

Syllabus for English 33 (Creative Writing: Prose Fiction)

Course Information

Semester & Year: Spring 2021

Course ID & Section #: Eng. 33, E0V666

Instructor's name: Prof. David Holper

Online asynchronous (meaning we won't have group sessions at a specific time/day) Number of units: 3

Instructor Contact Information

Office location or *Online: Use Canvas email or request a Zoom session

Office hours: NA

Phone number: NA

Email address: david-holper@redwoods.edu (don't use my generic email; use Canvas email)

"It is only the story that can continue beyond the war and the warrior... It is only the story... that saves our progeny from blundering like blind beggars into the spikes of the cactus fence. The story is our escort; without it, we are blind. Does the blind man own his escort? No, neither do we the story; rather it is the story that owns us." Chinua Achebe

Your Instructor: David has done a little of everything, including taxi driver, fire fighter, cook, soldier, house painter, and teacher. He took his BA in English at Humboldt State University, where he also studied journalism. After his graduation, he served for four years in the Army Military Intelligence Corps, then went on to earn a Masters of Fine Arts in English at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, where he wrote a book of short stories. Since then, he has published a number of stories and two books of poetry. He currently serves as the Poet Laureate for the City of Eureka. He lives in Eureka and teaches full-time at CR.

Required Materials

Textbook title: Bird by Bird Edition:

Author: Anne Lamott

ISBN: 0-385-48001-6

Other requirement: Writer's notebook

Catalog 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.

Course Student Learning Outcomes (*from course outline of record*)

- 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

Evaluation & Grading Policy

This is one of the few CR courses that may be taken for pass/no pass rather than for a grade. You are encouraged to take advantage of this option to free yourself to write without worrying about a grade. For a grade of pass, you must

apply in the Admissions & Records office before (TBA) for the credit/no credit option. Not completing the credit requirements described would result in a no pass grade if you had applied for the pass option. If you had not applied for this option, it would mean a grade of D or F.

If you do not apply for the pass/no pass option, your grade will consist of

- 1) Weekly exercises: 20 pts. each
- 2) Stories drafts: 100 pts. each
- 3) Revised story drafts: 100 pts. each
- 4) Polished piece for class booklet: 100 pts. each 5) Peer feedback for final: 50 pts.

Prerequisites/co-requisites/ recommended preparation

None

Special accommodations statement

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 707-476-4280.

Student feedback policy

All exercises and story drafts will be returned with scores and written comments within one week, unless otherwise notified.

Student Accessibility Statement and Academic Support Information

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 dishonesty

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, where the instructor determines that a student has demonstrated academic dishonesty, the student may receive a failing grade for the assignment and/or exam 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. 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 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; and 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, the student 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. 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](#).

Census Week

Before Census (Week 3): If you have missed two classes and have not turned in work, your name will be cleared from the class roster following Week 3 (Census Week). If you find yourself in this position and have not talked to David yet about your situation, you should do so as soon as possible. It's easy to be reinstated if you're accidentally dropped, but it's easier still to avoid being dropped in the first place.

Admissions deadlines & enrollment policies

Students who have experienced extenuating circumstances can complete & submit the *Excused Withdrawal Petition* to request an Excused Withdrawal (EW) grade instead of the current Withdrawal (W) or nonpassing (D, F & NP) grades. The EW Petition is available from the Admissions and Records Forms Webpage. Supporting documentation is required.

Communication Guidelines

Please make sure to know how to log into Canvas. Email communications should be through Canvas. You are encouraged to go into the Settings in Canvas and adjust them, so you can receive text message notifications of emails. If you have emailed me, you will likely receive a response the same day, unless it is late in the evening, in which case, you will receive a response the next day. If you need to attach a file, remember that you have to go into Canvas to do that. You cannot simply reply to an email and attach a file.

Preferred Name in Canvas

As a student, you have the ability to have an alternate first name and pronouns to appear in Canvas. Contact [Admissions & Records](#) to request a change to your preferred first name and pronoun. Your Preferred Name will only be listed in Canvas. It does not change your legal name in our records. See the [Student Information Update form](#).

Logging Into Canvas

Password is your 8 digit birth date

For tech help, email its@redwoods.edu or call 707-476-4160

Canvas Help for students: <https://www.redwoods.edu/online/Help-Student>

Canvas online orientation workshop:

<https://www.redwoods.edu/online/Home/StudentResources/Canvas-Resources> **Gender-Inclusive Language in the Classroom**

College of the Redwoods aspires to create a learning environment in which all people feel comfortable in contributing their perspectives to classroom discussions. It therefore encourages instructors and students to use language that is gender-inclusive and non-sexist to affirm and respect how people describe, express, and experience their gender. Just as sexist language excludes women's experiences, non-gender-inclusive language excludes the experiences of individuals whose identities may not fit the gender binary, and/or who may not identify with the sex they were assigned

at birth. Gender-inclusive/non-sexist language acknowledges people of any gender (for example, first year student versus freshman, humankind versus mankind, etc.), affirms non-binary gender identifications, and recognizes the difference between biological sex and gender expression.

Student Support Services

The following online resources are available to support your success as a student:

- [CR-Online](#) (Comprehensive information for online students)
- [Library Articles & Databases](#)
- [Canvas help and tutorials](#)
- [Online Student Handbook](#)

[Counseling and Advising](#) offers academic support and includes academic advising and educational planning

Learning Resource Center includes the following resources for students

- [Academic Support Center](#) for instructional support, tutoring, learning resources, and proctored exams.
- [Library Services](#) to promote information literacy and provide organized information resources.
- Multicultural & Diversity Center [waiting for hyperlink and Mission]
- Math Lab & Drop-in Writing Center

Special programs are also available for eligible students include

- [Extended Opportunity Programs & Services \(EOPS\)](#) provides financial assistance, support and encouragement for eligible income disadvantaged students at all CR locations.
- The TRiO Student Success Program provides eligible students with a variety of services including trips to 4year universities, career assessments, and peer mentoring. Students can apply for the program in [Eureka](#) or in [Del Norte](#)
- The [Veteran's Resource Center](#) supports and facilitates academic success for Active Duty Military, Veterans and Dependents attending CR through relational advising, mentorship, transitional assistance, and coordination of military and Veteran-specific resources.
- Klamath-Trinity students can contact the CR KT Office for specific information about student support services at 530-625-4821

The [Honors Program](#) helps students succeed in transferring to four-year institutions.

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 at 707-476-4112 or 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.

Required Reading: We will read approximately one-two sections a week from *Bird by Bird* by Anne Lamott and a story a week (from the class booklet). When we read stories, I'll ask you to grade the story (A-F) and write a one paragraph justification of your grade, which will be worth 5 points. You are strongly encouraged to mark up your book, save quotes in your writer's journals, and make notes all over the writing that you read.

PDFs and Printing: This semester the readings will be provided as PDFs or Word documents through the Modules. You'll need to find these documents, print them, and read and prepare for class.

Required Writing: We will do an exercise for each week of class (except when we are writing stories or revisions of stories). These exercises can be between 2-4 pages. They are worth 20 pts. each and are due as posted in the Modules each week. In addition, there are two stories required for the semester, each worth 100 pts. Also, you will be expected to revise each of these stories at least one time: the revisions are worth 100 pts. apiece. A revision is more than correcting spelling errors; a revision should show significant progress in your approach to the narrative. If you turn in a revision that is generally the same as the earlier draft, you may get the second draft back as no credit (with a request that you accomplish a more substantive revision). At the end of the semester, you will be required to submit one polished piece of work for the class booklet, which will be between 5-20 pages of writing, and will be worth 100 pts. This last piece of writing should be the best quality work you've produced all semester.

Work Format: All work must be typed and labeled (whether it's an exercise, a story draft, or a polished piece of work). Type your name, draft #, and date in the upper left-hand corner; also please include titles for your stories. Please remember to number your pages in the upper right hand corner (in the header). Remember to double space your work, so your instructor can edit it.

Late Work: If you miss a class, you should make up the work before the next class and put it in the instructor's box. Don't wait until the next class to turn it in. If you fall behind several weeks, coupled with absences (see below), this pattern may result in the instructor no longer accepting late work at all, which may result in your failing the course. Late work will be scored at half point value unless there you have a personal emergency that you have discussed with your instructor.

Final: You are required to provide your peers feedback on their final polished story. That feedback is worth 50 pts.

Your Portfolio: Please save all your work (and drafts) this semester so that you can see what happened this semester, as well as have stories or exercises to revise; and, in case I accidentally do not record the grade, you'll have a copy of the graded work. More importantly, you'll probably want to look back on this work later, so save, save, save; backup, backup, backup.

Note: This syllabus may be modified during the course of the semester, as needed. If there are corrections or additions, these will be posted on the syllabus calendar, which can be found on the course website.

For the Writer:

- 1) Once you've read your story or had your story read, please listen attentively and do not interrupt the other class members or instructor.
- 2) Do not rebut the criticisms either during or after a discussion.
- 3) Just because it's true is not enough.
- 4) If you get criticism about poorly typed or edited copy, that's a clear sign to you that you need to spend more time preparing your texts for class.
- 5) It is a good idea to take notes on a copy of the story so that you don't forget what is being suggested.
- 6) You have the right to stop the discussion if it becomes too personal or painful; however, you should not use this right lightly. Once you have stopped a discussion on a story, it may not be discussed again in class.
- 7) Revise while the ideas are still fresh.
- 8) If there are too many different ideas on how to revise, you might treat the ideas like a shopping list--buy what appeals to you. If you can't decide what to do, come see the instructor for a personal conference.

For the Class Participants:

- 1) Comment always with the mind to help. It's best if your responses are given out of a loving sense of trying to help.
- 2) Look for something good first.
- 3) It is not necessary to have the perfect or longest response to a story. Often times it's better to listen carefully and comment selectively, no matter how much you feel you know. A balanced discussion will be better for all of us than a discussion dominated by a few.
- 4) Everyone is entitled to an opinion in this class, even if you don't agree with another person.
- 5) Don't interrupt one another.
- 6) Don't attack one another's responses.

- 7) Don't use humor or sarcasm as a weapon.
- 8) Avoid name calling at all costs.
- 9) If you see someone become discouraged by a critique, go up to that person afterwards and encourage him/her.
- 10) Don't use comparison to published work as a means to show someone the "right way"; the writer must find his/her own way.

Calendar

Note: this calendar may be adjusted as needed. Please pay attention to weekly updates.

Week 1

Introductions, some basic ideas about fiction

HW: Buy your materials, write exercise 1, and read story 1

Week 2

Lesson 1: shaping a plot, share exercises in small groups and turn in.

HW: Write exercise 2, read story 2, read BBB Introduction and Ch. 1

Week 3

Lesson 2: types of irony, copy editing marks, dialogue rules and techniques. Reading from the stack, discussion of BBB, discussion of story 2, and share exercises in small groups and turn in. HW: Write exercise 3, read story 3, BBB pp. 16-32, favorite recipe.

Week 4

Holiday: Lincoln's Birthday

Week 5

Lesson 3: Three dimensionality in characterization, distribute recipes, discussion of BBB, discussion of story 3, and share exercises in small groups and turn in.

HW: Write Story 1 draft 1, read story 4, and BBB pp. 32-63. Bring a book to trade.

Week 6

Lesson 4: Crafting sentences. Trade books, reading of stories from the stack, discussion of BBB, discuss story 4, distribute story drafts to small groups and turn in a clean copy to instructor.

HW: Read and comment on peer story drafts, read story 5, and BBB pp. 64-84.

Week 7

Lesson 5: Submissions and rejection; hero's journey. Return story drafts and comments to one another, story drafts returned from instructor, Xerox of four stories distributed for next week, discussion of BBB, and discussion of story 5.

HW: Revise Story 1 draft 1, read story 6, and read and comment on four stories in the Xerox packet for next week.

Spring Break

Week 8

Lesson 6: Writers' routines. Group critique of four stories, discussion of story 6, and revisions of story 1 collected.

HW: Last four students revise story 1, read story 7, write exercise 4, read BBB pp. 85-109.

Week 9

Lesson 7: The business end of writing. Last revisions of story 1 collected, discussion of story 7, BBB discussed, and share and turn in exercise 4.

HW: Write exercise 5, read story 8, BBB pp. 110-130.

Week 10

Conferences

Week 11

Lesson 8: Simile and metaphor. Discussion of story 7, discussion of BBB, and share and turn in exercise 4. HW: Read story 8, BBB 133-161, write story 2 draft 1.

Week 12

Lesson 9: Revision and tightening your prose. Discussion of story 8, discussion of BBB, and distribute story 2 drafts to one another, as well as turn one in.

HW: Read and comment on story drafts, read story 9, BBB 162-182.

Week 13

Lesson 10: Applying hero's journey structures to plot. Discussion of story 9, discussion of BBB, return story drafts to authors and turn in a clean copy to instructor, and receive a Xerox of four student stories.

HW: Read and comment on Xerox of four student stories, revise story 2 draft 1, and read story 10.

Week 14

Organize final, collected polished pieces and booklet, discuss story 11, discuss Stephen King's chapter on revision.

HW: Read story 12, write exercise 5, BBB finish in next two weeks, come with sufficient funds to purchase the polished piece booklet.

Week 15

Discuss story 12, discuss BBB, polished piece reminders, final reminders, share exercise 5 and turn in. Class feedback

HW: Buy polished piece booklet and prepare for final (to be scheduled since instructor is away on final date)

Week 16

Final