

ENGL 307: Creative Writing

- Fiction: Intro to Writing Fiction



Course Syllabus for Winter 2026

Professor: LaEsha Sanders, M.F.A.

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Calendar:

Office: Brock Hall 3130

Office Phone: 423-236-2382 (*But email is the best way to reach me.*)

Office Hours: MW 11:00-1:50; T/TH 10:00-2:00; and on request

Class Meetings: MW 2:00-3:15 pm; Brock Hall 1207

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to writing fiction. During this course, each student will learn the methods of writing short stories (or chapters for a novel, if the student is so inclined) by studying fiction writing methods (found in our textbook), evaluating various authors and their work and, mostly, by the practice of writing, critiquing and revising the student's own work. This course is designed to be a workshop course, meaning that each student will be expected to produce a set number of short stories/chapters in a working novel/pages. These pages will be referred to as "worksheets." Each student will submit his/her worksheet to their peers on a set date and will read and evaluate/critique their peers submitted worksheets. Each student will be expected to be present on the day his/her worksheet is set to be workshopped by their peers. Additionally, each student will be expected to be present for each of their peer's workshop day as well in order to offer the same level of critique that their peers offer them.

You will be expected to produce both creative and critical work. Since this class is a 300-level course, you will read and write original stories with an emphasis on craft. As for creative work, you will be assigned to write your own original work, review your classmates work, and make significant revisions to your own work throughout the semester. Critical work will be assigned in the form of written analysis, reading responses, and critiques of stories written by your fellow colleagues. You will be expected to create a final portfolio of polished work at the end of the semester. These exercises and assignments are meant to foster your understanding and appreciation of the fictional craft of creative writing, as well as your growth as a creative writer.

Required Texts & Materials: What do I need?

- *Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft (7th Edition)* by Janet Burroway and Elizabeth Stucky-French
- *Walking on Water: Reflections on Faith and Art* by Madeleine L'Engle
 - A device with word processing software & access to eClass
 - A folder or section of a folder dedicated to this class only: This will be your writing journal, and it needs to be handwritten.

Assessments: How am I graded?

30% - Class participation: This includes workshop discussion/peer review (15%), reading of required assignments (both in and out of class (10%), and any in-class writing prompts or reading responses (5%).

50% - Writing assignments: This includes original work first draft (25%), and second (revised) draft (25%).

20% - Writing Portfolio

It is the professor's responsibility to clearly define the scope and requirements for each assignment. This information will be posted on eClass and/or announced in class. It is the student's responsibility to examine this information and ask clarifying questions when necessary.

** To earn an "A," work must be excellently reasoned and appropriately creative. Simply meeting the minimum requirement for any task does not guarantee an "A."

Letter	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
Percent	93-100	90-92	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	67-69	63-66	60-62	0-59

Responsibilities: How do I succeed?

Come to class! Fiction, by nature, is a discussion class. Whether reading, responding to texts, workshopping your classmates' stories, or participating in other forms of class discussion, fiction classes are conversation heavy. Remember that class attendance is more than just showing up; it is also thoughtful participation in any and all class discussions, especially in peer-to-peer workshop.

**Note: Although I do not have attendance as part of the final semester grade, if a student misses more than two classes (with legitimate reason), I will start deducting significant points from your class participation grade.

Pay attention to your SAU email account and be sure to check it daily for important announcements, instructions, etc. that may come up.

LATE WORK POLICY: I do not accept late work of any kind. If you realize you are going to be absent on the day an assignment is due or on the day of your workshop, please plan ahead and communicate with me so we can adjust workshop schedule accordingly.

Communication is key, and it is the student's responsibility to initiate this communication if he/she misses a class.

Policies: What Else do I Need to Know?

- 1) Work written from this course must be **original and new**. Creative writing in any form is meant to be exactly that - creative. If you didn't create it, then please don't turn it in as your own. **Please note:** I do not allow the use of ChatGPT or any other AI platforms (known and unknown) in my class. If a student turns in work generated by Chat GPT or any other AI program, that work will receive an automatic "0" and further disciplinary action could be taken including the automatic dismissal from this class even after the drop/add date has expired. In such a case, the student will receive an "F" for their semester grade and will not be given the chance to repeat the course. This rule applies to original creative work, to peer review letters and oral feedback, to story analysis, and to any and all other assignments in this course.

- 2) Be courteous to your classmates. Many times, we will be discussing one another's original written work in this class. This can be scary for everyone. Though the discussion forum is meant to be a place for honesty and growth, it's also a place to be kind and respectful. Remember we are all learning together.
- 3) As a Christian educational institution, Southern Adventist University has established a **dress code** emphasizing modesty, cleanliness, neatness, and professional appropriateness. As a student attending Southern you have signed a statement of your willingness to comply with the rules and regulations of this institution. In my class in particular, I simply ask that you dress mindfully. Also, DO NOT wear your pajamas to my class.
- 4) **Disability Statement:** In keeping with Southern Adventist University's policy, if you are a student who believes you may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability or learning challenge (i.e. physical, learning, psychological, ADHD or other type), you are strongly encouraged to contact Disability Support Services (DSS.) DSS provides reasonable accommodations for persons with documented qualifying disabilities. Students with short-term disabilities, such as a broken arm, can often work with professors to minimize classroom barriers. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and cannot be implemented until faculty or staff members have received the official Letter of Accommodation from DSS. Specific details of disabilities remain confidential between students and DSS unless a student chooses to disclose or there is a legitimate academic need for disclosure, which is on a case-by-case basis. For further details, reach out to Disability Support Services at 423-236-2544 or Bietz Center, 3rd floor, Suite 3900, website at www.southern.edu/administration/student-success/disability.

Academic Integrity & Plagiarism

Academic integrity is an integral part of the educational process. In this university setting, we seek to nurture independent thought and to maintain a professional and a Christian code of ethics that upholds our own personal integrity and that of the academic community. Consequently, dishonesty of any kind is unacceptable and may result in a failing final grade for the course. If you are uncertain if a certain course of action is ethical, please refer to the Academic Honesty Policy in the current Undergraduate Catalog.

Plagiarism Policy:

- Work that is submitted for credit must be the original work of the learner specifically prepared for this course.
- Assignments that are not the original work of the learner are considered plagiarized and in violation of the honesty code.
- Plagiarism occurs when another person's work, words, or ideas are represented as one's own without the use of a school-recognized method of citation (e.g., copied from another source such as an author or another student without properly acknowledging the actual writer/author).
- Plagiarism also occurs when knowingly giving or allowing one's own work to be copied or otherwise duplicated by another for academic credit or when resubmitting one's own work for academic credit.
- In this class especially, I will approach any use of AI forms of writing with the same disciplinary action as plagiarism.
- Using any content from the Web without citing is plagiarism. Plagiarism may result in a grade of F being recorded for the assignment and can result in failure for the course.

Faculty Responsibilities:

As your professor in creative writing, it is my responsibility to create a safe and open environment for creative discussion. Fiction (or any creative writing), by nature, often stirs up many emotions and difficult topics. I am not one to censor your creativity, but I do have a responsibility in this classroom to be sure all topics are discussed with respect, kindness, and awareness that all of us come from different walks of life, environments, world views and cultural backgrounds. While keeping the floor open for creativity, I will also ensure that writings and discussions remain tactful.