

## Creative Writing Course Syllabus

### Course Texts:

Selections from the following texts will be utilized over the course of this class:

*Berbrich, Joan D. Writing Creatively . New York: AMSCO School Publications, Inc., 1977.*

*Carroll, Joyce A., Edward E. Wilson, and Gary Forlini. Prentice Hall Writing & Grammar : Grade 11. Boston: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2008.*

Additional reading will be selected which are relevant to the various assignments and styles of writing studied during the course.

### General Course Description:

This course is designed to develop students' creative abilities and writing skills. The course will serve as an introduction to the writing of original narrative essays, poetry, short fiction and various forms of performance drama. Instruction in grammar and vocabulary will help improve the student's writing. Students will also receive instruction in editing techniques in order to critique their own work. Students will be introduced to markets and careers for creative writing. The class will also incorporate various forms of educational technology to help students write and edit their works.

### Course Content:

The course is structured around larger writing assignments each of which will involve smaller components and assessments. The major assignments include:

- 1) **Personal Narrative:** Students will create a personal narrative in which they work on their ability to write with detail and create suspense and drama in their writing.
- 2) **Profile Essay/Character Sketch:** Students will complete a character sketch/profile essay in order to help them develop the skill to create original characters and develop the ability to create detail and “show” and not “tell” when they are writing.
- 3) **Poetry Project:** Students will seek out poems by famous poets which are exemplars of 12 notable poetic techniques as well as write 10 original poems of their own using these and other techniques of poetry they have studied.
- 4) **Children's Book:** Students will build on their ability to write with poetic devices in creating an original children's book. In writing the children's book the students will begin to master the idea of plot development which will be essential for other unit's of study.
- 5) **Short Story:** Students will create an original short story in which they demonstrate their skills in mastering the concepts of the development of plot as well as their ability to create characters.
- 6) **Query Letter:** The Query Letter is the first step an author takes on the road to getting their work published. Students will learn how to structure a query letter appropriately as well as learn the details of the publishing industry and how a book goes from simply an author's manuscript to a published work.

- 7) **Humorous Sketch:** Students will learn the format for writing a stage play combined with a unit on humor in which they will study various techniques of humor used by successful humorists. The students will then present their humorous sketches by performing them for the class.
- 8) **Narrative Film:** Students will learn the format and process for writing a narrative film. This unit will include multiple small assignments (i.e. film pitch, treatment, etc.) before the students actually produce a final production level script.
- 9) **“Longform” Narrative Non-Fiction Research Paper:** The students will end the semester with a production of a “longform” narrative piece in which they research and write a work of narrative non-fiction about an historical event they have chosen.

The class will also include various other skill based activities in order to improve writing skills and miniature units on topics such as the history of the English language and the creation of dialogue for works of fiction.

**The following assessments are used during the course of this class:**

- (1) Formal writing assignments
- (2) Short in-class writing assignments
- (3) Active participation in class discussion and activities
- (4) Performance Assessments (e.g. speeches)
- (5) Research assignments
- (6) Skills-based tests, quizzes, and a final exam

**Helpful information for our class:**

I grade on a point system, totaling all points to arrive at a grade. I do not offer extra credit. Students must achieve at least 70% of total possible points in order to pass the course. This means an F on a report card can be a 69%, but a 14% as well. An F and a C do not necessarily equal a D. The *percentages* behind those letters are what matters.

Late work will be accepted at a 50% point reduction. Any work that has not been turned in after a reasonable amount of time will become a grade of 0 (zero).

**Classroom Expectations  
A.K.A – The Rules**

1. **RESPECT** – First and foremost, respect each other, respect me, and respect our room. This is the basic rule that you should live by. Our class has a shared responsibility to support each other’s efforts to learn. Every other rule on this paper is insignificant compared to this one.
2. **PREPARATION** – Come to class prepared. You will need a binder or a folder, notebook, writing utensil, and textbook daily.
3. **TARDIES** – Don’t be late to class. You need to be in the classroom when the bell rings. Consequences are as follows:  
1st offense – warning  
2nd offense – Detention  
3rd offense – Detention/ parent contact

4th + offense – Dean’s referral

4. **ABSENT WORK** - If you are absent, it is your responsibility to get your assignments. I get to school at least 30 minutes before school starts each day and stay at least 45 minutes after the school day ends. You should have no problem finding me and asking for assignments you missed.

5. **DRESS CODE & PROHIBITED ARTICLES** – Follow the rules outlined in your handbook. If there is an infraction, I will give you one chance to fix it. Following offenses will be handled by the Deans. **PLEASE NOTE:** I will be more than happy to confiscate any cell phones which I see during class. Sitting in class texting is the same thing as sitting in class chatting loudly with the person next to you. I will not tolerate such disrespectful behavior.