

Bergen Community College
School of English
Department of Composition and Literature

COURSE SYLLABUS

WRT 208: Creative Writing Workshop - Playwriting
Day/time/Room: TBA

Course Description:

WRT-208 Creative Writing: Workshop in Playwriting is a workshop-style course that allows students to experience and practice the creative process involved in writing. This course provides students with an understanding of dramatic text, the skills necessary to create character, relationship, dialogue, and dramatic action. In addition, the course introduces students to the process of stage performance and managing their scripts for this medium.

The Prerequisite for this course is WRT 101: Composition I
WRT 208 is a 3 Credit Elective Course
WRT 208 is not a General Education Course

Student Learning Objectives:

As a result of meeting the requirements in this course, you will be able to:

1. Recognize the special genre demands of the art and craft of playwriting by reading and analyzing the creative work of professional writers.
2. Utilize the elements of craft in the drama genre.
3. Develop a greater appreciation for the creative process.
4. Practice critical approaches and develop aesthetic sensibilities through immersion in the creative process and interaction with others in a workshop setting.
5. Review the conventions and apply standards of professional manuscript preparation.
6. Evaluate and apply the unique conventions and requirements intrinsic in scripts made for theatre performance.

Course Content:

Students in this course can expect to explore their creativity by practicing the craft of writing drama. Many of students will have already done some creative writing, but whether a practiced writer, considering writing as a career, or someone trying creative writing for the first time, this course will give students the opportunity to work in a friendly and supportive atmosphere. As students read and discuss the work of professional writers, they will note dramatic techniques and see how various elements combine to create strong and effective plays. Students will apply this knowledge in writing their own plays. Students will hone their critical skills and benefit from receiving “audience” reaction by participating in workshops with fellow students. By listening to, reading and discussing the works of others, each student will be exposed to the diverse voices and worlds of the other students.

Suggested Recommended Texts:

Plays in one Act. Daniel Halpern Ed. Harper Perennial, New York.
ISBN: 9780880014908.

Twelve Classic One Act Plays. Mary Carolyn Waldrep, Ed. Dover Thrift Editions, New York;
2010.
ISBN:9780486474908

Evaluation

Evaluation of student performance in WRT-207 is based on the Student Learning Objectives. Students will show their achievement of these objectives through the following:

Assignment Type	Recommended Percentage
Workshops Discussion	20%
Work in Progress Scenes	20%
Final One Act Play	20%
Final Portfolio	20%
Class Participation (Assigned Readings)	20%

Recommended Grading Scale	
100-90	A
89-85	B+
84-80	B
79-75	C+
74-70	C
69-60	D
59 and below	F

Attendance Policy

BCC Attendance Policy: “All students are expected to attend punctually every scheduled meeting of each course in which they are registered. Attendance and lateness policies and sanctions are to be determined by the instructor for each section of each course. These will be established in writing on the individual course outline. Attendance will be kept by the instructor for administrative and counseling purposes.”

Class Attendance Policy: This is a workshop based course and everyone’s attendance is vital. Thus, poor attendance will affect your grade. If your EXCUSED absences (All absences must be excused in advance) exceed twice the number of weekly meetings (2), your grade will be lowered by five (5) % and for each subsequent absence, a further 5%. If you miss more than four weeks of class (4), you will fail this course. In addition, Tardiness will not be accepted; therefore, three late arrivals will equal one absence.

This is the English Department notice about plagiarism; see p. 43 in BCC 2006-07 College Catalog for official policy on cheating and plagiarism.

A STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM

In college, we read and critically explore ideas that represent the intellectual property of researchers and scholars. Just as stealing another's property is wrong in everyday life, so also is the taking of someone's intellectual property without giving the creator/author credit. Plagiarism is the presentation of others' language, ideas and thoughts as if they were our own.

The Latin word *plagiarius* means "kidnapper." Plagiarism is taking another's intellectual property without the owner's permission or without acknowledging the source. Whether the plagiarism occurs purposefully or carelessly, the offense is serious and carries severe academic penalties.

How Can Students Prevent Plagiarism?

Students must carefully use citations to credit:

- Ideas that are not common or general knowledge;
- Facts and statistics from published research;
- Graphs, charts, and diagrams from published research;
- The exact words of another in spoken or written form (quotations);
- Material published in books, magazines, encyclopedias or journals;
- Material from electronic on-line sources;
- Material written by other students or individuals;
- Material obtained from paper-writing "services."

A Matter of Integrity

Personal integrity is at the heart of the issue. A blemish on one's integrity has serious academic and career repercussions. Plagiarism destroys the essential trust between students and teachers. A plagiarized paper calls into question all the work produced by a student. Just as academic achievement produces respect, plagiarism produces academic disgrace. Students would be wise to preserve the ethical integrity of their character through a conscientious avoidance of plagiarism.

(Prof. Charles Bordogna, Bergen Community College 12/20/2000)

In this class, the College policy on cheating and plagiarism as stated in the Bergen Community College Catalog will be followed. Plagiarism on any assignment will result in an F on assignment and a possible F in the course depending on the severity of the case.

Suggested Course Outline

Note: This is a tentative schedule and is subject to change. An individual workshop schedule will be created during the first few weeks of the course, and overall workshop dates listed below may be adjusted based on enrollment and need.

Week	Assignments for next Class
<p>1 Introductions and analyses of Syllabus. Establishing a writer’s pattern and commitment. Understanding the workshop process. Writing exercise.</p>	<p>Read the following plays: <i>Finding the Sun & On Sundays</i> (Halpern)</p>
<p>2 What is Dramatic Writing? Understanding the difference between narrative and dramatic writing. Showing rather than telling: creating scenes where story is told mostly through action. Exercises: Relationships: How do characters dramatically express fear, love, hate, anger etc. Establish Workshop schedule according to groups of students: Student groups will be established on WebCT, for submissions.</p>	<p>Read the following: <i>American Tropical</i> (Halpern) Continue the exercise from class. Submit for Workshop: (Students who are presenting their scenes for each week must (MUST) have their work in progress uploaded to WebCT by day/time TBA) Any student who fails to do so will get a zero for the assignment and will not be able to submit late – No Exceptions!</p>
<p>3 Basic Plot Structure: (exposition, inciting incident, rising action (Dramatic Questions), climax, falling action) Exercise: Finding and generating Stories (Group Exercise)</p>	<p>Read the following: <i>Life Under Water</i> (Halpern) Submit for Workshop: Group ?? Exercise: Use what you learned in the class exercise and generate 2 storylines for next class. (Stories must have exposition, rising action etc)</p>
<p>4 Creating Characters: Exercise: Students perform a scene from <i>Betrayal</i>, by Harold Pinter.</p>	<p>Read the following: <i>The Problem</i> (Halpern) Submit for Workshop: Group? Finish today’s exercise at home.</p>
<p>5 Dialogue: Meaningful and sparse Dialogue Movie: “Sunset Limited” followed by discussion.</p>	<p>Read the following: <i>A Life with No Joy in it</i> (Halpern) Submit for Workshop: Group?</p>

<p>6 Stage management: Understanding that a play is continuous, and has limitations. Exercise: Writing Stage Directions for “Sunset Limited”.</p>	<p>Read the following: <i>Tone Clusters</i> (Halpern) Submit for Workshop: Group? Exercise: Finish the exercise at home.</p>
<p>7 Put your characters to work: Characters rarely sit and talk, give them movement. Exercise: Characters can perform a task while on stage.</p>	<p>Read the following: <i>The Boundary</i> (Halpern) Submit for Workshop: Group?</p>
<p>8 Setting: understanding the era, Movie: “Look Back in Anger” followed by discussion.</p>	<p>Read the following: <i>Riders to the Sea</i> (Waldrep) Submit for Workshop: Group?</p>
<p>9 Building Conflict, rising and Falling action. Exercise: Scenes with power/pleasure/duty/identity conflicts</p>	<p>Read the following: <i>The Proposal</i> (Waldrep) Submit for Workshop: Group?</p>
<p>10 Dramatic Questions: Holding the audience’s attention. Exercise: Developing Suspense plot AND Emotional Plot.</p>	<p>Read the following: <i>The Land of Heart’s Desire</i> (Waldrep) Submit for Workshop: Group?</p>
<p>11 Revising: Removing Subtext. Exercise: Respecting the audience and putting subtext behind the dialogue, and not in the dialogue.</p>	<p>Read the following: <i>The Knave of Hearts</i> (Waldrep) SUBMIT FOR PERFORMANCE: Students can cast their characters and provide a script for performance next week.</p>
<p>12 Performance</p>	<p>Read the following: <i>Tender Offer</i> (Halpern) SUBMIT FOR PERFORMANCE.</p>
<p>13 Performance</p>	<p>Read the following: SUBMIT FOR PERFORMANCE.</p>
<p>14 Performance</p>	<p>SUBMIT FOR PERFORMANCE.</p>

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Performance
Classes End

**Submit: All writing must be submitted in
final portfolio.**