

Syllabus for English 33– Creative Writing, Prose—Del Norte Education Center

Semester & Year	Spring 2019	
Course ID and Section #	English 33-D6555	
Instructor's Name	Professor Ruth Rhodes	
Day/Time	Class: Tuesdays, 2:45pm - 05:55pm	
Location	DM 36	
Number of Credits/Units	3	
Contact Information	<i>Office location</i>	E7 in the "Faculty Club House"
	<i>Office hours</i>	Thursday 10:30-11:30 and by appointment
	<i>Phone number</i>	707-465-2336
	<i>Email address</i>	Ruth-Rhodes@redwoods.edu
Textbook Information	<i>Title, Edition, Author, and ISBN #</i>	None

*"A professional writer is an amateur who didn't quit."
— Richard Bach.*

Course Description

A study in developing the art of writing fiction, emphasizing communication, clarity, and economy. Students read and analyze many types of fiction while they generate, develop, critique, and revise their own and others' texts.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Differentiate and utilize concrete detail and abstraction in fiction.
2. Control grammar and punctuation to clarify ideas.
3. Apply a process-oriented approach to writing fiction that involves inventing, drafting, revising, and editing.
4. Compose original written texts, using genre-specific structures and formal conventions.

Special Accommodations

College of the Redwoods complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Please present your written accommodation request at least one week before the first test so that necessary arrangements can be made. No last-minute arrangements or post-test adjustments will be made. If you have a disability or believe you might benefit from disability related services and may need accommodations, please see me or contact [Disabled Students Programs and Services](#). Students may make requests for alternative media by contacting DSPS at 707-465-2352.

Academic Support

Academic support is available at [Counseling and Advising](#) and includes academic advising and educational planning, [Academic Support Center](#) for tutoring and proctored tests, and [Extended Opportunity Programs & Services](#), for eligible students, with advising, assistance, tutoring, and more.

Academic Honesty

In the academic community, the high value placed on truth implies a corresponding intolerance of scholastic dishonesty. In cases involving academic dishonesty, determination of the grade and of the student's status in the course is left primarily to the discretion of the faculty member. In such cases,

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where the instructor determines that a student has demonstrated academic dishonesty, the student may receive a failing grade for the assignment and may be reported to the Chief Student Services Officer or designee. The Student Code of Conduct (AP 5500) is available on the College of the Redwoods website at: <https://www.boarddocs.com/ca/redwoods/Board.nsf/Public?open&id=policies#>. Additional information about the rights and responsibilities of students, Board policies, and administrative procedures is located in the college catalog and on the College of the Redwoods website.

Disruptive Classroom Behavior

Student behavior or speech that disrupts the instructional setting will not be tolerated. Disruptive conduct may include, but is not limited to: unwarranted interruptions; failure to adhere to instructor's directions; vulgar or obscene language; slurs or other forms of intimidation; physically or verbally abusive behavior. In such cases, where the instructor determines that a student has disrupted the educational process, a disruptive student may be temporarily removed from class. In addition, he or she may be reported the Chief Student Services Officer or designee. The Student Code of Conduct (AP 5500) is available on the College of the Redwoods website at:

<https://www.boarddocs.com/ca/redwoods/Board.nsf/Public?open&id=policies#>. Additional information about the rights and responsibilities of students, Board policies, and administrative procedures is located in the college catalog and on the College of the Redwoods website.

Emergency Procedures for the Del Norte campus:

Please review the campus evacuation sites, including the closest site to this classroom (posted by the exit of each room). The Crescent City campus emergency map is available at (<http://www.redwoods.edu/delnorte/Maps-and-Directions>; scroll down to the Safety Map). For more information on Public Safety, go to <http://redwoods.edu/publicsafety> In an emergency that requires an evacuation of the building:

- Be aware of all marked exits from your area and building.
- Once outside, move to the nearest evacuation point outside your building:
- Keep streets and walkways clear for emergency vehicles and personnel.
- Do not leave campus, unless it has been deemed safe by the campus authorities.

RAVE – College of the Redwoods has implemented an emergency alert system. In the event of an emergency on campus, you can receive an alert through your personal email, and/or phones at your home, office, and cell. Registration is necessary in order to receive emergency alerts. Please go to <https://www.GetRave.com/login/Redwoods> and use the “Register” button on the top right portion of the registration page to create an account. During the registration process you can elect to add additional information, such as office phone, home phone, cell phone, and personal email. Please use your CR email address as your primary Registration Email. Your CR email address ends with “redwoods.edu.” Please contact Public Safety, 707-476-4112, security@redwoods.edu, if you have any questions.

College of the Redwoods is committed to equal opportunity in employment, admission to the college, and in the conduct of all of its programs and activities.

Additional Emergency Procedure Notes from Professor Rhodes:

*Our evacuation point for DM 36 in the case of a fire or natural disaster is in **the parking lot by the student lounge**. In the very unlikely event of an active shooter incident, rapidly disperse away from the campus rather than cluster at the evacuation point.*

Attendance

Please attend all classes. English Department policy allows your instructor to drop you from the roster if you miss more than two weeks (total) of class before Week 11. Since we meet once a week, don't miss more than two classes if you want to stay enrolled.

Materials

Please bring a notebook to class as your dedicated English 33 Journal. You will also need a system for electronic file storage so you can access and revise your work, such as a thumb drive, an account in the cloud, or other reliable means.

When your work is due to be workshopped, you must bring **collated paper copies** of your piece to class—enough for your classmates and your professor. The estimated expense for this is around \$25 for the semester.

Classroom Expectations

- Be on time.
- Silence your cell phone and put it away during class. Allow yourself to bring your full attention to lectures, discussions, and activities. Laptops should be used only with advanced permission.
- Participate fully—it's more interesting that way, and you're more likely to enjoy class if you're intellectually involved. Listen to whomever is talking. Give them your complete attention. Avoid side conversations.
- **Step up** if only a few people are asking questions or contributing to the discussion. We always need new voices.
- **Step back** if you've made a number of comments already. Create a space for others to join in. It's okay if we have to wait for new people to chime in.
- In workshop when students are reading their work, be prepared to comment using the language of the Good Stories handout, and following the techniques we go over which are on the Writing Workshop handout. Provide the kind of feedback you would like to receive: specific, constructive, and clear.
- If you need to excuse yourself, change seats, move to standing or stretch, please do so. You have freedom of movement here. Your freedom, however, should not infringe on the ability of others to focus, so if you do move around, do so with minimal interruption.

Primary Focus

Good writers do **four** things continually:

1. They read good writing
2. They read about techniques for good writing.
3. They write. *A lot.*
4. They workshop their writing, sharing it with other writers who provide constructive feedback.

These are the habits that make good writers, and practicing them is pretty much the focus of this class. Expect to do about 6 hours of homework each week (the standard for a 3 credit class). This will vary depending on how quickly you read, write and revise. Your homework will generally be to read some sample writing, work on your drafts and to comment on the drafts of your fellow students via Canvas. Assignment due dates are listed on the weekly scheduled and will be posted to Canvas.

Grades

Your grades in this class are generally based on effort. Are you coming to class prepared? Are you completing the assignments on time? If yes, you are working towards success in the student learning outcomes and will receive high grades.

It is *possible* to grade creative writing based on how “good” prose pieces are, and some instructors do this. That’s fine. I’m choosing another road—a road I think is effective for producing high quality work and “writerly” habits of mind. There are indeed standards expected of good prose, and we will focus on them. You will get lots of feedback on the “quality” of your work. But I believe the creative process flourishes best in an environment where students are free to experiment and try things, flail about unsuccessfully, and feel good about it. For writers, flailing is *natural and right*. If you are working towards the student learning outcomes with energy and stamina, if you are showing up and meeting deadlines and commenting thoughtfully on the work of others, you are going to be successful in this class.

Grades will be updated weekly, usually on Fridays. Check your progress on our class’s *Canvas* site. Let me know immediately if you see an error on my part. Errors noted after finals week cannot be fixed.

A (100-90%) / B (89-80%) / C (79-70%) / D (69-60%) / F (59-0%)

Exercises / Journaling	25%
Writing Assignments	25%
Feedback / Workshop Participation	25%
Portfolio	25%

Exercises / Journaling (25% of course grade)

In each class meeting, we will do a writing exercise in our journals to practice our developing skills. These activities are worth points, and you must be present in class and willing to share out in order to earn credit for them.

Writing Assignments / Drafts (25%)

You will write and submit to Canvas six (6) stories over the course of the semester: two (2) memoirs, three (3) short stories, and one (1) additional prose piece. For that final draft, you may write a short story or explore another prose fiction genre like stage plays, screenplays, or comic scripts. Assignments in this category are graded for completeness and timeliness, but you can count on me to provide feedback on each draft to help you improve the quality of your writing. Please use MLA format.

Revisions: The due dates for the Writing Assignments are on Canvas and on the schedule at the end of this syllabus. While you **must** turn in a draft on the due date, good writers are constantly revising. So yes, you may continue to tinker with your stories after the due dates and upload revisions before your piece is workshopped. I will comment on your file upload *after the workshop*, so if you do revisions before then, make sure your most recent file upload *matches* the version you present in class. This

must be true in the Writing Assignment Section (where I will comment) as well on the discussion board (where your classmates will comment).

Since not all your stories will be workshopped, I will comment on the rest of your Writing Assignments / Drafts as I am able. If I haven't commented yet on a story, feel free to update it. If you want to make changes *after* I have made comments, that's great. But don't upload your new version to the Writing Assignments page. That may create confusion. Save it in a separate place.

Pro Tip: You will find that naming your files based on revision date (SnowStory2.29 vs. SnowStory3.14) can help you keep track of your stored versions.

Workshop Participation / Feedback (25%)

Half of your drafts in this course will be workshopped by the class. When it is your day to have an assignment workshopped in class, **bring enough collated, printed copies for your classmates and for the professor.** Have them ready to go—don't make copies at the last minute. You will also post the *same version* of your story to a discussion board for written feedback. The workshop—in person and online—is an opportunity to get valuable feedback from a diverse audience, so it is very important to participate even if you are feeling that your draft isn't perfect. In fact, it *won't* be perfect. That's okay. It's a process. Plus, you get points for presenting at the workshop and posting online.

You are also expected to provide good feedback to your fellow writers when their pieces are workshopped. We will discuss the standards for feedback at length. Your feedback is worth points, and you will be graded based on your attention to standards we establish. Because some students find it difficult to provide high quality feedback *in the moment*, we will also use Canvas as a place to record what we thought worked and what we thought didn't work.

Portfolio (25%)

As a capstone to the course, you will revise and edit three (3) of your Writing Assignments / Drafts and put them in a portfolio representing your best work (2000 words, minimum). Portfolios will be graded based on the ability to revise using feedback from others. Your pieces don't have to be brilliant. After all, you haven't had very long to work on them. They just have to be better than they were when you first wrote them. Portfolios will be turned in as *paper copies*, in a folder, on the last day.

Final caveats:

- There is **no extra credit** in this class.
- Late work **cannot be made up** after the assignment closes on Canvas.
- This syllabus and schedule are **subject to change**.

Week	Date	Topics and Assignments
1	Jan 22	Course introduction / Good Stories <u>Memoir</u> : Conflict
2	Jan 29	<u>Memoir</u> : Image Memoir 1 Due / Workshop for Group 1
3	Feb 5	<u>Memoir</u> : Energy Workshop for Group 2
4	Feb 12	<u>Memoir</u> : Insight Memoir 2 Due / Workshop for Group 3
5	Feb 19	Personal Day – No Class
6	Feb 26	<u>Memoir</u> : Revision Workshop for Group 4
7	March 5	<u>Short Story</u> : Characters in Conflict
8	March 12	<u>Short Story</u> : Images in Context Short Story 1 Due / Workshop for Group 3
March 18-23, Spring Break – No Class		
9	March 26	<u>Short Story</u> : Energy through Voice and Dialogue Workshop for Group 4
10	April 2	<u>Short Story</u> : Insight as Theme Short Story 2 Due / Workshop for Group 1
11	April 9	<u>Short Story</u> : Revision Workshop for Group 2
12	April 16	<u>Plays and Screenplays</u> : Scenes and Beats Short Story 3 Due / Workshop for Group 3
13	April 23	<u>Comic Books and Graphic Novels</u> : Moment, Frame, Image, Word, Flow Workshop for Group 4
14	April 30	<u>Any Fiction</u> : Revision Any Fiction 1 Due / Workshop for Group 1
15	May 7	<u>Any Fiction</u> : Revision Workshop for Group 2
16	May 14	Portfolio Due / Evaluation Activity

Note: Feedback for drafts will be due 1 week after the last group workshops that assignment. Discussions can be accessed, but not added to.