ENG 9CE: Creative Expression in Writing
3 units, Winter 2014
Instructor: Maria Hummel

Course Description:
Creative Expression in Writing is a writing class that explores daily creative practice through readings, prompted exercises, improv, games, collaboration, workshop, and revision. It is an introductory course and recommended for students who have never taken a Creative Writing class before. It is a safe space to take risks and fail. You’ll walk out with dozens of pages of new material, and a self-awareness of your own creative process.

Creative Expression in Writing fulfills Stanford’s Ways of Thinking/Ways of Doing Creative Expression Requirement: The ability to design, create, and perform – each enriches our lives in substantial and meaningful ways. Thinking creatively, giving expressive shape to ideas, and communicating those ideas with imagination and precision are not only indispensable to all artistic endeavors, they also represent broadly applicable skills that strengthen and enhance traditional academic pursuits, stimulate effective problem-solving, and foster originality and innovation in new areas.

Course Objectives for Creative Expression students:
1. Explore your own potential and produce original creative projects.
2. Engage in artistic collaboration and the creative reinterpretation of art made by others.
3. Take creative risks beyond your comfort zones
4. Experience what it is to make the unimagined possible and real.
5. Appreciate how experimentation, failure, and revision can play a valuable role in the creation of successful and innovative works.
6. Consider multiple and possibly divergent solutions to a problem.
7. Explore the role of artistic expression in addressing issues that face society.
Required text:
Course reader, available from CopyAmerica and during first week of class.

Grade:
Participation (35%):

• Come to class prepared and on time
• Contribute thoughtfully to discussions
• Reading and respond insightfully to published or peer work
• Participate in group improv and performance activities

This class depends on the full participation of its members. Please keep the tone in the classroom professional, constructive, and respectful; it is possible to be both generous and rigorous.

If you must miss class for illness, sports, etc: 1) let me know in advance. 2) expect some make-up work. Unexcused absences will lower your grade by a half-letter each time, i.e. one unexcused absence knocks A down to A-, etc.

Written Exercises (35%): Over the course of the quarter, you will complete multiple written exercises, both in class and out. These exercises will include imitations, flash fiction, poetry and prose poems, observations, and illustrations. You will keep a daily creativity journal. At the end of the quarter you will compile and turn in a portfolio of your work, which will include revisions of some of these exercises.

Late assignments automatically receive a C grade.

Collaborative Project (15%): End-of-term collaborative project, including a “live” element to be presented at an evening CE event in Week 10.

Reading & Performance Attendance (15%): Over the course of the quarter, you must attend the CE Improv Night, Collaborations Night, and one creative writing reading or event.

Content of Creative Pieces:
Because this class is based on collective trust, you should not include references to any instructors or students in your work.

Laptops, Cell Phones, Food:
Laptops may be used only during in-class writing exercises, with WIFI off. Feel free to bring them to class, but don’t leave them on the table or open during general discussion.
Because ringing and buzzing and One Direction are disruptive, all cell phones should be switched off prior to entering the classroom. If for some reason you must be reachable, please talk to me before class.

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).

ABRIDGED CLASS CALENDAR

Week 1: CREATIVITY AND CREATIVE PRACTICE
--What is creativity? What does it mean to develop and maintain a personal creative practice? How do we go about doing it?

Readings:
Sandra Cisneros, “My Name”
Michael Martone, “Contributor’s Note”
Shelley Carson, “Brainsets and the Creative Process”

Week 2: BECOMING A PERSON ON WHOM NOTHING IS LOST
--How is creativity a response to the world as it is? How can we become observers of both our internal and external worlds? How can concrete details create an experience—i.e. of loss, of longing, pleasure, contentment, isolation—for the reader?

Readings:
Joanne Beard, “Behind the Screen”
Robert Hass, “A Story About the Body”
Some descriptions of faces
Scott McCloud, excerpts from Making Comics
Kevin Young, “Ode to Pork”
Pablo Neruda, “Ode to My Socks”
Sei Shonagon, “Hateful Things”

Week 3: THE LAND OF THE FIGURATIVE
--How does art and writing transcend the “real”? The “real” vs. the “true.”
Readings:
Aloysius Bertrand “Five Fingers of the Hand”
Sandra Cisneros, “Hair”
Jack Gilbert, “Michiko Dead”
Jean Toomer, “Portrait in Georgia”
Deb Olin Unferth, “Passport”
Haruki Murakami, “Upon Meeting the 100% Perfect Girl One April Morning”