

FOLSOM CORDOVA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Course Outline
Creative Writing**

Date: February 2006

Subject Area: Elective

Proposed Grade Level(s): 11-12

Course Length: 2 Semesters

Grading: A - F

Number of Credits: 10

Prerequisites: C or better in previous English Classes and/or Teacher Recommendation

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Creative Writing will help beginning writers learn to tap into and shape their writing ability. Just as students with physical gifts can be coached so that their gifts can be perfected, students with creative imaginations can be led to exercise and develop their creative writing. This class will “coach” novice writers in the intricacies of language use and literary structure toward a mastery of conventions, forms, and procedures of creative writing.

GENERAL GOALS/PURPOSES:

Students who enjoy creative writing will:

- Develop an understanding of what it is to work like a writer
- Develop and reinforce critical thinking and problem solving skills
- Develop and reinforce oral and written communication techniques and collaboration
- Explore their creativity through a variety of written genres
- Experience the satisfaction of following a piece of work through the steps of inspiration, creation, and revision to submission and publication.

Students will:

- Show an understanding of the importance of Journaling (keeping Chapbooks/Commonplace Books).
- Show an understanding of the importance of narrative point of view—how to select and write in a particular point of view and the consequences of such decision.
- Show an understanding of the necessity to hone a “word sense” by working to master the medium of language.
- Write creative pieces demonstrating an understanding of the concepts introduced for each genre.
- Create personal writing portfolios of creative pieces in a variety of genres thereby demonstrating an understanding of the concerns of the poet, the fiction writer, and the playwright.
- Demonstrate a maturing sense of the writer’s craft by acting as contributing members of peer editing circles and writers’ groups.
- Demonstrate a maturing ability to take and use criticism.
- Demonstrate a willingness to take on the role of self-editor.

STUDENT READING COMPONENT:

This course will require students to read a variety of creative works: poetry, short and long fiction, and plays. The teacher-selected works will be chosen for their usefulness in terms of information, examples (isolated major problems) and the possibility of exercises. They will include both professional and student work to demonstrate various levels of achievement. Students will select works from lists that are recommended for additional reading.

STUDENT WRITING COMPONENT:

Students will start and keep a writing journal (chapbook/commonplace book) and create a working writing portfolio and a presentation portfolio.

- In the writing journal students will record practice writings (the working out of parts or drafts of a poem, story, or play). They will record ideas for future writings. They will record quotations from readings and/or observations along with their reactions, as models or for inspiration.
- In the working portfolio, students will place all drafts of work done to produce the final version of poems, short and longer fiction, and plays.

For the presentation portfolio, students will sort through all their works and assemble the body of work most representative of individual maturation as a writer.

STUDENT ORAL COMPONENT:

There will be teacher and student-led class discussions on pieces of example writing. In addition there will be forms of “readers’ theater” as students demonstrate understanding of and practice a variety of voices, points of view, characterization, meter, imagery, sound patterns, and dialogue. Finally, students will work cooperatively in peer evaluation and writing group sessions.

DETAILED UNITS OF INSTRUCTION:

The texts for this course could include but should not be limited to:

Recommended Teacher Resources:

Creative Writer’s Handbook. Philip K. Jason and Allan B. Lefcowitz.. Prentice Hall, 1994
Our Private Lives: Journals, Notebooks and Diaries. Daniel Halpern. Ecco, 1988
45 Contemporary Poets. Alberta Turner. Longman, 1985
Hunting the Snark: A Compendium of New Poetic Terminology. Robert Peters. Paragon House, 1989
Patterns of Poetry: An Encyclopedia of Forms. Miller Williams. Louisiana State University Press, 1986
Rhyme’s Reason, rev. ed. John Hollander. Yale University Press, 1989
The Art of Fiction: Notes on Craft for Young Writers. John Gardner. Vintage Press, 1991
Creating Short Fiction. Damon Knight. Writer’s Digest, 1985
The Passionate, Accurate Story. Carol Bly. Milkwee Editions, 1990
Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft, 3rd. ed. Janet Burroway. HarperCollins, 1992
Art of Screenwriting. William Packard. Paragon House, 1987
Complete Book of Scriptwriting. J. Michael Straczynski. Writer’s Digest, 1982
How to Write a Play. Raymond Hull. Writer’s Digest, 1983
Playwriting: How to Write for the Theatre. Bernard Grebanier. Harper & Row, 1979
The Screenwriter’s Workbook. Syd Field. Dell, 1984
Revising Fiction: A Handbook for Writers. David Madden. Penguin/Plume, 1988
International Directory of Little Magazines and Small Presses. Dustbooks, published annually
International Literary Market Place. Bowker, published annually

Student Texts:

The Writer's Craft. McDougall Littell, 1998 (Chapters 1-3)

Writing and Grammar. Prentice Hall, 2001 (Chapters 1-6)

Writers Inc.

Ready access to the following reference materials:

An Unabridged Dictionary

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary

Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology

Dictionary of American Regional English

Harper Dictionary of Contemporary Usage

NTC's American Idioms Dictionary

New Dictionary of American Slang

The Penguin Rhyming Dictionary

Words to Rhyme

Roget's International Thesaurus

Synonym Finder

Knowing Where to Look: The Ultimate Guide to Research. Lois Horowitz. *Writer's Digest*, 1984

Encyclopedia of American Facts and Dates. Edited by Gorton Carruth. Harper & Row, 1987

Facts on File Yearbook. Facts on File. Published annually

World Almanac and Book of Facts. Newspaper Enterprises Association, published annually

Bartlett's Familiar Quotations, 16th ed. Edited by John Bartlett and Justin Kaplan. Little, Brown, 1992

Facts on File Dictionary of Proverb. Rosiland Fergusson. Facts on File, 1985

Semester One

- I. The Writer's Concerns
 - A. Working Like a Writer
 - 1. Attitude
 - 2. Work habits
 - 3. Exercises and readings
 - B. Keeping a Journal
 - 1. Why bother?
 - 2. Starting the Journal
 - 3. What to write
 - 4. Exercises and readings
 - C. Starting a Working Portfolio
 - 1. What it is
 - 2. How to manage it
 - 3. Rubric(s)
 - D. Writing Groups
 - 1. What they are
 - 2. How to organize and be productive
 - E. Learning to Use Language
 - 1. Accuracy
 - 2. Precision
 - 3. Concreteness
 - 4. Appropriateness
 - 5. Idiomatic usage
 - 6. Figures of speech
 - 7. Style
 - 8. Exercises and readings

- F. Point of View
 1. What it is
 2. Making a decision
 3. Consequences
 4. Exercises and readings
- G. Inventing and Researching
 1. Imagining
 2. Beginning with facts
 3. Research and field work
 4. Exercises and readings

II. Writing as a Poet

- A. The elements of poetry
 1. Line and meter
 2. Lines and rhymes
 3. Lines and free verse
 4. Imagery
 5. Sound patterns
 6. Exercises and readings
- B. Practicing poetry
 1. Imitation
 2. Recasting
 3. Writing assignment of specific types of poems
 4. Readings
- C. Practicing writing – conventional to unconventional; metered verse to free verse

III. Writing as a Fiction Writer

- A. The Nature of Fiction
 1. Plot
 2. Setting
 3. Characterization
 4. Exercises and readings
- B. Narration
 1. Exposition
 2. Flashbacks
 3. Scene
 4. Verisimilitude
 5. Exercises and readings
- C. Practice writing – short story, short, short story, novella

Semester Two

I. Writing as a Playwright

- A. The Elements of Drama
 1. Storytelling
 2. Characters and presentation of same
 3. Character development
 4. Setting
 5. Beats (smaller unit of stage time than an act or scene)
 6. Exercises and readings
- B. Dialogue
 1. Principles

2. Common errors
 3. Exercises and readings
 - C. Problems
 1. Contradictions
 2. Interruptions
 3. Long speeches
 4. Pauses
 5. Accents and dialect
 - D. Practice writing – radio, television, movie, stage, readers’ theater
- II. Peer Editing/Revision Groups
- A. Purpose
 - B. Organization
- III. Writing Genres Revisited
- A. Writing as a Poet -- Problems
 1. Diction
 2. Anonymous voice
 3. Abstractions
 4. Unintentional humor, diction
 5. Ineffectual line breaks
 6. Exercises and readings
 - B. Revision of work in Working Portfolio
 - C. Writing as a Fiction Writer—Problems
 1. Needless complications
 2. Misuse of dialogue
 3. Deus ex machina
 4. Descriptive clutter
 5. Exercises and readings
 - D. Revision of work in Working Portfolio
- IV. Publication
- A. Preparation
 1. Revision again
 2. Mechanics
 3. Manuscript Form
 - B. Finding a publisher
 - C. In-house publication
 1. School Student Literary Magazine
 2. Class Student Literary Magazine
 3. Portfolio Presentation

Instructional Methods:

- Teacher presentation
- Student presentation
- Class discussion
- Questioning techniques
- Group Activities
- Individual Instruction

Assessment Methods:

- Objective tests (short answer, M/C, T/F)
- Performance based: Student Presentation(s), Group Work (Writing and Editing)
- Journal, Essays, Research Reports
- Working Portfolio
- Presentation Portfolio (Rubric Assessment)

THIS COURSE WILL PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THE CAHSEE AND/OR THE FCUSD EXIT EXAM IN:

Writing and Reading

LAB FEE, IF REQUIRED:

None

SUBJECT AREA CONTENT STANDARDS TO BE ADDRESSED:**Reading Standards:**

Word Analysis:	1.1, 1.2, 1.3
Literary Concepts	2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6

Writing Standards

Writing Strategies	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 1.9
Writing Applications	2.1, 2.2, 2.4

Oral Standards

Listening and Speaking	1.4, 1.5, 1.6
Speaking Applications	2.6

DISTRICT ESLRs TO BE ADDRESSED:**Students will be:**

- **Self-Directed Learners:** The students will understand and use appropriate sources to find information, research subjects, and complete class assignments.
- **Effective Communicators:** By speaking to a variety of sources throughout the year, and working in small groups, the students will understand what it is to be effective communicators', developing the necessary skills to enhance their ability to communicate effectively, and regularly practice those skills.
- **Quality Producers:** The students will write appropriate articles, take appropriate photos, and layout the paper using the appropriate technology to ensure all work is produced to the best of their abilities.
- **Constructive Thinkers:** Students will be required to select the appropriate resources to gather information. They will then need to analyze and synthesize that information in to a usable format.
- **Collaborative Workers:** Through the study of group dynamics, how to implement those dynamics in a functional group and group projects, students will become better collaborative workers.
- **Responsible Citizens:** Through the course work and units of study, students will develop a better understanding of themselves, the world around them, and the impact they have on their social, political, and natural environment.