Good writing is supposed to evoke sensation in the reader. Not the fact that it is raining, but the feeling of being rained upon. E.L. Doctorow

Course Description and Rationale
This course will serve as an introduction to the writing of original short fiction. We will read and discuss a selection of stories in order to familiarize ourselves with works of publishable merit, to study craft elements such as voice, plot, character, dialogue, and to practice workshop techniques in approaching this material as well as our own. We will complete writing exercises that will help us develop craft skills, and we will eventually draft and revise a short story to submit to the workshop where we will learn to offer constructive criticism. At the end of the quarter each student will submit a portfolio of revised material and an essay for a final grade. By the end of this course you should have a deeper understanding of fiction and the craft of writing, a growing sense of your own voice and aesthetic interests, and a small body of your very own creative work.

Required texts and materials:
• Writing notebook: Free-writes, written responses and other in-class writing exercises go here, so you are expected to bring your notebook to every class. Must be letter-sized, lined, and please only use it for this class.
• Additional: Two-pocket folder to keep your writing and class materials/handouts.
• A budget for making about 16 copies of your workshop material.

Course Components and Procedures

Attendance and participation: 30% of grade
This includes attendance, punctuality, involvement in readings and class discussions, a presentation on a story, and attending at least three readings in the Creative Writing Program.

Absences: Just come to class. If you are absent for any reason, you must get in touch with one of your peers to find out what you may have missed, and to obtain copies of the work that was distributed in class. After two absences, your grade will go down by 1/3 of a letter grade for each day missed. Because it disrupts our discussion, frequently arriving late to class will result in a reduction of your grade by 1/3 of a letter grade. If you have perfect attendance I will add two percentage points to your final grade.

• Your participation will be limited if you have not done the assigned readings. Participation in workshop is mandatory, and I expect insightful contribution on a frequent basis. Consistently poor or meager feedback when responding to others’ work will result in additional deductions from your participation grade. Workshop will commence shortly after the scheduled start of class; arriving late will result in penalties.
similar to those above.

Presentation: In the first half of the quarter, you will lead a 20-minute discussion on a story from our anthology. We will choose stories and set a schedule during the second week of class. I will of course model this presentation, and am also available should you need help planning yours. Handouts in-class writing exercises and other ways of involving the class are welcome.

Workshop: Workshop is a big part of this class. This is the place where we give constructive feedback and critiques to other writers. You are required to make copies of your work for everyone at least one class before your workshop. Failure to observe this requirement will result in a 1/3 of a letter grade deduction from your final grade for each day you are late and it will be your responsibility to track down every class member and get them your work. If you miss a workshop for which you are scheduled to be “up” you will similarly be penalized. If you are unable to attend class on the day of your workshop you must notify me ahead of time. The homework before each workshop will be to carefully read the work and annotate it as you see fit in pen or pencil and also type up a letter analyzing the project, discovering the value in it, i.e. what you think works and doesn’t work (support with reasons and references to the work-shopped text), and finally, offering strategies for revision. If you are not “up” for workshop, continue to work and revise your own work, including your writer’s notebook.

Written Critiques: 15%
For every story that is up for workshop, you will hand a 1-2 page critique to the author and email a copy to me. Critiques should be typed, dated, and have your name and the author’s name, and title of the work at the top of the page. In addition, for every piece you workshop I expect to see a revised draft.

Assignments: 20%
Included in this grade are all stories written for the class, in-class or weekly out-of-class exercises based on craft lessons/readings.

Final Portfolio: 35% of grade
Each student will compile selected drafts and revised editions together with their final project in order to complete a final portfolio. This should also include an author’s statement outlining aesthetic values and goals of the final project and portfolio, as well as reflections on the revision process. * Revisions are major overhauls of your stories based on the feedback you’ve received in class.

Grading
• Please be aware that letter grades are not awarded until the end of the quarter. You can, however, talk to me about your performance at any point during the quarter.

Conferences
I will require you to schedule a conference in the middle of the quarter to discuss your writing concerns, problems and/or goals with me. Additionally, feel free to e-mail me at any time, or speak to me before or after class, or during office hours.
Reading Series
As part of your participation grade you are required to attend at least three of the Creative Writing Department’s Reading Series events. The complete schedule is available at: http://creativewriting.stanford.edu/
These are truly extraordinary opportunities to hear visiting writers read from and talk about their work. You can also attend a Poet’s House or Art of Writing workshop in lieu of one of the readings.

Academic Integrity: For questions regarding proper classroom and student conduct, please refer to the Stanford Student Honor Code:
http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/judicialaffairs/policy/honor-code

Students with Documented Disabilities
Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, URL: http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/oae).