

Professor Oscar De Los Santos
WCSU Office: 205 Higgins
Spring 2017 Hours: M: 10:30-12 noon and 3-4:30 p.m., T: 1:30-4:30 p.m.,
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Online Multi-Genre Workshop

Course Description

In this course you will write in your preferred genre(s) and critique your peers' writings in their preferred genre(s). While most of us prefer to work in one specific genre, it's important to be familiar with as many as possible. This is especially true at a time when working writers are often asked to stretch in many different directions and the boundaries between genres have grown increasingly blurred.

By the way, "genre" is a term laced with multiple meanings. Let's talk about all of them.

Requirements

1. You must post three extensive excerpts from your work(s) in progress. Each fiction and non-fiction excerpt should run 10-15 double-spaced pages. Each poetry submission should consist of about eight-to-ten poems. Be mindful of posting deadlines (see "Due Dates," below).
2. Everyone will be expected to respond to each posted excerpt in your workshop group. (Groups will be posted in the online "Writing Lounge" of our virtual classroom in a couple of weeks.) Please strive to offer helpful criticism and engage the author and each other in conversation about the piece. The writer, in turn, may respond to the ongoing conversation and answer queries about her/his submission. (While I monitor the online conversations and jump in from time to time, I imbed most of my comments in your emailed submissions, then email them back to you.)
3. Write a five-page critique on a craft text that focuses on your preferred genre. *Select a text that you have never read before.* What did you learn from the book? Would you recommend it? Have you read other craft texts by the same author? If so, are the other books better or worse than this one? Specifically, how is this book better or worse than others that explore the same genre? (Don't limit yourself to these questions. Consider them suggestions.) Post and email this critique by the deadline. Please use MLA format for your essay submissions.
4. Write a five-page essay that analyzes the collision of genres in modern creative writing. (In this instance, I use "genre" as subject matter, not necessarily the form used to chronicle it.) Specifically:
 - Select a text in your favorite genre that also showcases colliding genres. Identify and analyze distinctions and intersections in the work: elements that

root it soundly in a specific category and elements where it slips into territories often associated with other genres.

- Does such boundary blurring enhance a work or confuse an audience? If the boundary blurring is more than clever showboating, how does it enrich the focus or theme of a piece of writing?
 - Do you find traces of genre collision in some of your own material? Discuss.
 - Ultimately, how much should we worry about adhering to or breaking genre boundaries when we write?
5. Respond to the bi-weekly (or thereabouts) questions and assignments I will post in the “Genre and Writing Questions and Exercises” section of our virtual classroom. Contribute to the ongoing conversation. Write and post a response to any assignment by the due date, which will be clearly marked with each question or exercise.

Due Dates

1. Your first writing excerpt should be posted no later than January 26.
2. Your craft text critique should be posted no later than February 24.
3. Your second writing excerpt should be posted no later than March 6.
4. Your third writing excerpt should be posted no later than April 7.
5. Your genres in collision exploration essay should be posted no later than May 5.

IMPORTANT:

1. Besides posting required material to the appropriate threads, *you must e-mail me copies of all posted assignments and writing excerpts*. E-mail your materials (as Word attachments, not pdfs) to: delossantoso@wcsu.edu. It is not necessary to e-mail your discussion thread comments, *but I'll critique and grade only those assignments and excerpts that are e-mailed to me*.
2. *I need to receive an e-mail submission of each assignment no later than the posting deadline for that assignment*. To reiterate, please submit all emailed works in Word format, not pdf. **NO LATE ONLINE SUBMISSIONS MAY BE POSTED, NOR WILL THEY BE ACCEPTED FOR GRADING.**

Grading

Your final grade will be determined according to the following breakdown:

1. Writing Excerpt #1: 20%
2. Writing Excerpt #2: 20%
3. Writing Excerpt #3: 20%
4. Craft Text Critique: 10%
5. Genres in Collision Essay: 10%
6. Responses to Posted Writing Questions and Posted Submissions: 20%

Feel free to contact me anytime via email or telephone. If you're around Danbury and want to stop by my office and chat, that works too. Write and schedule an appointment.

I look forward to working with you. Let's have a fun and productive semester – one in which we learn from each other and help each other improve our craft.

Oscar De Los Santos, Ph.D., is current Chair of the Writing Department and former chair of the English Department at Western Connecticut State University. His books include *Hardboiled Egg* (short stories), *Spirits of Texas and New England* (folklore stories), *Infinite Wonderlands* (science fiction, co-authored with David G. Mead). He edited *Madame Luna and other Moon Stories*, *Reel Rebels* (film essays), and co-edited *When Genres Collide* (essays, with Thomas J. Morrissey). Oscar's stories and essays have appeared in *Channeling the Future: Essays on Science Fiction and Fantasy Television*, *New York Review of Science Fiction*, *Extrapolation*, *Connecticut Review*, *Saranac Review*, and other books and journals. His edited short story collection, *The Living Pulps*, will be published in 2017; a novel, *Before Celia*, is also forthcoming.