

The Well-Trained Mind Academy  
**Creative Writing for the Logic Stage**

**Course Blackboard site:** wtma.blackboard.com

**Required Text(s):**

\*Any additional texts or readings will be provided for the students on Blackboard.

Fishman, Boris. *The Creative Writer, Level One: Five Finger Exercises*. ISBN 9781933339559

Fishman, Boris. *The Creative Writer, Level Two: Essential Ingredients*. ISBN 9781933339566

Students will need to have an observation notebook. Any kind of portable, small notebook will do.

**Course Description:**

Creative Writing for the Logic Stage is a semester-long elective course that meets once per week. We will be exploring different aspects and genres of creative writing through analysis of an assortment of readings and completing various writing exercises. Students will be exposed to the foundations of fiction and poetry. Creative Writing for the Logic Stage will cover the core elements of creative writing, and successful compositions in general.

*Please note: This course may be taken individually in the fall or spring semester; a student may enroll in both the fall and spring to fulfill the full-year option. In the fall students are introduced to fundamental concepts with an emphasis on strengthening individual skills; in the spring these concepts are revisited, and students are encouraged to build off of them to create more complex, independent works. Students will be expected to create original work each semester, with more emphasis on original pieces in the spring.*

**Written Assignments:**

Assignments will be graded pass/fail. An assignment with a passing grade (A) reflects that the student has put obvious effort into the assignment and grasps the concept upon which the assignment is based. An assignment with a failing grade (F) shows little to no effort and a lack of understanding for the assignment's objective. Comments will be given in response to all submitted assignments, whether they are passing or failing, to help the student better their writing and support their creativity.

Students will have at least two kinds of assignments each week: a reading assignment and a writing assignment. Some weeks there may be additional freeform work, such as drawing or photography. All assignments will be posted on the course Blackboard page under "Assignments."

At the end of the semester, students will turn in an original short story and poem for review. Each piece of writing will have been worked on over the course of the semester, going through at least two rounds of revision before submission.

**Workshopping:**

At certain times during the semester, students will be asked to share their work with their classmates during class. Our class is a safe space to share our creative writing. When commenting on another student's work, please consider their feelings and how you would feel if you were receiving your own comments.

**Grading breakdown:**

Attendance: 10%

Participation: 15%

Homework: 50%

Original Story and Poem: 25%

**Policies:***Late Work*

Late work will not be accepted for a passing grade unless an extension is granted by the instructor at least two days before the work is due. If you need more time on an assignment, make sure to email me to ask for an extension as soon as you know you need more time.

**Example Schedule:**

*Assignment will be posted each week to the "Assignments" page on the course Blackboard site.*

Week 1: Fiction, Plot

Week 2: Fiction, Plot

Week 3: Fiction, Character

Week 4: Fiction, Dialogue

Week 5: Fiction, Observation

Week 6: Fiction, Setting

Week 7: Fiction, Point of View

Week 8: Poetry, Introduction

Week 9: Poetry, Description

Week 10: Poetry, Getting the Words Right

Week 11: Poetry, Getting the Words Right

Week 12: Poetry, Sound

Week 13: Original Writing

Week 14: Original Writing

Week 15: Original Writing

Week 16: Original Writing

Exam week: Performing Your Work

The Well-Trained Mind Academy  
**Creative Writing for the Rhetoric Stage I**

**Course Texts**

Instructor will provide access to all texts. Students will read, discuss, and analyze works by Samuel Amadon; A.R. Ammons; Lucie Brock-Broido; Basil Bunting; Joshua Clover; Hart Crane; Robert Creeley; Carolina Ebeid; Matthea Harvey; Gerard Manley Hopkins; Susan Howe; Robert Lowell; Nathaniel Mackey; Rusty Morrison; Dg Nanouk Okpik; Michael Palmer; Claudia Rankine; Lisa Robertson; Tomaz Šalamun; Brandon Shimoda; Tracy K. Smith; Wallace Stevens; Roberto Tejada; Rosmarie Waldrop; Lynn Xu; and W.B. Yeats.

**Course Description**

A semester-long workshop for high school students dedicated to the crafts and techniques of poetry and fiction. Students will identify and explore traditional and non-traditional literary forms while developing individual creative writing projects. Copious reading and writing assignments will illustrate matters of character, style, voice, diction, stanza, structure, metaphor, and meter. A primary goal of the course will be to demystify the creative process and expand student awareness of the written arts; as such, please leave any and all preconceived notions about creative writing at the door.

As stated above, the class is a workshop. Significant time will be spent critiquing work in class, and all students will be required to participate actively and thoughtfully. Any and all commentary, assuming it is fully explained, thoughtful, respectful, and intended to improve the overall achievement of the piece in question, will be welcome and encouraged.

Additionally, unless otherwise discussed and arranged, this is not a class that is designed to workshop preexisting material. Students will be expected to create new pieces which utilize the materials and concepts from class instruction.

**Grading**

Given the inherently subjective nature of artistic expression, I will not be issuing grades on individual pieces of writing. However, every student is expected to complete every assignment as given, to participate in class discussion, to experiment with new forms and concepts, and to apply the material introduced in class to their own work.

In short, students will be graded on their performance *as students* as opposed to being graded on the quality *as writers*.

That being said, by semester's end students will be expected to create between 3-5 finished poems and one 10-12 page short story (or two 5-6 page stories) that will constitute their final portfolio. There will be numerous other writing assignments that occur throughout the semester, some of which will become the work that is included in

the student portfolio, others of which will not.

Breakdown:

Participation: 33%

Weekly Assignments: 33%

Final Portfolio: 34%

### *Late Work*

All assignments are due prior to the beginning of class. Late assignments will miss the opportunity to be workshopped and, as such, will provide only limited feedback from peers. Late assignments are only exempt from this policy if there is an emergency and the instructor is notified before the start of class.

### **Course Structure**

The titles of each session refer to the exercise your student will be completing for homework on that day. For example, in the class titled “Objects” your student will be expected to complete a poem of a given length which describes an object in detail without naming it. During the following session, the pieces will be workshopped and another exercise will be given for homework.

In addition to the lectures and their accompanying exercises, the students will be given three graded assignments. Each will focus on researching literary journals and practicing their skills with literary analysis. The due dates are listed below.

### **Example Schedule:**

*All assignments are due by 10:00pm (EST) on the night before class.*

#### **Week 1**

Introduction to Poetry.

#### **Week 2**

Word, Line, Stanza.

#### **Week 3**

Objects.

*Assignment: Write a poem describing an object, without naming it or its function.*

#### **Week 4**

Imitations/Negatives.

*Assignment: Take an existing poem and negate it (substituting opposites for all words).*

#### **Week 5**

To Build or To Destroy.

*Assignment: Write a poem in which something is either built or destroyed, piece by piece.*

#### **Week 6**

Collage.

*Assignment: Write a poem incorporating sentences from existing texts.*

#### **Week 7**

What We Mean When We Say Translate.

*Assignment: Translate a poem from another language, approximating the sound and not the meaning of the original.*

**Week 8**

Erase.

*Assignment: Take an existing text and remove all the words you want, until all that's left is your new poem.*

**Week 9**

Create.

**Week 10**

Revise.

**Week 11**

Who Are They?

*Assignment: Write a character sketch.*

**Thanksgiving Break**

**Week 12**

They Did What?!

*Assignment: Write a detailed description of a series of physical acts.*

**Week 13**

I Can't Decide!

*Assignment: Write about one event told from three different perspectives.*

**Week 14**

What Time Is It Anyway?

*Assignment: Write a story that takes place in the past, present, and future.*

**Winter Break**

**Week 15**

What's in That Head of Yours?

*Assignment: Write a piece entirely in internal monologue.*

**Week 16**

Revise.

**Exam Week**

The Well-Trained Mind Academy  
**Creative Writing for the Rhetoric Stage II**

**Course website:** wtma.blackboard.com

**Course Text:**

- Mallarmé, Stéphane. *A Roll of the Dice*. Seattle: Wave Books, 2015. ISBN 9781940696041

Also, if it helps provide any context for the instruction, students are welcomed, but *by no means required*, to purchase the instructor's book:

Hummel, Thomas. *Letters & Buildings*. Subito Press.

**Course Description**

A semester-long workshop for high school students dedicated to the development of theme. The course will provide the first opportunity for students to consider the intricacies, pitfalls, delicacies, and excitements of developing macro-content. Which is to say: students will be asked to 1) identify their primary creative concerns and inquiries; 2) determine which forms and methods maximize the development of those concerns and inquiries; and, 3) openly evaluate other bodies of work to analyze the development of theme therein.

In order to accomplish those three objectives (particularly the last) the student will be supplied with a sampling of a particular artist's body of work and will engage in a semester-long dialogue with that body of work. Students will be provided with the artist's work at the start of the semester and will navigate, strangle, dissect, and coddle the body of work over the next sixteen weeks.

As always, a primary goal of the course will be to demystify the creative process and expand student awareness of the written arts; as such, please leave any and all preconceived notions about creative writing at the proverbial door.

**Grading**

Given the inherently subjective nature of artistic expression, I will not be issuing grades on individual pieces of writing. However, every student is expected to complete every assignment as given, to participate in class discussion, to experiment with new forms and concepts, and to apply the material introduced in class to their own work.

In short, students will be graded on their performance *as students* as opposed to being graded on their quality *as writers*.

Breakdown:

Participation: 33%

Weekly Assignments: 33%  
Final Portfolio: 34%

### **Course Structure**

The titles of each session refer to the exercise your student will be completing for homework on that day. During the following session, the pieces will be workshopped and another exercise will be given for homework.

In addition to the lectures and their accompanying exercises, the students will be producing analytical responses related to the books assigned above.

### **Example Schedule:**

*All assignments are due by 10:00pm (EST) the day before class.*

#### **Week 1**

*What do we call what's inside? A discussion of proximity and how a body of work is built.*

#### **Week 2**

*Assignment: The list as utterance. Construct a piece of objects without context.*

#### **Week 3**

*Assignment: Using research to create a lexicon from which to compose.*

#### **Week 4**

*Assignment: Answering questions and deleting the questions—making what remains.*

#### **Week 5**

*Assignment: A exercise in exhaustion; a deterministic assignment.*

#### **Week 6**

*Assignment: Writing in the voice of an exile.*

#### **Week 7**

*Assignment: Writing about fear, but only what scares you.*

#### **Week 8**

*Assignment: Articulating the ineffable.*

#### **Week 9**

*Assignment: As I change, so, too, does the world.*

#### **Week 10**

*Assignment: An index.*

#### **Week 11**

*Assignment: What one sentence can do.*

#### **Weeks 12 & 13.**

*Assignment: An autobiography, but not of yourself.*

#### **Week 14**

*Assignment: An autobiography's autobiography.*

#### **Weeks 15 & 16**

*Assignment: Making it mean something.*