INTRODUCTION TO CREATIVE WRITING / ENGL 3800 (Spring 2010)
Section 01 (CRN 24904)
TR 1410-1525—U 268 (James M. Baker University)

Dr. Brigitte Byrd
brigittebyrd@clayton.edu
http://a-s.clayton.edu/langlit/faculty/Byrd.htm
Office: A&S 210M
Office Phone: (678) 466-4556
Office hours: 1530-1700
(and by appointment)

Texts:
Tell It Slant, ed. Brenda Miller and Suzanne Paola
New Sudden Fiction, ed. Robert Shapard & James Thomas
Poemcrazy, Susan Goldsmith Wooldridge

NOTE: I will use these texts again, along with others, in Advanced Creative Writing courses, so you may keep them.

Additional Required Materials:
A notebook
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 selected readings in poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction as well as student writing in these genres.

From Student Learning Outcome for all English Majors
1. Analyze and evaluate texts that reflect diverse genres, time periods, and cultures.
4. Produce a variety of materials, including oral presentations, for a range of rhetorical contexts.

Student Learning Outcome:
* Introduction and study of the writing craft in creative nonfiction, fiction, and poetry through reading assignments in all three genres and through attendance to readings.
* Understanding and practice of the craft in prose writing through exercises: scene vs. exposition, specificity and detail, characterization, dialogue, point of view, rhythm of sentences, image and metaphor.
* Understanding and practice of the craft in poetry writing through exercises: concepts of concreteness vs. abstraction, imagery, sound, rhythm, and shape.
* Understanding of the laborious nature of the craft by practicing constructive criticism of writing in all three genres through workshops and revising pieces submitted to the workshop.
* Production of midterm and final portfolios.
* Understanding what makes “good” writing by staging the adaptation of a piece of writing and performing it into a different medium (in collaboration with a small group of peers).
NOTE: I will provide you with a schedule of literary events taking place during the semester. Check the link on the English Department homepage and/or on my homepage for a schedule of the Clayton State University Visiting Writers Spring 2010.

**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 read in class and perform this text creatively using a different medium.

**Conferences:**
Although I encourage students to visit me during my office hours, I also require 1 mandatory conference. Not showing up at a scheduled conference is the equivalent of 2 absences.

**Visiting Writers Reading Series:**
Mandatory attendance to all three events from the Clayton State University Visiting Writers Reading Series. If your school schedule or your work schedule prevents you from attending the Clayton State University Visiting Writers Reading Series, you need to see me by January 31st so that we may make other arrangements.  
*You will notice that I have canceled two class meetings this semester in order to make up for your attendance to our Clayton State University Visiting Writers Reading Series Spring 2010.

**University Policies:**
Students must abide by policies in the Clayton State University Student Handbook, and to the Student Code of Conduct.

**Disruption of the Learning Environment**
Behavior which disrupts the teaching–learning process during class activities will not 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://a-s.clayton.edu/DisruptiveClassroomBehavior.htm

**University Attendance Policy:**

2
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 what excessive absences, whether justified or not, are sufficient causes for institutional withdrawals or failing grades.

**Attendance Policy (specific to this course):**
Attendance is expected for all class periods. Attendance is mandatory for workshops and presentations. **Attendance to all three events from the Clayton State University Visiting Writers Reading Series (or if unable to attend these, to other literary events) 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. 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 4 excused or unexcused absences, your overall grade for the course will drop one letter grade then one additional letter grade for each additional absence.

**You will notice that I have canceled two class meetings this semester in order to make up for your attendance to our Clayton State University Visiting Writers Reading Series Spring 2010.**

**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.

**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.

**Disability Services:**
Individuals with disabilities who need to request accommodations should contact the Disability Services Coordinator, Student Center 214, 678-466-5445. 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 4 absences, your overall grade starts dropping. Similarly attendance is mandatory for workshops and presentations. Attendance to all three events from the Clayton State University Visiting Writers Reading Series (or other literary events, if needed) 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 (30%):**
- 10 typed reading journal responses 10%
- 5 finished & typed exercises 10%
Participation 10%

Final Portfolio (70%):
10 typed reading journal responses 10%
5 finished & typed exercises 10%
Participation 10%
First draft favorite piece (2 to 3 page short-story, 2 to 3 page literary essay, or 3 poems) 10%
Final draft favorite piece 20%
Small notebook and recording of poems 10%
Final Exam: Presentation/Performance 10%
Peers 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 March 2nd, 2010, reflects your progress in the class 6 weeks into the semester. 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 (within a couple of days).

Course Schedule:
NOTE: I will refer to the texts as indicated below.
TIS for Tell It Slant
NSF for New Sudden Fiction
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
1/12 Introduction to the course and to peers
1/14 TIS 8-21 “The Basics of Good Writing in Any Form,” reading journal 1

Creative Nonfiction Unit

Week 2
1/19 TIS Maxine Hong Kingston 348-58, reading journal 2
1/21 TIS Terry Tempest Williams 426-33, reading journal 3, TIS Brent Staples 405-09, reading journal 4, in-class exercise 1 (scene vs. exposition)

Week 3
1/26 Exercise 1 due, in-class exercise 2 (developing character)
1/28 Exercise 2 due, TIS David Sedaris 387-94, reading journal 5, TIS Lawrence Sutin 411-15, reading journal 6, Sign up for a conference

Week 4
**TUESDAY 2/02--Novelist Patti Callahan Henry reads at CSU at 6:30pm in B10**

2/02  Exercise 3 due (dialogue), TIS Scott Russell Sanders 384-86, reading journal 7, TIS Jennifer Price 374-77, reading journal 8

2/04  TIS Charles Simic 403-04, reading journal 9, TIS Bhanu Kapil Rider 382-83, reading journal 10, in-class exercise 4 (taste)

**Week 5**

2/09  MANDATORY CONFERENCE

2/11  MANDATORY CONFERENCE

**Week 6**

2/16  In-class exercise 5 (sound)—don’t forget to bring a CD (music) to class today!

2/18  Midterm portfolio due in class, film

**Fiction Unit**

Note: since we will read short-short fiction, each reading journal entry will include three stories, so write a paragraph for each individual story.

**Week 7**

2/23  Introduction to short-short stories: NSF “Editor’s Note,” NSF Lan Samantha Chang 52-56, Nadine Gordimer 68-72, Andrew Lam 78-84, reading journal 1

2/25  NSF Aimee Bender 63-67, Ian Frazier 73-77, Yann Martel 101-04, reading journal 2, exercise 1 due (plot--remember to use exercise 2 from midterm portfolio)

**Week 8**

**THURSDAY 3/04 poet Chad Davidson reads at CSU at 6:30pm in B14 (event sponsored in part by the Georgia Council for the Arts)**

3/02  NSF Claudia Smith 105-10, Robert Olen-Butler 131-36, Dean Paschal 177-81, reading journal 3

3/04  Touré 159-63, NSF Ha Jin 1889-95, Chrissy Kolaya 222-28, reading journal 4, exercise 2 due (point of view), sign in for workshops:

Group 1:______________, ______________, ______________, ______________

Group 2:______________, ______________, ______________, ______________

Group 3:______________, ______________, ______________, ______________

Group 4:______________, ______________, ______________, ______________

Group 5:______________, ______________, ______________, ______________

Group 6:______________, ______________, ______________, ______________

**Week 9  SPRING BREAK**

**Poetry Unit**

Notes:

a) You must sign on to Poetry Daily on the web at [http://www.poems.com](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 MTWRF of weeks 10, 11 & 12 (15 entries) by writing down the name of the author, the name of the poem, a passage from the poem which you find particularly interesting. PRINT EACH POEM (OR HAVE EACH POEM READY ON YOUR COMPUTER) AND BRING TO CLASS ALL POEMS ASSIGNED BY THE TIME OF MEETING.
b) You will notice that you only have 5 reading responses due for the final portfolio, which means that you will write a paragraph for each one of the three readings/events you attended in addition to your reading responses.

**Week 10**
3/16 PC (the entire book), reading journal 5 (this entry needs to cover the entire book—which you cannot do in one paragraph!)
3/18 *No class for attending three readings from Clayton State University Visiting Writers Reading Series*

**Week 11**
3/23 *language—words* (making of a word bank)
3/25 *lines and images*, exercise 3 due (image)

**Week 12**
3/30 *sound effects*
4/01 *form*, exercise 4 due (form), group 1 distributes selected piece to class

**Week 13**
4/06 Workshop group 1, group 2 distributes selected piece to class
4/08 *No class for attending three readings from Clayton State University Visiting Writers Reading Series*

**Week 14**
4/13 Workshop group 2, group 3 distributes selected piece to class
4/15 Workshop group 3, group 4 distributes selected piece to class

**Week 15**
**THURSDAY 4/22 poet Scott Wilkerson reads at CSU at 6:30pm & CYGNET launching party B14**
4/20 Workshop group 4, group 5 distributes selected piece to class
4/22 Workshop group 5, group 6 distributes selected piece to class

**Week 16**
4/27 Workshop group 6, *Final portfolio due in class except for group 6*
4/29 **Final portfolio group 6 due (make sure to include exercise 5!), PRESENTATIONS / PERFORMANCES**

**Week 17** (Finals Week)