MᶜLENNAN
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

WACO, TEXAS

COURSE SYLLABUS

AND

INSTRUCTOR PLAN

INTRO. TO CREATIVE WRITING

ENGL 2307.001

Dr. Jessica Zbeida

NOTE: This is a 16-week course.

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 Corequisites:

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: Dr. Jessica Zbeida
MCC Email: jzbeida@mclennan.edu
Office Phone Number: (254)299-8949
Office Location: Faculty Office Building (FOB) 113
Office/Teacher Conference Hours: TTH, 8:30 am – 10:30 am (via Zoom)
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/

Methods of Teaching and Learning:

This course uses a mix of assigned reading, lecture, class discussion, and short and long writing assignments to helps students meet the learning objectives, including:
- Assigned Reading, Lecture, and Class Discussion
- Writing Workshops and Peer Response Letters
- Draft Submissions (including Writer's Notes)

- A Publication Project (revise and submit a work for publication)
- A Final Portfolio (a collection of the student's work, including one assignment revised for publication)

Submit your work online in Brightspace (**save your files in .rtf or .docx format**). *All assignments MUST be submitted online—hard copies are not accepted*.

Course Grading Rubrics

I use holistic grading rubrics for assignments in this course. Each rubric is tailored to the assignment and appears in the course units in Brightspace.Course Objectives and/or Competencies:

<u>Course Learning Objectives:</u>

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.
Use edited American English in creative works.

<u>Course Attendance/Participation Guidelines:</u>

If a student is not in attendance in accordance with the policies/guidelines of the class as outlined in the course syllabus as of the course census date, faculty are required to drop students from their class roster prior to certifying the respective class roster. A student's financial aid will be re-evaluated accordingly and the student will only receive funding for those courses attended as of the course census date.

Before the 60% point of the semester, a student who is absent for 25% or more of a face-to-face or blended course or who misses 25% or more of assigned work for an online course will be withdrawn from the course with a grade of W. A student may also request to be withdrawn with a grade of W before the 60% point of the semester. After the 60% point of the semester, the student may request to be withdrawn if the student is passing, or be assigned the final grade earned at the end of the semester after grades have been updated to reflect missing work.

PLEASE NOTE:

- If you do not attend class before Jan. 24th (census date), you will be dropped. This may impact your ability to get future financial aid.
- If you want to drop the class before Jan. 24th, you may do so. The course won't appear on your transcript. Please speak with me first. If I can help in any way, I will. Please also

check with your advisor and with the Office of Financial Aid to understand how dropping this class might affect your academic progress.

- If you withdraw from the class between Jan. 24th (census date) and Mar. 21st (the 60% point in the semester), you will receive a "W" on your transcript. Consult with me, your advisor, and Financial Aid before you make your final decision.
- **IMPORTANT:** Students are limited to **6 TOTAL** withdrawals over their undergraduate education at ALL Texas public colleges and universities they attend.
- If you miss more than four weeks of class before Mar. 21st, you may be withdrawn and receive a "W" grade on your transcript.

Course Outline or Schedule:

Week 1 (1/8 – 1/14)
Start Here: Syllabus & Course Introduction.

- Discuss Syllabus, including course policies, grading, expectations for attendance, participation, academic integrity, and student conduct/behavior.
- Course shell structure in Brightspace; set notification settings for the course.
- Overview of textbook (*Imaginative Writing,* by Janet Burroway).

Work Due: Syllabus Quiz (1/12); "About Me" Discussion Post (1/13); Assigned Reading: Week 2 (1/15).

Weeks 2 – 4 (1/15 – 2/4)
Unit 1: Creative Nonfiction.

- Discuss Creative Nonfiction (CNF) assignment.
- Forms and methods of Creative Nonfiction, including memoir and personal essay.
- Fact vs. Truth in nonfiction; "Image" and Imaginative Writing.
- Writing Workshop #1: Creative Nonfiction. Post a copy of your draft and provide feedback (including Peer Response Letters) for at least TWO classmates.
- Development & revision: quilting, research, editing, and the workshop; Revision Strategies for CNF.

Work Due: Discussion Post #1 (1/20); Assigned Reading: Week 3 (1/22); Post draft CNF essay to Writing Workshop #1 (1/26); Assigned Reading: Week 4 (1/29); Writing Workshop #1 (post draft Fri., 1/26; post Peer Response Letters Fri., 2/2); Assigned Reading: Week 5 (2/5).

Weeks 5 – 8 (2/5 – 3/3)
Unit 2: Fiction.

- Discuss Short Fiction (SF) assignment.
- Forms and methods of Short Fiction, including story, plot, flashback, character, point of view, text, and subtext. Voice and style in writing.

- Writing Workshop #2: Short Fiction; post a copy of your draft and provide feedback (including Peer Response Letters) for at least TWO classmates.
- Revision strategies for Short Fiction.

Work Due: Discussion Post #2 (2/10); Assigned Reading: Week 6 (2/12); Prepare draft of Short Fiction assignment; Assigned Reading: Week 7 (2/19); Post draft of Short Fiction assignment to Writing Workshop #2 (2/23); Writing Workshop #2 (post draft Fri., 2/23; post Peer Response Letters Fri., 3/1); Assigned Reading: Week 9 (3/11).

Weeks 9 – 12 (3/11 – 4/7)
Unit 3: Poetry.

- Discuss Poetry (P) assignment.
- Forms and methods of Poetry, including the line, verse, imagery, metaphor, and sound.
- Discuss setting; Discuss Appendix A – Basics of Prosody.
- Writing Workshop #3: Poetry; post a copy of your draft and provide feedback (including Peer Response Letters) for at least TWO classmates.
- Revision strategies for Poetry.

Work Due: Discussion Post #3 (3/16); Assigned Reading: Week 10 (3/18); Prepare draft of Short Fiction assignment; Assigned Reading: Week 11 (3/25); Post draft of Poetry assignment to Writing Workshop #3 (3/29); Writing Workshop #3 (post draft Fri., 3/29; post Peer Response Letters Fri., 4/5).

Weeks 13 – 14 (4/8 – 4/21)
Unit 4: Publishing Your Work.

- Discuss Publication Project assignment.
- 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.

Work Due: Discussion Post #4 (4/15); Publication Project (4/21).

Weeks 15 – 16 (4/22 – 5/2)
Unit 5: Final Portfolio.
- Discuss Final Portfolio assignment.
- What is a Final Portfolio? Course Wrap Up & Reflection.

Work Due: Discussion Post #5 (4/27); Submit Final Portfolio (due 4/30)
Final Portfolio due Tuesday, April 30th, by 5:00 pm.

<u>Course Grading Information:</u>

Final grades are determined as follows:

Course Component	Description	Percentage
Draft Submissions	Drafts for writing workshop in three genres (creative nonfiction, fiction, and poetry); drafts must include 'Writing Notes' (see below)	30%
Peer Response Letters	Response letters (1-2 pg.) for peers that provide feedback on drafts discussed in workshop	30%
Publication Project	Includes the revision and submission of one draft to a literary magazine, conference, or contest	10%
Participation & Attendance	Includes attendance and participation in discussion, exercises, and writing workshop	10%
Final Portfolio	Final project that presents a collection of the work, including one draft revised for publication	20%

Draft Submissions

You will prepare drafts for workshop in three genres: creative nonfiction, fiction, and poetry. **Instructions for each draft and a grading rubric appear in Brightspace**. *Submissions are 'works in progress.' They don't have to be perfect as long as they demonstrate creative effort toward your goal.* At the end of each submission, include a 'Writing Notes' section that describes your writing process, intentions, difficulties with the project, and intended audience. (A sample of 'Writing Notes' appears in Brightspace). *Submit all drafts online by uploading a file in .rtf or .docx format to the Writing Workshop discussion forum in Brightspace*. I post feedback as soon as possible, usually within two weeks of submission. If you have any questions regarding feedback, please contact me.

Peer Response Letters

Before workshop, read and provide feedback on your peers' drafts by writing notes (handwritten or electronic) on the draft AND preparing a Peer Response Letter. Students prepare response letters for AT LEAST TWO peers. **Letters should: address the writer by name; use an appropriate tone; and, be typed, double-spaced, and 1-2 pages in length.** Successful letters will include *observations*, *questions*, and *possibilities* for revision. Balance the space devoted to each—remember, the goal is to *encourage and support* the writer; not to 'fix' their work. Use the letter to provide 'macro' feedback for the draft as a whole, and use the margins of the draft to add 'micro' feedback on specific scenes, lines, or passages. **A sample Peer Response Letter appears in Brightspace.**

Publication Project

For this project, you will select one draft (such as 2-3 poems, an essay, or a short story), revise it, and then submit your work to a literary magazine, conference, or contest. *Before revising, be sure to identify a target publication and to review its submission guidelines and back issues.* Revisions should be tailored to the publication's audience and standards. Be sure to prepare a short cover letter for your submission, too. **Instructions and a rubric appear in Brightspace.** Please save files in .rtf or .docx format, and upload your work to the assignment submission folder in Brightspace.

Participation & Attendance

Attendance is required for this course. Our class is a community of writers, and it requires students' active engagement. Each week, I take an attendance grade (posted in Brightspace). To be counted 'present,' students must attend class and participate in activities, such as short writing exercises, writing workshops, discussion posts, etc. **Students at MCC enrolled in 16-week, face-to-face classes are allowed TWO WEEKS (or four classes) of excused absences without academic penalty. NOTE:** *Students who miss more than **three weeks** of class receive a lower Participation & Attendance grade, and students who miss more than **four weeks** of class may be dropped from the course and/or receive a failing grade.*

WRITING WORKSHOP GUIDELINES

Over the semester, you will share drafts with your peers in writing workshop. For each workshop, students will upload a copy of their file in .rtf or .docx format to the 'Writing Workshop' discussion topic in Brightspace. Keep in mind that **successful workshops operate on the 'Golden Rule' principle: treat others how you want to be treated.**

Advice on Reading and Responding to a Draft

Read each draft twice. The first reading orients you to the work, so don't add comments yet. At the end of the draft, read the 'Writing Notes' to understand the writer's goals, intended audience, and writing process. Read the draft *again*, and as you go consider the draft. Add questions to the margins of the draft about specific lines or passages you want to address—focus on why the writer made a particular choice (plot, setting, character, conflict, etc.) and how it affects (or doesn't affect) the rest of the work.

Keep your comments brief and specific, and use your Peer Response Letter to address the work as a whole. Remember, broad comments like, "I liked it" or "I didn't really like it" aren't very helpful. But, a comment like, "What if the story opened with the last scene instead of the first one?" or "Would the poem change if it used softer sounds?" are *specific* and *invite a response from the writer*. Strive for open-ended questions that focus on possibilities for the work (rather than 'corrections').

Advice on Receiving Feedback in Workshop

It's natural to be nervous about workshop. As much as possible, listen with an open mind. If you feel the class has misinterpreted something or should move on, **feel free to jump in**, perhaps by

asking a question like, "What parts of the work gave you that impression?" or "Could we discuss X? I wasn't sure how to handle that…" Questions like these guide your classmates to the parts of the work you want to address.

In the end, some comments may not be the best advice for you or your work. *Don't take every suggestion*—trust your instincts. You may need time (a few days or a week) between receiving feedback and beginning the revision process. That's okay—use it to reflect. As you revise, think carefully about your choices. Remember, fixing a 'problem' area in draft might involve changing other parts of the text or rewriting the whole thing. Even if your peers don't have specific suggestions for revision, knowing which part of the work needs attention is valuable.

Last, don't expect for your peers to say your work is perfect. That's not the point of workshop. With writing, you have an infinite number of chances. Persistence pays off, so stick with it and don't give up!

What to Expect during Workshop

1. At the start of workshop, the author of the work reads one or two favorite lines or passages (5 min.). This helps the class understand how the work *sounds* to the author.

2. Next, another student briefly describes the text, focusing on how the author addresses the audience, what kind of work the text is or wants to be, how the work resembles or differs from other works in the genre, etc. *The description isn't a time to criticize the work;* rather, it's a chance to establish what's most memorable or interesting to readers. Other students may add to the description.

3. After the description, the author asks a question(s) to kick-start the discussion. The workshop will have an open conversation involving the author, instructor, and other students in which everyone will ask questions, offer possibilities, and suggest areas for revision. As much as possible, questions should focus on material that isn't addressed in the text or the author's Writing Notes.

4. As time allows, the workshop will unpack specific passages and examples in the text. Remember, workshop isn't the place to regurgitate your Peer Response Letter—the author reads that later.

5. If *at any time* the writer feels like the workshop is getting sidetracked, he/she/they can 'redirect' the discussion by asking a question or saying, "Let's move on." The author is **ALWAYS** *part* of the conversation.

6. At the end of workshop, the author identifies one or two points from the discussion to explore during revision. The author should leave workshop with concrete ideas for revision.

Final Portfolio

Rather than a final exam, students will prepare a Final Portfolio that presents their growth and development as a writer. Instructions for this assignment and a rubric appear in Brightspace. The portfolio includes:

(1) **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 Draft Submission** (this is the revision submitted for the publication project)
(3) **Additional Creative Work(s)** (this may include revisions of other drafts submitted to workshop or additional *unpublished* material to complement the other elements of the portfolio; at least one other work must appear, but more may be added)
(4) A **Collection of Notes/Feedback Used to Revise** (2-3 examples of written feedback used to revise the major assignments; this may include Peer Response Letters provided in class, student notes from workshop discussion, instructor feedback, etc.)

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 or Conduct Policy:

S**tudents must treat all participants in the course with respect.** In all assignments and interactions with others in the course, you should **strive to provide respectful, constructive feedback**. 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.

S**tudents 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).

[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 additional guidelines specific to this course.

MᶜLENNAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ACADEMIC RESOURCES/POLICIES

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. For additional information, please visit www.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

Title IX:
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. Claudette Jackson, (Accommodations/Title IX) at (254) 299-8465. MCC employees are mandatory reporters and must report incidents immediately to the Title IX Coordinator. Individuals may also contact the MCC Police Department at (254) 299-8911 or the MCC Student Counseling Center at (254) 299-8210. The MCC Student Counseling Center is a confidential resource for students. Any student may report sexual harassment anonymously by visiting http://www.lighthouse-services.com/mclennan/

Additionally, Title IX provides rights and protections for pregnant and newly parenting students. Go to McLennan's Title IX webpage at www.mclennan.edu/titleix/. It 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.

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/

Academic Support and Tutoring is here to help students with all their course-related needs. Specializing in one-on-one tutoring, developing study skills, and effectively writing essays. Academic Support and Tutoring can be found in the Library and main floor of the Learning Commons. This service is available to students in person or through Zoom. You can contact the Academic Support and Tutoring team via Zoom or email (ast@mclennan.edu) by going to our website (https://www.mclennan.edu/academic-support-and-tutoring/)

College personnel recognize that food, housing, and transportation are essential for student success. If you are having trouble securing these resources or want to explore strategies for balancing life and school, we encourage you to contact either MCC CREW – Campus Resources Education Web by calling (254) 299-8561 or by emailing crew@mclennan.edu or a Success Coach by calling (254) 299-8226 or emailing success@mclennan.edu.

Paulanne's Pantry (MCC's food pantry) provides free food by appointment to students, faculty and staff. To schedule an appointment, go to https://calendly.com/paulannespantry-mcc/15min.

The CREW, Success Coaches, and Paulanne's Pantry are all located on the second floor of the Student Services building in Success Coaching Services.

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 at
https://www.mclennan.edu/foundation/docs/Emergency_Grant_Application.pdf

MCC Academic Integrity Statement:
Please view our Academic integrity statement for more information about academic
integrity, dishonesty, and cheating. The unauthorized use of artificial intelligence (AI) for
classwork can be a violation of the College's General Conduct Policy. Whether AI is
authorized in a course and the parameters in which AI can be used in a course will be
outlined by each instructor.

Minimum System Requirements to Utilize MCC's D2L|Brightspace:
Go to https://www.mclennan.edu/center-for-teaching-and-learning/Faculty-and-Staff-
Commons/requirements.html for information on the minimum system requirements
needed to reliably access your courses in MCC's D2L|Brightspace learning
management system.

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 notified via 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.

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. For more
information about your student email account, go to www.mclennan.edu/studentemail.

Instructional Uses of Email:

Faculty members can determine classroom use of email or electronic communications. Faculty should expect and encourage students to check the college email on a regular basis. Faculty should inform students in the course syllabus if another communication method is to be used and of any special or unusual expectations for electronic communications.

If a faculty member prefers not to communicate by email with their students, it should be reflected in the course syllabus and information should be provided for the preferred form of communication.

Email on Mobile Devices:

The College recommends that you set up your mobile device to receive McLennan emails. If you need assistance with set-up, you may email Helpdesk@mclennan.edu for help.

You can find help on the McLennan website about connecting your McLennan email account to your mobile device:

- Email Setup for iPhones and iPads
- Email Setup for Androids

Forwarding Emails:

You may forward 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 be lost or placed in junk or spam filters.

For more helpful information about technology at MCC, go to MCC's Tech Support or email helpdesk@mclennan.edu.

Disclaimer:

The resources and policies listed above are merely for informational purposes and are subject to change without notice or obligation. The College reserves the right to change policies and other requirements in compliance with State and Federal laws. The provisions of this document do not constitute a contract.