are described at http://adminservices.clayton.edu/studentlife/judicial_affairs.htm.

**Disability Services:**
Individuals with disabilities who need to request accommodations should contact the Disability Services Coordinator, Student Center 214, 770-961-3719, disabilityservices@mail.clayton.edu.

**Evaluation:**
In order to receive a C in this course, you must turn in all the written work below on time and contribute to a presentation/performance. Remember that attendance is required and that after 6 absences, your overall grade starts dropping.

**Midterm Portfolio (30%):**
- 10 typed reading journal responses 10%
- 5 finished and typed exercises 10%
- Participation 10%

**Final Portfolio (70%):**
- 10 typed reading journal responses 10%
- 5 finished and typed exercises 10%
- 1 finished, typed and thoroughly revised piece 20%
- Presentation / Performance 10%
- Participation 10%
- Small notebook and recording of poems 10%
Peers response evaluation sheet

Grading:

- **A** 90 - 100%
- **B** 80 - 89%
- **C** 70 - 79%
- **D** 60 - 69%
- **F** below 60%

**Mid-term Progress Report**
The mid-term grade in this course which will be issued on October 10, 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, by mid-term, which occurs on October 14.

**Important dates:**
- 9/07  Schedule a conference
- 9/28  Midterm Portfolio due in class
- 10/14  Last day to drop without academic accountability
- 11/16  Schedule a conference
- 12/07  Final Portfolio due in class

**Course Schedule:**

NOTE: I will refer to the texts as indicated below.
- TIS for *Tell It Slant*
- X33 for *Short Fiction by 33 Writers*
- PC for *Poemcrazy*

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.

**Week 1**
- 8/22  Introduction to the course
- 8/24  Introduction to peers

**Creative Nonfiction Unit**
Week 2
8/29  TIS 8-21, reading journal 1
8/31  TIS Richard Selzer 305-402, reading journal 2, in-class exercise 1 (scene vs. exposition)

Week 3
9/05  NO CLASS (Labor Day)
9/07  TIS Lawrence Sutin 410-15, reading journal 3, in-class exercise 2 (developing character), handout distributed (Geoff Dyer), Sign up for a conference

Week 4
9/12  Handout Geoff Dyer, reading journal 4, exercise 3 due (dialogue), TIS 28-46, reading journal 5
9/14  TIS M.F.K. Fisher 296-97, reading journal 6, Paisley Rekdal 378-83, reading journal 7, in-class exercise 4 (taste)

Week 5
9/19  TIS Brent Staples 405-09, reading journal 8, in-class exercise 5 (sound)—don’t forget to bring a CD of music to class today!
9/21  MANDATORY CONFERENCE: NO CLASS MEETING

Fiction Unit

Week 6
9/26  MANDATORY CONFERENCE: NO CLASS MEETING
9/28  X33 Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni 453-65, reading journal 9, Gish Jen 584-89, reading journal 10, Midterm portfolio due in class

Week 7
10/03  X33 Toni Cade Bambara 107-12, reading journal 1, in-class exercise 1 (plot)
10/05  X33 Robert Olen-Butler 325-29, reading journal 2, exercise 2 due in class (point of view)

Week 8
10/10  X33 Jamaica Kincaid 611, reading journal 3, Kincaid 616-28, reading journal 4
10/12  X33 Donald Barthelme 184-85, reading journal 5, Barthelme 186-92, reading journal 6

Poetry Unit

NOTE: You must sign on to Poetry Daily on the web at http://www.poems.com and read a new poem everyday—at least during this unit. You will keep a record of the poems posted on MTWR of weeks 9-12 by writing down the name of the author, the name of the poem, a passage from the poem which you find particularly interesting.

Week 9
10/17  PC 2-23, reading journal 7, exercise 3 due in class (image)
10/19  PC 23-46, reading journal 8

Week 10
10/24  PC 48-73, reading journal 9, exercise 4 due in class (concreteness and abstraction)
10/26  PC 74-93, reading journal 10, group 1 distributes selected piece to class

Week 11
10/31  Workshop group 1, group 2 distributes selected piece to class
11/02  Workshop group 2, group 3 distributes selected piece to class

Week 12
11/07  Workshop group 3, group 4 distributes selected piece to class
11/09  Workshop group 4, group 5 distributes selected piece to class

Week 13
11/14  Workshop group 5, group 6 distributes selected piece to class
11/16  Workshop group 6, group 7 distributes selected piece to class, sign up for a conference

Week 14
11/21  Workshop group 7
11/23  NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING

Week 15
11/28  MANDATORY CONFERENCE: NO CLASS MEETING
11/30  MANDATORY CONFERENCE: NO CLASS MEETING

Week 16
12/05  MANDATORY PRESENTATION / PERFORMANCE
12/07  MANDATORY PRESENTATION / PERFORMANCE, Final portfolio due in class

Week 17 (Finals week)