



WACO, TEXAS

**COURSE SYLLABUS
AND
INSTRUCTOR PLAN**

**Intro. to Creative Writing
ENGL 2307.001**

NOTE: This is a hybrid/blended 16-week course.

DR. JESSICA H. ZBEIDA

COVID 19 Notice:

McLennan Community College is committed to providing you with every resource you need to reach your academic goals. We are also concerned for your safety. We are working through COVID-19 guidelines to make sure we offer a safe environment for you and our faculty. This will include smaller class sizes to manage social distancing and proper cleaning techniques. You will have the advantage of a physical classroom experience but may also need to work part of the time online as we adjust to limited classroom capacity. This will also allow us the flexibility to move online if so directed by federal, state and/or local COVID 19 guidelines. Faculty and staff are preparing now to ensure that you have the best experience in the midst of these uncertain times.

Course Description:

Practical experience in the techniques of imaginative writing. May include fiction, nonfiction, poetry, screenwriting, or drama. Semester hours 3 (3 lecture).

Prerequisites and/or Co-requisites:

ENGL 1301 or equivalent.

Course Notes and Instructor Recommendations:

Creative writing introduces students to the conventions of imaginative writing and publishing. In this class, you will read and write creative works representing several genres. You will also participate in writing workshops in which we discuss one another's work and offer feedback and suggestions. This course emphasizes the writing process (prewriting, drafting, and revision), collaboration, and the fundamentals of engaging poetry, prose, and drama. Students who complete this course should feel prepared to pursue creative projects and publication.

Instructor Information:

Instructor Name: Jessica H. Zbeida

MCC E-mail: jzbeida@mclennan.edu

Office Phone Number: (254)299-8949

Office Location: Faculty Office Building (FOB), 113

Office/Teacher Conference Hours: MW, 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Other Instruction Information: I respond most quickly to e-mail (within 24-48 hours). If you want to meet outside of office hours, please contact me at least 24-48 hours in advance.

Required Text & Materials:

Title: *Imaginative Writing: The Elements of Craft*

Author: Janet Burroway

Edition: 4th ed.

Publisher: Pearson

ISBN: 978-0-13-405324-0

MCC Bookstore Website: <http://www.mclennan.edu/bookstore/>

Student Support/Resources:

MCC provides a variety of services to support student success in the classroom and in your academic pursuits to include counseling, tutors, technology help desk, advising, financial aid, etc. A listing of these and the many other services available to our students is available at <http://www.mclennan.edu/campus-resource-guide/>

College personnel recognize that food, housing, and transportation are essential for student success. If you are having trouble securing these resources, we encourage you to contact a success coach by calling (254) 299-8226. Students can visit the Completion Center Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. to meet with a success coach and receive additional resources

and support to help reach academic and personal goals. Paulanne's Pantry (MCC's food pantry) is open 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Monday-Friday, without an appointment. The Completion Center and pantry are located on the Second Floor of the Student Services Center (SSC).

MCC Foundation Emergency Grant Fund:

Unanticipated expenses, such as car repairs, medical bills, housing, or job loss can affect us all. Should an unexpected expense arise, the MCC Foundation has an emergency grant fund that may be able to assist you. Please go to <https://www.mclennan.edu/foundation/scholarships-and-resources/emergencygrant.html> to find out more about the emergency grant. The application can be found [here](https://www.mclennan.edu/foundation/docs/Emergency_Grant_Application.pdf) (https://www.mclennan.edu/foundation/docs/Emergency_Grant_Application.pdf).

Minimum Technical Skills:

Students should have basic computer skills, knowledge of word processing software, and a basic understanding of how to use search engines and common web browsers.

Backup Plan for Technology:

In the event MCC's technology systems are down, you will be contacted/notified through your MCC student email address. Please note that all assignments and activities will be due on the date specified in the Instructor Plan, unless otherwise noted by the instructor.

* [Click Here for the Minimum System Requirements to Utilize MCC's D2L|Brightspace](https://www.mclennan.edu/center-for-teaching-and-learning/Faculty%20and%20Staff%20Commons/requirements.html) (<https://www.mclennan.edu/center-for-teaching-and-learning/Faculty%20and%20Staff%20Commons/requirements.html>)

Click on the link above for information on the minimum system requirements needed to reliably access your courses in MCC's D2L|Brightspace learning management system.

Email Policy:

McLennan Community College would like to remind you of the policy (<http://www.mclennan.edu/employees/policy-manual/docs/E-XXXI-B.pdf>) regarding college email. All students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to use their McLennan email addresses when conducting college business.

A student's McLennan email address is the preferred email address that college employees should use for official college information or business. Students are expected to read and, if needed, respond in a timely manner to college emails.

Instructional Uses of Email:

In this class, I expect all students to check their college email regularly. It is the primary method by which I'll communicate with you about grades, changes in due dates, etc.

Email on Mobile Devices:

The College recommends that you set up your mobile device to receive McLennan emails.

Forwarding Emails:

You may forward the emails that come to your McLennan address to alternate email addresses; however, the College will not be held responsible for emails forwarded to an alternate address that may become lost or placed in junk or spam filters.

Core Objectives for Communication:

Courses in this category focus on developing ideas and expressing them clearly, considering the effect of the message, fostering understanding, and building the skills needed to communicate persuasively. Courses involve the command of oral, aural, written, and visual literacy skills that enable people to exchange messages appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience.

- **Critical Thinking (CT)** -- to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information
- **Communications Skill (COM)** -- to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication
- **Teamwork (TW)** -- to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal
- **Personal Responsibility (PR)** -- to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making

Course Learning Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Generate creative writing in several genres.
2. Describe how literary elements such as plot, character, dialogue, conflict, and tone contribute to imaginative writing.
3. Write in a style appropriate to diverse audiences and purposes.
4. Prepare creative works for publication according to a journal's submission guidelines.
5. Use edited American English in creative works.

Methods of Teaching and Learning:

This course uses a mix of assigned reading, lecture, class discussion, and short and long writing assignments to help students meet the learning objectives, including:

- Assigned Reading, Lecture, and Class Discussion
- Short Writing Exercises and Writing Workshops
- Assignments (creative nonfiction, short fiction, and poetry)
- A Student Journal (weekly journal entries)
- A Final Portfolio (a collection of the student's work over the semester, including one assignment revised for publication)

Students will submit their work online in Brightspace (**save your work in .pdf or .docx format**). *All essay assignments MUST be submitted online—hard copies are not accepted.*

Course Grading Rubrics

I use holistic grading rubrics for major writing assignments in this course. Each rubric is tailored to the assignment. You may view them in the course units in Brightspace.

Course Grading Information:

Students' final grades are determined as follows:

Course Component	Description	Percentage
Assignments	Creative writing assignments in three genres (creative nonfiction, fiction, and poetry)	45%
Publication Project	Students will revise one of the major assignments and submit it to a literary magazine, conference, or contest of their choice	15%
Student Journal	A collection of short writing exercises prepared over the semester	10%
Homework	Includes short writing exercises, discussion posts, and peer review workshops.	10%
Final Portfolio	Final project that presents a collection of the student's work over the semester, including one work revised for publication	20%

Assignments

Students will prepare three major assignments for this course in three genres: creative nonfiction, fiction, and poetry. **Detailed instructions for each assignment and a grading rubric appear in Brightspace/D2L.** All assignments are submitted online—upload your file as an attachment in .pdf, .doc, or .docx format. I try to provide feedback on major assignments as soon as possible, usually within two to three weeks of submission. If you have any questions regarding feedback, please contact me.

NOTE: All assignments will be submitted to TurnItIn, a plagiarism detection tool in Brightspace. This software compares submissions to material in TurnItIn's database, which includes work submitted by other students and information available online. When an assignment is uploaded, it becomes part of the database. If you attempt to reuse work submitted to TurnItIn in another course, you risk serious academic consequences, such as receiving a failing grade for the assignment/course and other disciplinary action.

Publication Project

Students will revise one of the major assignments (such as 2-3 poems, an essay, or a short story) and submit their work to a literary magazine, conference, or contest for review. *Before revising, students should identify a target publication and review its submission guidelines and previously published content carefully.* Revisions should be tailored to the publication's audience and

standards. In addition to their revision, students will prepare a short cover letter for their work with the publication’s name and address. **Detailed instructions for this assignment and a rubric appear in Brightspace.** Please save files in .doc, .docx, or .pdf format and upload your work to the assignment submission folder in Brightspace.

Journal

Over the semester, students will keep a journal in which they respond to writing exercises and prompts given in class. Each entry should be roughly 1-2 paragraphs in length (or about 7-10 sentences). Students should record their work in a composition book or spiral notebook. A grading rubric for the journal appears in Brightspace. *Though I only grade the journal at the end of the semester, students should strive to complete the entries every week.* If you miss class, please contact me regarding journal exercises you may have missed.

Homework

Students complete short writing exercises, discussion posts, and peer review workshops throughout the semester, which are part of the “homework” category. Short writing exercises on plot, character development, and other topics occur throughout the course. For each assignment, students also participate in writing workshop in which they share a draft of their work and provide feedback to classmates on their work. I try to provide feedback on homework assignments within 1-2 weeks of submission.

Final Portfolio

Rather than a final exam, students will prepare a Final Portfolio that presents their growth and development as a creative writer. Detailed instructions for this assignment and a rubric appear in Brightspace. In the portfolio, students will include:

- (1) A **Portfolio Reflection Paper** (750+ words) that describes the student’s experience in the course, including a discussion of the works chosen for revision, the student’s goals for revision, and the student’s progress toward achieving them.
- (2) **Revision of One Major Assignment** (this should include the revision submitted for the publication project)
- (3) **Revision of an Additional Assignment** (revision of one other major assignment submitted for the course)
- (4) A **Collection of Workshop Notes** (2-3 examples of written feedback used to revise the major assignments; this may include peer notes provided in class, student notes from workshop discussion, instructor feedback, etc.)

Course Outline or Schedule:

The schedule below provides a general overview of the course. A detailed course schedule with weekly assigned reading is available in the “Course Introduction Unit” in Brightspace.

Week 1 8/24 – 8/30	Start Here: Syllabus, Schedule, & Course Intro. Unit - Discuss the syllabus, schedule, textbook, & course shell in Brightspace.
	<i>Work Due: Syllabus Quiz (8/29); “About Me” Discussion Post (8/29); Journal Entry #1; Assigned Reading for Week 2 (8/31).</i>

Weeks 2-4	Unit 1: Creative Nonfiction - Discuss Creative Nonfiction (CNF) assignment & rubric; Discuss methods and techniques of Creative Nonfiction, including memoir and personal essay; Fact vs. Truth in nonfiction; “Image” and Imaginative Writing; Writing Workshop #1: Creative Nonfiction; Discuss Revision Strategies for CNF.
8/31 – 9/20	<i>Work Due: Discussion Post #1 (9/5); Journal Entry #2; Assigned Reading for Week 3; (9/7); Journal Entry #3; Assigned Reading for Week 4 (9/14); Writing Workshop #1 (9/14 and 9/18); Journal Entry #4; Creative Nonfiction Assignment (9/20); Assigned Reading for Week 5 (9/21).</i>
LABOR DAY HOLIDAY, Mon., Sept. 7th, 2020; MCC Campus Closed	
Weeks 5 – 7	Unit 2: Fiction - Discuss Short Fiction (SF) assignment & rubric; Methods and Techniques of Short Fiction, including elements of fiction (story, plot, flashback, character, point of view, text, and subtext); Voice and style in writing; Writing Workshop #2: Short Fiction; Discuss revision strategies for Short Fiction.
9/21 – 10/11	<i>Work Due: Discussion Post #2 (9/26); Journal Entry #5; Assigned Reading for Week 6 (9/28); Journal Entry #6; Assigned Reading for Week 7 (10/5); Writing Workshop #2 (10/5 and 10/9); Journal Entry #7; Short Fiction Assignment (10/11); Assigned Reading for Week 8 (10/12).</i>
Weeks 8 – 10	Unit 3: Poetry - Discuss Poetry (P) assignment & rubric; Methods and techniques of Poetry, including elements of poetry (the line, verse, imagery, metaphor, and sound); Discuss setting; Discuss Appendix A – Basics of Prosody; Writing Workshop #3: Poetry; Discuss revision strategies for Poetry.
10/12 – 11/1	<i>Work Due: Discussion Post #3 (10/17); Journal Entry #8; Assigned Reading for Week 9 (10/19); Journal Entry #9; Assigned Reading for Week 10 (10/26); Writing Workshop #3 (10/26 and 10/30); Journal Entry #10; Poetry Assignment (11/1); Assigned Reading for Unit 4 (11/2).</i>
Weeks 11 – 13	Unit 4: Publishing Your Work - Discuss Publication Project assignment & rubric; Discuss publishing your work, finding venues for your work, reading submission guidelines, writing a cover letter, and simultaneous submission; Participate in Zoom conference with Dr. Zbeida; Discuss revision strategies for Publication Project.
11/2 – 11/22	<i>Work Due: Discussion Post #4 (11/7); Journal Entry #11; Journal Entry #12; Journal Entry #13; Publication Project (11/22).</i>
Thanksgiving Holiday, Nov. 25th – 28th, 2020; MCC Campus Closed	
Weeks 14 – 16	Unit 5: Final Portfolio - Discuss Final Portfolio assignment & rubric; What is a Final Portfolio? Course Wrap Up & Reflection.
11/23 – 12/10	<i>Work Due: Discussion Post #5 (11/28); Submit Student Journal (12/6); Final Portfolio due Dec. 8th, 2020.</i>

Late Work and Make Up Work Policies:

As a rule, I do not accept late work. In rare cases (hospitalization, serious car accident, etc.), I will allow students to submit work late, but only if I feel the situation warrants it. If something unexpected happens that may affect your ability to submit an assignment, please contact me immediately (either by e-mail or phone). **Make-up work is allowed solely at my discretion.** For

assignments, I deduct five points for each day late—assignments that are not submitted within **ONE WEEK** of the original deadline receive a “0” grade.

Student Behavioral Expectations and Attendance Policy:

Students must treat all participants in the course with respect. In all assignments and interactions with others in the course, you should **strive to provide specific, constructive feedback** to your peers. In a course like creative writing, success depends on our ability to collaborate and help one another reach our writing goals. To do this, we must practice active listening and develop empathy for others, particularly those who come from different backgrounds.

Students who disrupt the learning environment (such as posting offensive material to the discussion board) will be marked absent for the week. Make up work is not allowed in such cases. If you experience any behavior in the course that you find inappropriate, please contact Dr. Zbeida or another MCC campus official (See Title XI Statement below).

Attendance is required for this course. I record attendance in Brightspace, and you can view your attendance record there. **To be counted “present,” students must participate by engaging in discussion (either in person or via Zoom) and completing the work assigned for that week.** Students are allowed to miss two weeks of class without academic penalty. Students who **miss three weeks or more of class may fail the course.** If you need to miss class for a school-sponsored event or religious observance, it is your responsibility to notify Dr. Zbeida beforehand. If you do not do so, you may not be allowed to make up your work.

*** [Click Here for the MCC Academic Integrity Statement](http://www.mclennan.edu/academic-integrity)**
(www.mclennan.edu/academic-integrity)

The link above will provide you with information about academic integrity, dishonesty, and cheating.

*** [Click Here for the MCC Attendance/Absences Policy](https://www.mclennan.edu/highlander-guide/policies.html)**
(<https://www.mclennan.edu/highlander-guide/policies.html>)

Click on the link above for the college policies on attendance and absences. Your instructor may have guidelines specific to this course.

Accommodations/ADA Statement

Any student who is a qualified individual with a disability may request reasonable accommodations to assist with providing equal access to educational opportunities. Students should contact the Accommodations Coordinator as soon as possible to provide documentation and make necessary arrangements. Once that process is completed, appropriate verification will be provided to the student and instructor. Please note that instructors are not required to provide classroom accommodations to students until appropriate verification has been provided by the Accommodations Coordinator. Instructors should not provide accommodations unless approved by the Accommodations Coordinator. For additional information, please visit mclennan.edu/disability.

Students with questions or who require assistance with disabilities involving physical, classroom, or testing accommodations should contact:

disabilities@mclennan.edu

254-299-8122

Room 319, Student Services Center

*** [Click Here for more information about Title IX](#)
(www.mclennan.edu/titleix)**

We care about your safety, and value an environment where students and instructors can successfully teach and learn together. If you or someone you know experiences unwelcomed behavior, we are here to help. Individuals who would like to report an incident of sexual misconduct are encouraged to immediately contact the Title IX Coordinator at titleix@mclennan.edu or by calling Dr. Drew Canham (Vice President for Student Success) at 299-8645. Individuals also may contact the MCC Police Department at 299-8911 or the MCC Student Counseling Center at MCC by calling 299-8210. The MCC Student Counseling Center is a confidential resource for students. Any student or employee may report sexual harassment anonymously by visiting the following website: <http://www.lighthouse-services.com/mclennan/>.

McLennan's Title IX webpage (<http://www.mclennan.edu/titleix/>) contains more information about definitions, reporting, confidentiality, resources, and what to do if you or someone you know is a victim of sexual misconduct, gender-based violence or the crimes of rape, acquaintance rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, dating violence or domestic violence.

** You will need to access each link separately through your Web browser (for example: Internet Explorer, Mozilla, Chrome, or Safari) to print each link's information.*