English 25: Creative Writing: Multi-genre

*Imaginative Writing: The Elements of Craft*, 3rd ed., Janet Burroway

*On Writing*, Tenth Anniversary Edition, Stephen King

A Writer’s Journal of your choice.

Assorted handouts.

Welcome to English 25. Over the course of the semester, you will study and experiment with various writing forms and techniques, using exercises from our text as well as other sources. You will analyze and critique established writers’ work, with a special emphasis on form and technique. You will employ these techniques as you write and revise your own personal essays, poems, fiction and drama.

After completing this course, you should be able to:

- **Define** and **identify** the distinguishing features of the primary forms of creative writing
- **Define** and **identify** the primary techniques writers use in producing these forms
- **Analyze** and **critique** the forms and techniques employed by accomplished writers
- **Create** and **revise** your own stories, essays, poems and plays that **employ** the appropriate techniques

**August**

30 Introductions.

**September**

1 **Read** through p. 12 in *Imaginative Writing* do TT 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 in your Writer’s Journal. **Read** through p. 37 in *On Writing*. **Write** a one-paragraph response to King’s opening. What do you notice about the style of the book?

6 **Read** Chapter 2, “Image,” in *IW* through p. 25. Do TT 2.2 and 2.4 in your WJ. **Read** the Dillard and Sedaris selections.

8 **Read** “The Diamond Mine.” and do TT 2/7. **Read** through p. 84 in *OW*. Pick your favorite passage. Copy it into your WJ and tell me why you picked it. **Write** a two-page analysis of imagery in one of this week’s readings. Be sure to cite and explain at least three examples and to refer directly to the terms and definitions in our textbook.

13 **Read** Chapter 3, “Voice,” through p. 52. Do 3.1, 3.2.

15 **Read** 53-61 in *IW*. Do 3.6 and 3.8. **Read** through p. 101 in *OW*. Now that you’ve read the chapter on voice, say something about King’s. (In a paragraph.)

20 **Read** Trillin’s essay, “Rock Threat Subsides.” Using it as a model, do TT 3.11. **Read** McGuane’s “Cowboy” and Borges’s “The Book of Sand.” Do TT 3.12 **Write** a two-page analysis of voice in one of the Chapter 3 readings. Be sure to cite and explain three specific passages within the work and to refer directly to the terms and definitions in our textbook.

22 **Read** the poems on 80-83 in *OW*. Choose and do 2 exercises from TT 3.13, 3.14 and 3.15. **Read** through 103-137 in *OW*. **Write** a reflective paragraph in response to this question: What part of the Toolbox does your writing need most?

27 **Read** pp. 196-209 in *IW*. Do TT 7.1 but take it further, identify three candidates for development and revision. **Type** these up and bring the typed versions to class.

29 **Interim drafts due**. (After consulting with classmates and mulling it over, choose one exercise to
develop into a larger piece. Keep in mind that over the course of the semester you should revise 1 piece of fiction, 1 set of poems, 1 essay/memoir, and 1 piece of dramatic writing. Spend some time developing it so that it is significantly changed from your first draft.) Workshops.

October
4  **First Revision Due.** Use a folder to hand this in. Include all drafts of the piece and an author’s note. Your author’s note should identify the genre, cite specific examples of choices you made during the revising process, and explain where and how you have employed the techniques we’ve studied in *Imaginative Writing*. **Read** 209-211 in *IW*. **Read** Yi-Yun Li story (handout).

**WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 5** Writer Yi-Yun Li will be on campus. You must attend either her afternoon Craft Talk, “RX for a Story Worth the Telling,” (2:30, Hagerty Lounge) or her evening reading (7:30 Soda Center). Write a response in your WJ.

6  **Read** Chapter 4, “Character,” to p. 101. Do TT 4.2 and 4.4.

11 **Read** “Thread” and “JohnJohn’s World.” Do TT 4.11.

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12,** writer Ryan Van Meter will give a craft talk “Why Are Sharks Mean? Voice and Authenticity in Coming-of-Age Nonfiction” (2:30, Hagerty Lounge) and a reading (7:30 Soda Center). You are required to attend one of these and to write about it in your WJ.

**FALL BREAK OCTOBER 13 AND 14** Take *On Writing* with you and finish it. In your WJ, write a thank you note to Stephen King telling him about the parts you found most and least useful in his book.

18 **Read** “The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World” and do TT 4.12. **Read** the poems on 119-122 and do TT 4.13 (See note above re: King.)

20 **Read** “Bed Among the Lentils” and do TT 4.14. **Write** a two-page analysis of a character from of the readings in this chapter. Be sure to cite and explain at least three specific passages and to refer directly to the terms and definitions in our textbook.

25 **Read** Chapter 5, “Setting,” to p. 144. Do TT 5.1, 5.3 and 5.4.

27 **Read** “The School” and “The Werewolf” and do TTs 5.10 and 5.11. **Write** a two-page analysis of setting in one of the Chapter 5 readings. Cite and explain three examples and refer directly to the terms and definitions in our textbook.

November
1  Repeat TT 7.1. Again, choose 3 candidates for development. **Type** them up, bring them to class.

3  **Interim drafts due.** (After consulting with classmates and mulling it over, choose one exercise to develop into a larger piece. Spend some time developing it so that it is significantly changed from your first draft.) Workshop

8  **Second Revision Due.** Use a folder to hand this in; include all drafts of the piece and author’s note. Your author’s note should identify the genre, cite specific examples of choices you made during the revising process, and explain where and how you have employed the techniques we’ve studied in *Imaginative Writing*.

10 **Read** Chapter 6, “Story,” in *IW*. Do TT 6.1 and 6.3.

15 **Read** “Red Sky in the Morning” and “Incarnations of Burned Children.” Do TTs 6.5 and 6.6.

17 **Read** the poems on 185-189. Do TT 6.10
Read Chapter 8, “Creative Nonfiction,” up to p. 242 plus the note on format on p. 261. Do TT 8.3, 8.4 and 8.5. Thanksgiving—IMPORTANT! Before heading home (or elsewhere), read “Jack Culberg, 79,” by Studs Terkel. While you are among family or friends, do TT 8.13.

Read Chapter 9, “Story and Plot,” in IW. Find a story idea in your WJ. Read “A Very Short Story,” “Powder,” and “Bigfoot Stole My Wife.” Do TT 9.1

Read “The Story.” Do TT 9.2, 9.3 Write a two-page analysis of plot in one of the stories from Chapters 6 or 8. Cite the text at least three times and be sure to refer directly to the terms and definitions in our textbook.

Interim drafts due. Workshops.

Third Revision Due. Use a folder to hand this in; include all drafts of the piece and author’s note. Your author’s note should identify the genre, cite specific examples of choices you made during the revising process, and explain where and how you have employed the techniques we’ve studied in Imaginative Writing.

EXAM WEEK: We will meet during our assigned time, which is when your fourth revision is due. Use a folder to hand this in; include all drafts of the piece and author’s note following the guidelines established.

You will need a Writer’s Journal for the semester. This can be in any form that is comfortable for you: a pretty, bound Moleskine, a plain composition book, a spiral notebook, or you may prefer to do all your writing on your computer. Bring your Writer’s Journal to class every day. (If you write on your computer, print out the day’s work and keep it in a folder.) All of the assigned “Try This” exercises should done and kept in your Journal. The Journal is also where you should do and keep in-class assignments, responses to the assigned readings and to the Creative Writing Reading Series events. If you hand-write your Journal, take care to make it legible. Writing on every other line may help. You may need to write the exercise twice—once without thinking about the reader and then again for your reader. Make sure every exercise is precisely dated and labeled (e.g., “TT 1.3, p. 74,” “Response to Stephen King Reading,” “in-class exercise 9/1”).

You will regularly be asked to read the exercises out loud. This Journal is not a diary and should not contain any deep dark secrets you wish to keep secret.

Policies:

• All work is due when it’s due. Late submissions go down by ½ grade/day.
• Attendance is required. Missing more than two classes in a semester may result in a lowered grade. Please stay in touch if you have a medical or family emergency that makes attendance impossible. You are responsible for completing the work whether you are in class or not. You are also responsible for finding out whether there were any changes to the assignments on the syllabus. Please ask a classmate for this information.
• You need to be in class on-time, ready to work
• Cell phones should be off and out of sight. Texting (or engaging in other electronic communication) during class is inappropriate. If you choose to violate the no phone policy, you will be asked to leave class.

Basis for final grade:

• Journal TT exercises: (Graded as a whole) 30%

This is how I evaluate Writing Journals:
D=Fails to Meet Minimum Requirements.
C= Meets Minimum Requirements.
B=Shows Initiative and Imagination. Consciously works to apply lessons/techniques from class.  
A=Shows much evidence of initiative and imagination, as evidenced by a willingness to take risks, to go beyond what’s assigned and follow creative sparks where they may lead.

- Analytical essays: 30% (These essays will be graded along the lines of the current Composition and Seminar Rubric.

- Four revised pieces: 30%
- Participation. 10%. Lively participation is expected. Although it can be intimidating at first, you are expected to share your work with your peers. You are all expected to provide honest, encouraging feedback. (We’ll talk about what that is.)

This is how I will evaluate your revised pieces:

D=Final draft differs little from the original exercise. (No significant additions, subtractions, rearrangements. No evidence the writer has applied the techniques presented in the class.)  
C=Final draft shows some development compared with the first, however, changes have not been smoothly integrated to make a coherent, polished whole. In addition, the piece may not accurately follow formal conventions as defined in the text or may suffer serious mechanical errors.  
B=Final draft shows significant development from the original exercise, by adding, deleting and rearranging material. The writer has consciously applied lessons and techniques from class.  
A=Publication material. The final draft leaves little room for improvement because the writer has used the appropriate techniques, taken significant risk and followed the initial idea beyond the obvious.

**Student Disability Services:** Student Disability Services extends reasonable and appropriate accommodations that take into account the context of the course and its essential elements for individuals with qualifying disabilities. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the Student Disability Services Office at (925) 631-4358 to set up a confidential appointment to discuss accommodation, policies, guidelines and available services. Additional information regarding the services available may be found at the following address on the Saint Mary’s website: [http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/academics/academic-advising-and-achievement/student-disability-services.html](http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/academics/academic-advising-and-achievement/student-disability-services.html)