

English 412: Senior Workshop in Creative Writing College Hall 313

Glenn Freeman

Office: 207 South Hall, X4224

Office Hours: M 11-12:00 and by appointment

Block 5: Jan. 11 – Feb. 3, 2016

Books:

Writing Past Dark, Bonnie Friedman

The Writing Life, Annie Dillard

Handouts on moodle to be printed and brought to class.

Course Description:

Welcome to ENG 412, a workshop in which we will focus on your work and life as advanced creative writers. This course will allow the time to work on completing work you've done at Cornell and to define for yourself who you are as an artist and the artistic tradition to which you belong.

The bulk of this class will be spent writing and discussing our work, our goals, and our philosophies of writing and art. I would like us to work as a supportive and honest community of working artists.

Objectives:

- To produce a body of literary work of significance, of publishable quality. This will require students to think and act *creatively* and independently as they *integrate and apply* new *knowledge*.
- To refine our ability to articulate thoughtful responses to literary texts. The class critique sessions will require students to *speak clearly, listen actively, and engage with others in productive dialogue*.
- To learn to appreciate the complex and subtle means by which literary texts create emotional, physical, and intellectual effects on readers.
- To better understand literary traditions and where our work fits within those traditions. To explore the importance of influence and our relationship as artists to writers who have come before us.
- To develop our skills at presenting our work to the public.
- To understand the process by which work is submitted for publication and prepare our work for this process.

Assignments:

- **Artistic Statement:** During the block, you will write two versions of an artist's statement. The first will be a short, pithy description of your art and your goals as an artist. This document is useful after college for anyone applying for grants or fellowships or graduate programs. The second version will be a longer, theoretically-informed discussion of your sense of where you fall within an artistic tradition. This longer essay will consider questions such as "What good is art for?" "Why writing?" "Why do I write?"
- **Reading List:** Early in the class, I will meet with each of you individually. We will discuss your prospectus and your working bibliography. We will develop a plan of reading for the block, deciding what seems most valuable to your own work to read or re-read, thinking particularly about texts that will help you with your extended artistic statement, texts that help you think about your influences and situate your writing in an artistic tradition.
- **Publication Discussion:** We will discuss a variety of means and venues for publication/presentation of your work. I would like everyone to research possible venues to which you might submit your own work. You will then present your findings to the class so that by the end of the course we will all know a variety of potential places to send our work. I will expect you to explain any aesthetic sensibilities you see in the editorial decisions (what kind of work seems to fit into this journal?) and to give us the guidelines for submitting work.
- **Participation:** This is a senior-level workshop. Everyone's participation is essential to make this a productive experience for everyone. I expect you to attend class and to be fully prepared for in-depth discussion. This is especially important for the discussions of your peers' work: read the material several times and be ready to dig into the work in discussion.
- **Class Exercise:** During your time at Cornell, you have certainly done many writing assignments to keep you writing creatively. During this course, I would like you to develop your own exercise. This can be something completely new, or can be a twist on an exercise you've been given in other classes, or in writing groups. You should plan an exercise that will have your peers write for 5-10 minutes. We will then discuss the exercise, focusing mostly on why you think the exercise may be valuable. What do you hope that your peers experience through the exercise?
- **Workshop Discussion:** Much of this block will be spent discussing your peers' work. For each round of discussions, you will be assigned to open the discussion for one piece, making general observations, suggestions, and suggesting issues we should discuss as a group. One round will focus on a lengthy section of the final manuscript—expectations for this round will be more in-depth. You will open the discussion by giving a roughly 10-minute reaction to the work: what the writer's intentions seem to be, what the writer does particularly well, strategies you think the writer might experiment with, etc. Then you will pose a few opening questions for

the class to discuss which will lead to an open-ended discussion of the work. You are NOT expected to lead the class discussion for the entire time, but you will rather get the discussion started.

- **Final Portfolio:** The final day of class you will be submitting a portfolio of your polished work. We will have discussed the goals for this portfolio early on, but the plans will evolve throughout the block. You will write a brief paper then discussing how the project has gone and where you think the material stands at this point: how finished do you think it is? What is the next step in your project?

You are now advanced creative writing students and I will treat you as such. To that end, I will also evaluate your block holistically, considering all components in relation to you as individuals rather than by some rigidly pre-defined system. I will be evaluating you on the quality of your written work, your engagement with the class material and your peers' writing, and the effort you put forth throughout. I will give you a grade at the end of the block, but I will give you updates as we go, and I will be happy to discuss your progress with you at any point during the block.

Schedule:

We will meet daily from 12:00-3:00. I am available Mondays 11-12 and before and after class; otherwise, I have found it most productive for people to let me know when they would like to meet. I suggest that you contact me through e-mail if you'd like to get together at any point. I will post more detailed schedules weekly with reading and assignments.

Academic Honesty Expectations

Cornell College expects all members of the Cornell community to act with academic integrity. An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others. A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is her or his work unless there is a citation of a specific source. If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the College's requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty. The procedures regarding how the College deals with cases of academic dishonesty appear in The Compass, our student handbook, under the heading "Academic Policies – Honesty in Academic Work."

Communication:

You have all worked with me before: you know I frequently send updates, thoughts about a day's discussion, reminders, etc. through e-mail. You will need to check your e-mail *at least* once a day; twice is preferable. Similarly, e-mail is the best way to get in touch with me. You can stop by to talk at any time, but I respond to e-mails pretty quickly and can easily find a time to meet.

Accommodations:

Students who need accommodations for learning disabilities must provide documentation from a professional qualified to diagnose learning disabilities. For more information see <http://cornellcollege.edu/disabilities/documentation/index.shtml>

Students requesting services may schedule a meeting with the disabilities services coordinator as early as possible to discuss their needs and develop an individualized accommodation plan. If you have any special needs, please notify me within the first three days of the term.