

Creative Writing—The Writer’s Practice

ENG. 2050 | CARTHAGE COLLEGE | FALL 2021

INSTRUCTOR: Chad Morgan

LOCATION: MAIN (Lentz Hall 201 - Lecture)

TIME: Mondays, 6:00pm to 9:00pm

OFFICE HOURS: Lentz Hall, 224H | Mondays, 4:00 - 5:30pm, or by appointment

EMAIL: cmorgan1@carthage.edu

Required Course Texts:

Any and all required reading materials will be handed out in class or made available via the folder labeled “Course Documents” in the MyCarthage portal for this course. My personal goal is to have all or at least a majority of the semester’s readings uploaded to the folder within the first couple of weeks; regardless, you will always have access to the readings in a time-appropriate fashion.

Other Required Supplies:

In order to successfully complete this course, you will need the following supplies:

- **Class Notebook/Journal** – The most important thing you’ll need for this course is a notebook or journal. It should come as no surprise that we will be doing A LOT OF WRITING during the weeks of this course—and much of it will be done in class. I understand that writing by hand is not the preferred compositional method for everyone; however, for our specific purposes in this course, having a single, physical location that is dedicated solely to the work you produce in this class and cluttered by other distractions will be extremely beneficial—both for your learning process and to your writing in general. What that means is, your notebook should be used **ONLY** for this class.

Your class notebook or journal can be whatever style you prefer, whether that’s a traditional spiral bound notebook, legal pad, or something a bit more “journally.” **It must be brought with you to every class meeting—we WILL use them during every class!**

Course Description

Creative Writing: The Writer’s Practice is intended to help each of you develop a unique and functional writing practice. As this practice will be specific to the goals of each

individual, for themselves and their writing, what this practice eventually looks like will vary among you. The goal of this course is not prescriptive; rather, you should think of this course as a place where you are free to experiment with various methods and approaches to your writing. In other words, a primary goal of this class is to provide you with the tools and strategies you need to grow and develop a writing practice that works for you—whatever that ends up looking like.

To that end, there are a few specific goals and outcomes that I hope this course achieves, such as:

- to develop the capacity of awareness in writing
- to develop writing practices rooted in awareness and arrangement of things mental, physical, and textual
- to share a body of writing that emerges from these practices
- to discover and write in conversation with the practices and words of authors and creators living and dead, in the presence of the dead and the presence of the living (including your peers!)
- to hear and read each other's writing

These goals will be accomplished via a mixture of in-class and out-of-class writing assignments, reading assignments, and other in-class activities. We'll also look at a variety of texts in a plethora of forms and genres, including fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, as well as other media and art forms, from paintings and photography to film, to see how they can inspire and inform our own writing practices.

Assignments and Readings

Over the course of the semester, we will develop writing practices in various forms with the intention of developing our capacity of awareness in and through writing. We will also explore how developing awareness in other capacities (walking, reading, breathing, etc.) supports awareness in writing and how in turn awareness in writing supports other capacities.

The activities we undertake will be a mix of free, guided, and prompted writing assignments, most of which we will at least begin in class. You'll also be asked to respond in writing to some of the materials we engage in during class—though you shouldn't think of these as formal academic essays per se.

It is important to note the writing that emerges from these practices do not aim to be "finished" pieces of writing, whether a poem or story or essay. It is an activity and a

process. The writing will be useful, as ways of developing your capacity for awareness in and through writing and as material to make into other writings.

I will ask you to write several times per week this semester. The practices will change, as things do, from moment to moment and week to week, but the practice of regular writing will continue. Writing in class will be part of this weekly writing.

Projects

Two times in the semester you will make a collection of your writing that draws on the writing you have done and the practices you have learned. These chapbooks will be shared with the class in either digital or physical form. These will function as both your mid-term and final course projects. We will discuss these at length in class.

A note on sharing work:

Throughout the work, your work will be shared and responded to in a variety of ways. As we respond to work, our guiding principle will be to observe it with care and interest, to see what's there. As when we are writing, we are not interested in judging the work, in saying if we think it is good or bad. This is subjective, and leads nowhere.

This is difficult to unlearn, as we have all been told many times that our writing is good or bad or bad-good or good-bad. Instead we will, as we do when we are writing, be interested in what the writing is and how it was made, how certain approaches or states of mind were helpful or unhelpful. (At our first meeting, I will provide you with a worksheet that will give you clear and helpful guidelines on how to appropriately respond to your classmates' work. We'll go over it together so as to ensure that we are all on the same page.)

Attendance

It is important that you attend all the classes that you are able to. Writing is a practice one does, and much of that practice will happen in class and your presence will support everyone's practice, including your own. If you miss class, reach out to either me or a classmate about any notes or assignments you may have missed. If you have questions, come see me during my office hours.

That said, these days it is more important than ever that we conduct ourselves in a manner that keeps ourselves and those around us as safe as can be. What that means is: IF YOU ARE FEELING ILL OR EXHIBITING SYMPTOMS OF ILLNESS, PLEASE DO NOT COME TO CLASS. This applies not only to COVID-19, but to any other transmissible illness. Your learning and education are important; your health and the health of those around you are equally so.

A last note about attendance: when it comes to attendance, **communication is key**. If you know in advance of a class meeting that you're going to be absent, shoot me an email so that I a) won't be worrying about you, and b) so that I can fill you in on any assignments, discussion topics, etc., that you might have missed.

It's also a good idea to check out the college's official attendance policy, as there are some rules that are out of my direct control.

Grading

Grades will be determined based on the following factors:

- Attendance and Participation in the class (including demonstrated engagement as listener, writer, thinker, and speaker) will account for **40% of your final grade**
- Weekly writing practices and journal submissions will account for **40% of your final grade**
- Writing collections/chapbooks (your formal projects) will account for **20% of your final grade**

I do not assign grades to work during the semester in creative courses as I wish us to focus on the making and the writing for its own sake. If you have concerns about grades during the semester, please feel free to talk to me.

I will also make every effort to be as transparent about the grading process as possible as we progress through the semester, and am always happy to discuss or explain any grade assessments with each of you.

Screen/Device Policy

I request that you refrain as much as possible from engaging with your phones, tablets, or other electronic devices when they are not being used for purposes directly related to in-class activities. Because this course is three hours, we will take a 15 minute break near the mid-way point of each class, during which time you will be free to use your phones, etc.

That said, things happen, emergencies arise, and I get that. You should feel perfectly comfortable attending to any pressing matters that require your attention. Feel free to step out of the classroom to do so.

Mask Policy

Due to the ongoing pandemic, Carthage College has adopted a policy requiring masks to be worn by all individuals in all buildings and when social distancing cannot be maintained.

Masks will be required during outdoor classes, though you may lower or remove your mask during solitary activities when it is easily possible to maintain appropriate distance.

Masks must be worn at all times in the classroom, laboratory, studio spaces, hallways, bathrooms, and during in-person meetings. The face covering must conform to CDC guidelines and must cover both the nose and mouth at all times. Note that bandanas, neck gaiters, and masks with exhalation or external valves are not acceptable and are not sufficient for protection of others or yourself. Acceptable masks tie behind the head or loop behind the ears, fit snugly over the nose and chin, and can include cloth masks, medical/surgical masks, and N95s or KN95s.

Eating and/or drinking are prohibited while gathered together outdoors (because those activities interfere with consistent mask wearing).

Any student who refuses to wear a mask or consistently forgets one will be dismissed from the class and not be given an opportunity to make up missed work. The student will also be referred to the Dean of Students, as outlined by the process on Carthage's Stay Safe website.

Stay Safe Guidelines: <https://www.carthage.edu/carthage-covid-19/stay-safe-carthage/>
Frequently Asked Questions: <https://www.carthage.edu/carthage-covid-19/faqs/>

Health and Counseling Center Information

The Health and Counseling Center (HCC) supports students by addressing physical, mental, and emotional well-being. All services are free and confidential and are available to currently enrolled, full-time undergraduate students. Health services include the assessment and treatment of minor illness and injury. Diagnostic testing, complimentary over-the-counter medications, and referrals to off-campus providers are all available. Our licensed counselors help students with challenges that can be resolved with short-term, solution-focused counseling.

Some topics discussed during counseling include depression and anxiety, traumatic experiences, gender and sexuality, relationship concerns, stress management, and

academic challenges. More details—including info about appointments—can be found at carthage.edu/health-counseling.

Uwill is a free teletherapy platform for Carthage students. Uwill connects students with licensed therapists from all 50 states. Support is available in a variety of formats -- video, chat, messaging, or phone. Counselors are available nights, weekends, and during holidays. Access is quick and easy: app.uwill.com.

HCC Hours and Location:

TARC 2240 / 262-551-5710

M-F 8:30-4:00

Health Services (in-person):

Call to schedule a same-day appointment; walk-ins accepted

Counseling Services (in-person):

Call to schedule an appointment; walk-ins accepted M-F 11:30-1:00

Services, hours, and walk-in availability are subject to change

Additional Info:

- Nurse Practitioner: Wednesdays 2pm-4pm (appointment required; NP services are provided by a third party and billed to student's insurance)
- HCC is a Title IX confidential resource for students.
- We provide consultation for faculty and staff. If you need to talk to a provider, call our office at 262-551-5710.
- COVID-19 Testing is available for students with signs or symptoms of illness. Please call to be screened and to schedule a testing time.
- Carthage's vaccine requirement and associated testing is not administered by HCC. Visit the COVID-19 Update Page for more information.

Additional Health & Wellness Resources

- Uwill: Free, immediate access to a therapist for Carthage students
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
- Crisis Text Line: text HOME to 741741
- Crisis Text Line for Students of Color: text STEVE to 741741
- Trevor Lifeline (LGBTQ+): 1-866-488-7386

- National Domestic Violence Helpline: 1-800-799-7233 or text LOVEIS to 22522

Carthage College strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers due to your disability (including mental health, learning disorders and chronic medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, you also need to register with Diane Schowalter in Learning Accessibility Services (dschowalter1@carthage.edu).