ENGLISH 9CE

Story Worlds

English 9CE is a writing class that explores daily creative practice through readings, prompted exercises, improv, games, collaboration, workshop, and revision. This is an introductory course and recommended for students who have never taken a Creative Writing class before. Our primary aims in this class will be to take risks, succeed, reflect, revise, fail, and recover from failure.

A secondary, but no less important, aim is to become more alert to the various worlds of human experience through language. As we engage with the long tradition of literary art, we’ll think broadly and bravely, and explore the expressive opportunities inherent in writing.
The universe is made of stories, not of atoms.

— Muriel Rukeyser

Stanford Honor Code

The Honor Code is the University’s statement on academic integrity written by students in 1921. It articulates University expectations of students and faculty in establishing and maintaining the highest standards in academic work. The Honor Code is an undertaking of the students, individually and collectively:

1. That they will not give or receive aid in examinations; that they will not give or receive unpermitted aid in class work, in the preparation of reports, or in any other work that is to be used by the instructor as the basis of grading;

2. That they will do their share and take an active part in seeing to it that others as well as themselves uphold the spirit and letter of the Honor Code.

3. The faculty on its part manifests its confidence in the honor of its students by refraining from proctoring examinations and from taking unusual and unreasonable precautions to prevent the forms of dishonesty mentioned above. The faculty will also avoid, as far as practicable, academic procedures that create temptations to violate the Honor Code.

4. While the faculty alone has the right and obligation to set academic requirements, the students and faculty will work together to establish optimal conditions for honorable academic work.

Course Requirements

Class Participation (25%) This includes attendance, punctuality and involvement in class discussions (including on the course blog), as well as a presentation on an essay of your choice.

Absences: Attendance is required and essential to your experience of the course. Individual workshops & class collaborations are especially affected by absences and are impossible to recreate. If you have a legitimate reason to be absent, please arrange this in advance; otherwise unexcused absence will reduce your overall grade by 1/3 of a letter grade. Chronic absences will affect your grade significantly.

Course site: We’ll be posting some of the work for class on our class site, including annotations on the published essays we read and responses to classmates’ work. I’ll ask that you post a short comment on our class blog about some of our readings. We’ll also produce and respond to some short writing assignments. The site content will be entirely private to our class.

Assignments (25%) This includes all writing exercises you’ve completed in class and for homework, and a longer essay, set of poems, or story submitted for the traditional workshop. We’ll conduct mini workshops and/or cold reads (reading the assignment aloud to the class and then inviting response) for many of these assignments, as well as sharing assignments on the course site.

Grading

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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<td>Written critiques</td>
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<td>Readings attendance</td>
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<td>Assignments</td>
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<td>Final portfolio</td>
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<td>Collaborative project</td>
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When you read a short story, you come out a little more aware and a little more in love with the world around you. What I want is to have the reader come out just 6 percent more awake to the world.

— George Saunders

Written critiques (10%) One of the most valuable elements of a writing class is the opportunity to have your work seriously critiqued both by your instructor and your peers. It will be as beneficial to your writing to think critically and generously about your classmates’ work as it will be to have your own writing discussed. It isn’t necessary to write pages and pages of comments to your classmates, but make sure your letter is carefully thought-out and both critical and kind. It’s important to remember that we won’t be discussing polished essays but early drafts.

Attendance at Readings (15%) Attendance at three readings in the Creative Writing program is required. A list of readings this quarter can be found at http://creativewriting.stanford.edu and http://events.stanford.edu/.

Collaborative project (10%) End-of-term collaborative project, to be presented to the class. More on this to follow.

Final portfolio (15%): One of goals in this course is to produce a lot of writing, in the service of exploration. Not everything we write or dream up will be worth pursuing, or will allow us to do our best work. (As Louise Glück once wrote, "The only real exercise of will is negative; we have towards what we write the power of veto."). We’ll present some of the work we produce to our classmates, either in workshop or on the course blog. As the quarter progresses, we’ll choose some things to pursue and some things to discard. A final portfolio of the work we pursue will be due at the end of the quarter; our goal will be 15-20 pages of revised writing. This portfolio may be composed of a single long essay, a chapter of a memoir, or a series of short essays and investigations. The main criteria will be sustained engagement and thoughtful revision. The portfolio may not constitute a "completion" of the work you pursue, but it should be a significant step toward polish and achievement.

Accommodation

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 accommodation.

Required materials:

- Course reader (available at the Stanford Bookstore)
- In-class handouts
- Journal for daily use
- Budget for workshop copies