

**“A professional writer is an amateur who didn’t quit.”**

**— Richard Bach**

## **Course Information**

Semester & Year: Spring 2022

Course ID & Section #: **Engl 33-V3367**

Instructor’s name: Ruth Rhodes

Location: Online

Course units: 3

**Note: This late-start class begins January 29 and runs 14 weeks**

## **Instructor Contact Information**

Office location: E7, Del Norte Campus

Office hours: Call or Zoom by appointment (Email me and we’ll set up a time that works)

Phone number: 707-465-2336 (email is best for a quick response)

Email address: [Ruth-Rhodes@redwoods.edu](mailto:Ruth-Rhodes@redwoods.edu)

## **Catalog Description**

A study in developing the art of writing fiction<sup>1</sup>, 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**

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.

## **Accessibility**

Students will have access to online course materials that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and College of the Redwoods policies. Students who discover access issues with this class should contact the instructor.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a course in *prose* (writing that isn’t poetry). But the course outline also specifies *fiction* (writing describing imaginary events). While we will dabble in creative non-fiction (memoir), most of what we work on will be fiction.

College of the Redwoods is also committed to making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you have a disability or believe you might benefit from disability-related services and accommodations, please contact your instructor or [Disability Services and Programs for Students](#) (DSPS). Students may make requests for alternative media by contacting DSPS based on their campus location:

- Eureka: 707-476-4280, student services building, 1st floor
- Del Norte: 707-465-2324, main building near the library
- Klamath-Trinity: 530-625-4821 Ext 103

During COVID19, approved accommodations for distance education classes will be emailed to the instructor by DSPS. In the case of face-to-face instruction, please present your written accommodation request to your instructor at least one week before the first test so that necessary arrangements can be made. Last-minute arrangements or post-test adjustments cannot usually be accommodated.

## **Primary Focus**

Good writers do **four** things continually:

1. They read examples of good writing
2. They read advice about the craft of writing
3. They write. *A lot.*
4. They share their work with other writers who provide constructive feedback.

These habits make us better writers. Practicing these habits is the focus of this class.

## **Examples of Writing**

We will read at least one piece of professional fiction every week until the last few weeks. Sometimes, if the readings are short, we may read more than one. After reading them, we will write about what we observed in discussion posts.

## **Advice about the Craft of Writing**

Rather than assign a specific textbook, I will be sharing short (free) readings from many different sources on the craft of writing, including books, blogs, and articles. Most of the books I have drawn on are readily available online, at used book stores, and in libraries. When you find a writing advice book you like, snag it and read the whole thing. Find what works for you.

## **Writing Practice**

You will have specific writing practices related to the fiction examples and writing advice we are tackling each week. Think of them as your weekly workouts where you get your writing muscles in shape. You may experience some soreness from the writing workouts: feeling disappointed, getting stuck, and sometimes just muddling through assignments in which you may not be particularly interested. That's normal.

## **Feedback**

I will give you a lot of feedback in this class, including specific and detailed comments on your revised work, balancing encouragement with ideas for improvement. My feedback is my gift to

you for putting yourself out there. Your gift to me is that you will read and consider my feedback. I am a human being who likes what she likes. I do have specific ideas about what I think is “good.” But I will try not to let personal taste interfere with the kind of writing you want to do as I provide feedback<sup>2</sup>. I will, however, give you an honest assessment to help you develop your writing in the direction you want it to go.

Your fellow students will also provide you with feedback during writing workshops. They will have ideas about what they like, too, as will you. Their feedback will be helpful in the same way mine will be. The more eyes on your work and the more responses you have, the better your sense of how a general audience will respond to your work.

You will learn feedback techniques to help you make constructive, specific, honest, and thoughtful comments. We will even do a practice workshop to set a positive and supportive tone. Sometimes you may fail to communicate your feedback clearly, but you should do your best to be supportive. English 33 is not a class where we give harsh critiques, tear writing apart, or make writers want to give up. My advice is to avoid classes or programs that engage in one-upmanship and animosity.

As you do your best to give constructive feedback, receive it with appreciation rather than defensiveness. Occasionally, feedback might *feel* less than generous. Occasionally, it might even *be* less than generous. When feedback hurts, try to pivot. Accept the limitations of the person giving it and move on. Some hurt feelings along the way are the cost of doing business because we’re all imperfect. For my part, I will try to encourage and support you, and I will guide others to do the same.

## Grading Policy

English 33 is a class that focuses on creativity, not conformity and obedience. The creative process flourishes in an environment where students are free to experiment and try new things. Students need to be challenged, flail about unsuccessfully and feel good about it. For writers, flailing is *natural and right*.

I expect you to work hard, do the assignments, and give this class your all. I assume you enrolled in English 33 to become a better fiction writer. That has its own reward.

While I would like to eliminate grades from English 33, I am required to issue them. At the end of the semester, when you submit your portfolio, **you will request a final grade based on what you believe you have earned**. You may base that grade on the guidelines below or propose a different guideline for grading.

### Final Grades:

**A (100-90%)** To earn an A, complete all your assignments, earning 90-100% collectively. Present a polished portfolio that includes three (3) stories. Those three stories should be revised in response to workshop feedback.

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<sup>2</sup> Except pornography. It’s not that I don’t like it. I just don’t want to read *yours*. It’s a teacher-student thing.

**B (89-80%)** To earn a B, complete *nearly* all your assignments, earning 80-89% collectively. Present a polished portfolio of at least two (2) stories revised in response to workshop feedback. Sometimes, you can't do it all. B is a perfectly respectable grade.

**C (79-70%)** To earn a C, complete *most* of your assignments, earning between 70-79% collectively. Present a polished portfolio of at least two (2) stories with at least *one* revised in response to workshop feedback. Pat yourself on the back. You dared to keep going even though you experienced some setbacks.

**D (69-60%)** D is not a "passing" grade at CR, but it shows you did not give up. When you win the Pulitzer Prize for fiction, we will all have a good laugh about all those writing practices you missed because you were working three jobs and taking care of your kids. If you would like a D instead of an F, earn between 60-69% on your assignments collectively. Present a portfolio of at least (2) stories, even if none of them were revised from workshop feedback.

**F (59-0%)** Your assignments totaled between 0-59%. Something went wrong. You lost interest. You ghosted. Maybe life gave you lemons. Contact me. I probably can't make the F go away, but I can provide you with advice about applying for an incomplete or academic renewal so that the F grade won't delay or derail your future plans. Remember that road for writers is long, and a grade in this class is not a prediction of future writing success. *Illegitimi non carborundum*. Don't let the bastards grind you down.

### **Assignment Types:**

Discussion Participation	25% of total grade
Writing Practices	25% of total grade
Workshop Participation	25% of total grade
Portfolio and Cover Letter:	25% of total grade

### **Discussion Participation (25% of course grade)**

Each week, we read about the craft of writing and look at examples of professional creative writing. In the discussions, we will process what we're seeing and thinking. Weekly discussion posts and replies should be detailed, specific, and total of 300+ words.

### **Writing Practices (25%)**

Each week, you will submit a writing practice. Usually, it is a story or part of a story. I might ask you to riff on a certain type of narrative voice or to pay careful attention to mood, depending on what we've studied that particular week. A writing practice does not necessarily have to be complete and polished. It's just a practice. I usually expect it to be 500+ words. I don't give you much feedback on your writing *practices* until you write a revision and/or submit the draft to a Writing Workshop.

## Workshop Participation (25%)

Writers need feedback. That's the role of the writers' workshop. On weeks when we hold workshops, students will submit revised work for you to read, and you will provide constructive feedback for revision. Your workshop participation grade is based on the *feedback you provide to peers* on their stories (not the drafts you submit).

Comment on **at least two stories** during each workshop week for full credit (in the final string of workshops on the schedule, I may ask you to comment on more than two). There will be four (4) workshops over the semester.

**Aim to submit to 2 workshops.** Hungry, eager writers will clamber to be workshopped three times (that's for the A), but shyer, more sensitive folks will probably hang back until they can see value in the process. Submit at your own pace.

## Portfolio (25%)

Near the end of the course, you will select two to three stories to further revise for a final portfolio. The portfolio should represent your best work. Aim for 2000+ words total. I will grade portfolios based on the course learning outcomes and storytelling elements we cover in class.

**Please review the syllabus Grading Policy to see how many stories you need to workshop to earn the grade you want.**

Your portfolio pieces don't have to be brilliant. After all, you won't have worked on them for very long. But they should show growth, especially in the areas we focused on in the class.

In your portfolio cover letter, you will describe the contents of your portfolio and the skills you have gained. **You will also request the final grade you are seeking.** Explain why you have earned it (see Grading Policy above). I reserve the right to have the final say on grades, but I am inviting you to participate in the process.

## Class Organization and Structure

Assignments for this class are arranged in weekly modules. Work is due at the end of the week on Sunday, just before midnight.

The week typically begins with a short **lecture**. In the lecture, you will access some of the **readings**, which generally include a reading by a professional writer on writing craft and a creative reading (a memoir, short story, or a few pieces of flash fiction). They usually appear as links at the end of the lecture.

Each week, you will join a **discussion** about what you read so that you can make some connections to cement your learning. Then you will do a **writing practice**.

Beginning the fifth week, we will add occasional writing **workshops** where you will take turns sharing creative work and providing one another with specific feedback. Students will have an opportunity to submit creative writing to workshop several times during the semester.

At the end of the semester, lecture pages are shorter and the prose readings drop off. This change allows you to focus your attention on participating in the final workshops and in completing your **portfolio**.

English 33 is a 3-credit class—and this is a late start class, so lessons are compressed a bit. Students should expect to devote an average of 10 hours per week to complete assignments for this course.

### **Working Ahead, Falling Behind**

Modules are open early. If you know you're going to be busy with other activities, you can complete most assignments in advance of the deadline. This gets tricky when you need to respond to the post of another classmate in a discussion or provide feedback during a workshop, so keep that limitation in mind.

Try not to fall behind. English 33 requires a high degree of interaction. You can revisit old discussions and workshops, but make an initial post and reply by the deadline to get full credit. If you do get behind, focus on the current assignments rather than trying to make up the assignments you missed. The course is designed so that you do not have to do all the assignments to be successful.

**If you have a technical problem or a life crisis that prevents you from meeting a weekly deadline, send me an email or Canvas message.** We can negotiate a plan for you to move forward. Don't feel guilty about asking for help if you need it. I want you to keep growing as a writer even if you miss some lessons and activities!

Week 1's lecture contains a quiz. It's just a self-test and doesn't count towards your grade. But I hope it motivated you to read the syllabus carefully and check your understanding.

### **Admissions deadlines & enrollment policies**

#### Spring 2022 Dates

- *Classes begin: 01/15/22 [Note: Our late-start class begins 01/29/2022]*
- *Last day to add a class: 01/21/22*
- *Martin Luther King, Jr's Birthday (all campuses closed: 01/17/22*
- *Last day to drop without a W and receive a refund: 01/28/22*
- *Census date (or 20% into class duration): 01/31/22*
- *Last day to file P/NP (only courses where this is an option) 02/11/22*
- *Lincoln's Birthday (all campuses closed): 02/18/22*
- *Presidents Day (all campuses closed): 02/21/22*
- *Last day to petition to graduate or apply for certificate: 03/03/22*
- *Spring Break (no classes): 03/14/22-03/19/22*
- *Last day for student-initiated W (no refund): 04/01/22*
- *Last day for faculty-initiated W (no refund): 04/01/22*
- *Final examinations: 05/07/22-05/13/22*
- *Semester ends: 05/13/22*
- *Grades available for transcript release: approximately 05/30/22*

## **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](#).

Academic dishonesty is rare at the College of the Redwoods, but when it does occur, it is often the result of plagiarism. **Plagiarism** is taking the words and/or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. We will learn how to cite the ideas of others in this class. We will also use Turnitin.com (an app already integrated into Canvas) to guide us. Accidental plagiarism is common and is never punished. Students are invited to revise their work. But deliberate plagiarism will result in a zero for the assignment and possible removal from the class. So please do not buy an assignment online or copy information and/or words from websites to present as your own.

## **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](#).

## **Setting Your Preferred Name in Canvas**

Students have the ability to have an alternate first name and pronouns 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. This does not change your legal name in our records. See the [Student Information Update Form](#).

## **Canvas Information**

Log into Canvas at <https://redwoods.instructure.com>

Password is your 8 digit birthdate

For tech help, email [its@redwoods.edu](mailto:its@redwoods.edu) or call 707-476-4160

Canvas Help for students: <https://webapps.redwoods.edu/tutorial/>

Canvas online orientation workshop: [Canvas Student Orientation Course \(instructure.com\)](#)

## **Community College Student Health and Wellness**

Resources, tools, and training regarding health, mental health, wellness, basic needs, and more designed for California community college students, faculty, and staff are available on the California Community Colleges [Health & Wellness website](#).

[Wellness Central](#) is a free online health and wellness resource that is available 24/7 in your space at your pace. Students seeking to request a counseling appointment for academic advising or general counseling can email [counseling@redwoods.edu](mailto:counseling@redwoods.edu).

## **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](#) offers assistance to students who need professional counseling services such as crisis counseling.

Learning Resource Center includes the following resources for students

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

Special programs are also available for eligible students, include

- [Extended Opportunity Programs & Services \(EOPS\)](#) provides services to eligible income disadvantaged students, including textbook award, career academic and personal counseling, school supplies, transportation assistance, tutoring, laptop, calculator and textbook loans, priority registration, graduation cap and gown, workshops, and more!
- The TRiO Student Success Program provides eligible students with a variety of services, including trips to 4-year 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

This syllabus is subject to change



Week	Lecture Topics, Reading Links, & Workshops
1	<b>What Makes Good Storytelling?</b> <a href="#">Fish Cheeks</a> by Amy Tan <a href="#">Shitty First Drafts</a> by Anne Lamott
2	<b>Memoir</b> <a href="#">The Truth Twixt Writer and Reader</a> by Mary Karr <a href="#">Me Talk Pretty One Day</a> by David Sedaris
3	<b>The Power of Images</b> <a href="#">Creating with Images</a> by Heather Sellers <a href="#">My Family's Slave</a> by Alex Tizon
4	<b>Adding Energy and Managing Feedback</b> <a href="#">On Giving Feedback</a> by Peter Biello <a href="#">Writing Groups</a> by Anne Lamott <a href="#">Tonight We Dash</a> by Ruth Rhodes <b>Practice Workshop</b>
5	<b>Characters in Conflict</b> <a href="#">On Receiving Feedback</a> by Peter Biello <a href="#">Mastering Conflict in Fiction</a> by Gina Edwards <a href="#">Neighbors</a> by Raymond Carver <b>Week 5 Workshop (1)</b>
6	<b>Narrative Voice</b> <a href="#">Tips on Handling the Omniscient POV in Fiction</a> by Jack Smith <a href="#">Everyday Use</a> by Alice Walker
7	<b>Dialogue</b> <a href="#">How To Write Great Dialogue by The Closer Look</a> <a href="#">Hills Like White Elephants</a> by Ernest Hemingway
8	<b>Plot</b> "Short Assignments" by Anne Lamott (in lecture text) <a href="#">Premium Harmony</a> by Stephen King
9	<b>Language</b> <a href="#">On the Many Different Engines that Power a Story</a> by Lincoln Michael <a href="#">1937</a> by Edwidge Danticot <b>Week 9 Workshop (2)</b>
10	<b>Insight</b> <a href="#">Finding Your Themes and Using Them to Drive Your Creativity</a> , by Pat Aitchenson <a href="#">Springtime a la Carte</a> by O. Henry
11	<b>Mood</b> <a href="#">Tone, Mood, and Style</a> by Beth Hill <a href="#">The Colonel</a> by Carolyn Forché

12	<p><b>Revision</b>  <a href="#">12 Contemporary Writers on How They Revise</a> by Emily Temple  <a href="#">Fixed Income, Honor Society and Valediction</a> by Sherman Alexie  <b>Week 12 Workshop (3)</b></p>
13	<p><b>Working Through Fear and Doubt</b>  <a href="#">How to Edit Your Story Like a New York Publisher</a> by Pamela Hodges  (optional)  “Listen to Your Broccoli,” by Anne Lamott (in lecture text)  <a href="#">"The Ugly Truth about Self-Doubt As a Writer,"</a> by Ruthanne Reid  <b>Week 13 Workshop (4)</b></p>
14	<p><b>Finals Week</b>  <b>Portfolio &amp; Final discussion due Thursday, May 12</b>  Online classes close <b>Friday, May 13</b></p>