

English 249: Creative Writing Special Projects

Electronic Literature

Instructor: Jason Loan

Space: SNR 112

Time: Daily from 12:00 - 12:50

Office: Cascade 357

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 2 - 4 and by appointment

Email (preferred): jloan@pierce.ctc.edu

Office Phone: 253-964-6312

“...the goal of [electronic literature] remains consistent: to manipulate language, to transform the linguistic into the literary by means of computation...” —- Davin Heckman & James O’Sullivan

Welcome to English 249

English 249 is a course offering designed to explore *special projects* in creative writing. This specific iteration of the course is about *electronic literature*. A key question guiding our work will be: What possibilities exist when the computer becomes an essential part of the aesthetics of a literary work? To explore this question we will remix programs for generating poems, compose works of interactive fiction, and make literary bots. Throughout these projects you will document your composing and research processes, reflect on what you learn, and share your work within a community of peers.

This course is novice-friendly. No knowledge of computer programming required. If you are able to compose and edit text in an electronic document (MS Word, Google Doc, etc.) you have the technical competency required for this course.

I look forward to working and experimenting with you.

The course consists of three major projects:

Project 1: Remixing Taroko Gorge

Project 2: Composing Interactive Fiction

Project 3: Making a (Lit) Bot

Note:

More detailed instructions for these projects will be provided. In all our work this quarter we will engage in processes of drafting, feedback and revision.

Alongside these projects you will also be keeping a **Research Log**.

Research Logs

Each week you will document what you are learning in English 249 via a Research Log Entry. The goal of these entries is for you to capture the in-process moments of insight and learning, including the posing of questions. For each entry, I will offer some brief instructions via the course site as a starting point, and you are encouraged to extend your entries beyond these instructions as unanticipated things emerge in your work. These log entries will also serve as a resource for the self-evaluations that will be central to our assessment of your work in the course. Research Logs should be composed in a Google Doc shared with me and other members of the class.

Course Reading

In addition to compose our own creative work, we will also read the works of others. These will include various selections from the [Electronic Literature Collection](#) as well as examples in the genres we will be experimenting with.

We will also together read Charels O. Hartman's *The Virtual Muse: Experiments in Computer Poetry*.

Course Outcomes

1. Identify and employ structure and content in writing in various genres.
2. Analyze and utilize writing techniques including deviations in grammar, mechanics, syntax, and organization.
3. Employ theme in various genres.
4. Identify and utilize dialogue and dialect in genre writing.
5. Analyze and utilize character and point of view in genre writing.
6. Identify and develop voice in individual writing.
7. Identify and employ description, images and sound in genre writing.
8. Evaluate published and peer - written genre writing for literary quality.
9. Articulate and apply specific criteria for evaluations of quality.
10. Explain process of submitting genre writing to journals, publishers, production companies, etc.

CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS

Here's where we talk grades...

Our class will conduct assessment using a two-fold process of *assessment declarations* and *self-evaluation*. This system is meant to value your labor and the work you do in order to fully engage the course. My intention in using this system is to offer each of us a chance to experience composing and learning not as a strictly finite task that is either already mastered or simply needs to be mastered, but instead as an ongoing act of dialogue, invention, risk taking, concern for others, and, yes, even failure. My intention is to facilitate as close as we can a classroom-as-studio approach in which we each play a generative role in one another's learning.

Conventional grading requires us to over-simplify the otherwise complex processes of learning, processes that require from us a commitment to experimentation, to ambiguity, to taking risks, to listening and responding, and ultimately, to having a space for the productive failures that lay the groundwork for growth. This process does not focus on assigning letter or number grades to individual projects or assignments. This means that while activities, compositions and projects will receive feedback both from me and from your peers, they will not be assigned grades in the traditional sense.

Here's how it works:

Assessment Declarations

Each week's work has a point value, and you receive the points when the work is complete. So, as you finish each week, you will record the points in Canvas by means of a "Declaration" — which is just a true/false survey where you confirm that the work for the week is done. The points you declare are automatically recorded in your total points, which you can see in the Canvas Gradebook.

A typical weekly Declaration looks like this:

- I completed ALL components of this week's work. - True/False
- I completed ALL components of this week's work on time. - True/False
- I attended all workshops this week. - True/False
- I offered at least one peer some in-progress feedback or conversation on their work this week. - True/False

There will be a total of 300 points available for the quarter -- approximately 30 points a week for 10 weeks.

Self-Assessments

Each week, students will write a self-evaluation of their work for the week. This self-evaluation focus on how your learning relates to our course outcomes as well as one's own personal learning outcomes. These self-evaluations will be submitted via Canvas.

Determining Final Grades

Final grades will be determined by the student and the instructor based on the declarations and self-assessments.

Students finishing the course with at least 270 points will be eligible to receive a grade of B or better for the course. Finalizing this grade will be based on taking the self-evaluations of one's learning and the course outcomes into consideration.

Students finishing the course with at least 210 points will be eligible to receive at least a grade of C. Again, finalizing this grade will be based on taking the self-evaluations of one's learning and the course outcomes into consideration.

Students finishing the course with fewer than 210 points risk not passing the course and earning below a C (or 2.0). Again, finalizing this grade will be based on taking the self-evaluations of one's learning and the course outcomes into consideration.

Needs/Support

BASIC NEEDS SECURITY

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact [Student Support Services](#). Furthermore, please notify me if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to provide any resources that I may possess.

In short, if you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

My goal is to create a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.) To help accomplish this: If you have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those that appear in your official Pierce records, please let me know!

Creating this environment also includes my commitment to value the diversity of our language practices. School for many is often a place where judgements about language have been harnessed both intentionally and

unintentionally to marginalize people and set-up barriers to success. The composition classroom is a place where we can come to more critically understand how language plays a role in issues of inclusion/exclusion in the world.

I (like all us) am still in the process of learning about diverse perspectives and identities. If something was said in class (by anyone) that made you feel uncomfortable, please talk to me about it.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, as a participant in course discussions and work, I expect you to also strive to honor the diversity of your classmates.

SUPPORT and RESOURCES

From Access and Disability Services (ADS) to Multicultural Services to Tutoring, a variety of support services exist at Pierce College.

Students in need of additional support for any reason should seek out the appropriate services so you can make necessary arrangements. If you are not sure where to go or who to seek out please speak with me so I can help you get where you want to go. If I do not know the answer to a question I will always be more than happy to help you find out who does have an answer.

A good starting point is the [Support Services page](#) on the Pierce College website.

Again, do not hesitate to have a conversation with me about support and services. Your success is important to me and I'm willing to help you find what you need.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

Pierce College is committed to creating quality educational opportunities for a diverse community of learners. Pierce does not discriminate against its students or employees based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, or sexual orientation. In this class we will strive to maintain an open atmosphere with shared respect for all differences.

CONTACT ME

Email (jloan@pierce.ctc.edu) is the best way to contact me. Typically, you can expect a reply to an email within 24 hours; however, response times for emails received over the weekend will vary and may not receive a reply until Monday.

I do have an office phone. The # is 253-964-6312. I recommend emailing me first. I will not check my voice mail as often as my email, so the reply time will be faster.

Stopping in to see me during my office hours or making an appointment to meet with me are both an expectation and a great way to have questions answered, receive feedback and to talk about the work of our

course. I will do my best through out the semester to work with you so, again, don't hesitate to initiate a conversation.