

**SYLLABUS FOR  
ONLINE MULTI-GENRE WORKSHOP I  
WRT 543, Section 01 (CRN 11303)  
WCSU MFA PROGRAM  
Fall 2013**

**Instructor:** Holly P. Azevedo

**Email:** [azevedoh@wcsu.edu](mailto:azevedoh@wcsu.edu)

**Phone:** 860-350-5969

**A .Goals of the course:**

The primary goals of this course are: 1) to increase knowledge of the craft of writing, 2) to read and analyze work in multiple genres, 3) to practice giving constructive criticism of the work of others, and 4) to become better writers by reading and discussing the work of others.

Please take advantage of this opportunity to get to know your peers, the work they do, and how they think. Remember that giving and taking positive criticism is our goal. While debate is important to the discussions, please respond to the work and comments of others in the same manner you wish to be treated. Incivility will not be tolerated.

**Peer Reviews:** The art of critiquing is learned and honed by receiving critique, writing it, and reading comments on others' work. You may be commenting on genres with which you do not feel familiar. This is not a disadvantage; trust your instincts as a reader and a writer to offer fresh insights and useful comments.

**B. Course Readings and Discussions:**

By each due date, post your responses to the Blackboard Learn course using the following **Labeling convention:** **[Last Name] [Short Title]**, e.g., Azevedo Craft Book Response, in the [Assignment Name] Discussion Board Forum. Engage in relevant discussions, for example, questions posed by your peers, or why you agree or disagree with a response. Note that discussion periods for assignment posts will usually end after two weeks.

**1. A Grammar Revival**

**Readings:** Several exercises will be posted online, intended to be a review of common grammar and punctuation errors encountered in the MFA program.

**Response due: Monday, September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

**Assignment:** The details of the assignment are posted online.

**2. Craft Book**

**Reading:** *On Writing Reading: A Memoir of the Craft* by Stephen King.

I debated whether to use this book, but felt that because it is a mix of memoir and craft book by a successful fiction writer, it would have appeal and be useful to the class.

**Response due: Monday, September 30, 2013**

**Assignment:** Post a response of approximately 500 words about the assigned reading. For example, what advice of King's resonated with you? What will you do differently in your own writing based upon reading this book?

### **3. Genre Readings – Faculty Sampler**

**Readings:** A list of readings by some of our MFA faculty will be posted online, for your reading and response.

**Response due: Monday, November 4, 2013**

**Assignment:** The details of the assignment will be posted online.

### **4. Creative Research**

You began to learn about the concept of creative research from Ron Samul's workshop at the August residency, so I want to give you a chance to practice it. As a refresher, here is the link to Ron's presentation:

[http://prezi.com/jf5dbucqbw21/creative-research/?utm\\_campaign=share&utm\\_medium=copy](http://prezi.com/jf5dbucqbw21/creative-research/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy)

The objective of this assignment is to have you practice research skills, document responses to your research, and develop a writing post based on your research.

**Final Responses due: Monday, November 18, 2013**

**Assignment:** See the full details of the assignment posted on Blackboard.

### **C. Student Work:**

The work you post may be **from your primary or secondary genre**. All work submitted in this forum should be professionally presented with proper grammar, syntax, punctuation, etc. (unless artist license dictates other than proper...)

**Formatting:** When you post a file, use the Word doc or docx format so your peers can mark up documents with comments. Use the **labeling convention: [Last Name][Post Description]**, in the [Last Name] Work Discussion Board Forum, e.g., Azevedo Initial Post.

#### **1. Initial Post – New Work:**

By **Tuesday, September 3, 2013**, each student will post between five to ten pages of **new work**. For example, post five one-page poems, a draft of a ten-page story or an excerpt from a longer story, a scene from a play or a one-act play, an essay, or any other combination that achieves 5-10 pages of new work. Include 3-5 questions to indicate the areas on which you want to receive feedback.

**Assignment:** Each writing post to the Discussion Board will receive at least one response from the instructor and from each of the other students in the course (either a general response or a detailed response).

**General Responses:** Responses should consider the author’s questions, and comment on high-level aspects of the work, such as reader response, structure, character development, plot, or voice. Responses may compare the work to other published work, or may suggest revisions.

Respond to the work of the five students not assigned to you for detailed markups by replying to their writing post in their [Last Name] Work Discussion Board Forum no later than **Monday, September 16, 2013.** (Note the later date below for detailed markups.)

**Detailed Responses / Peer Editing:** Each student will do a detailed line-edited markup of the work of two of their peers, shown as the two people whose names appear to the right in the table below. **Note:** the detailed markup work will be done on the Initial Post only, not on the Revised posts.

<b>Student below will mark up:</b>	<b>1.</b>	<b>2.</b>
Berkheiser	Cummins	Steiner
Castel	Steiner	Richardson
Cummins	McCadden	Petitti
McCadden	Petitti	Simkins
Petitti	Berkheiser	McCadden
Richardson	Simkins	Castel
Simkins	Richardson	Cummins
Steiner	Castel	Berkheiser

Use “Track Changes” in Word to do the detailed markups. Examine all aspects of the work, from structure, voice, plot, and character development, to punctuation, grammar and word choice.

Post your detailed responses no later than **Monday, September 23, 2013.**

**2. Second Post – Revision:**

Using discussion board comments and the markups you received, revise your initial work. The objective is to learn how to accept and incorporate feedback. You may not agree with all of the suggested changes, but you need to consider the reasons for each critique, and the impact your work has on a reader.

**Reading:** Rick Moody gave a revision workshop at the August 2011 residency and provided these guidelines, which offer several suggestions to tighten your prose and strengthen your sentences.

**“A Guide to Revision,”** by Rick Moody. Available in the **Student Work** folder and from the MFA website [www.wcsu.edu/writing/mfa/Rick%20Moody%20A%20Guide%20to%20Revision.pdf](http://www.wcsu.edu/writing/mfa/Rick%20Moody%20A%20Guide%20to%20Revision.pdf)

**Post** your revised work by **Monday, October 14, 2013.** Include a description (approx. 300 words) of how you approached the revision and how you incorporated the feedback received.

**Responses:** Each revised writing post to the Discussion Board will receive at least one response from the instructor and from each of the other students in the course. Responses should comment on the effects of the revisions.

Respond to the writing post of each student in his or her [Last Name] Work Discussion Board Forum no later than **Monday, October 28, 2013.**

#### D. Recommended Works (Required):

Throughout the semester, you should find books, articles, scripts, reviews, writing-related websites or blogs, etc., that you want to share. Post your finds in the **Recommended Works** folder. In the Subject, provide the genre / category and the title or short description of the work. In the post, state why you are recommending this work and/or your thoughts on the topic. Post at least one recommendation to this discussion forum no later than **Monday, December 9, 2013**.

#### E. Due Dates - IMPORTANT:

**ALL WORK IS DUE BY MIDNIGHT OF THE DATE SPECIFIED. NO LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR GRADING. Please plan accordingly. "Midnight" refers to your home time zone.**

#### F. Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to positively critique others' writing
- Demonstrate an understanding of the revision process and the ability to improve their own work
- Write well-developed responses to readings
- Understand the fundamentals of creative research and its use as the basis for writing

#### G. Evaluation

Each student will be evaluated on the following:

- Quality and thoroughness of each Writing Post --  
(First post, Revised Post, Creative Research Writing Post) (3): 10% each  
Note: both contents and mechanics will be evaluated.
- Quality and thoroughness of responses to assigned readings & research: 30%
- Quality and thoroughness of responses to peer writing posts: 20%
- Quality and thoroughness of general discussion participation: 20%

To be successful in this course, you should be online regularly to keep up with the flow of postings and discussions. You are expected to read all posted work and discussions. Look for new posts in the **Discussion Board** tool. At the midterm point, you may send me a note to ask about your midterm progress.

#### H. Plagiarism

Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. If you use others' work, cite it properly. See the *WSCU Graduate Catalog 2011-2012* and the *WSCU Student Handbook* for more information.

## I. Summary of Assignments

### Writing Posts & Critiques

1. Initial writing post
2. 2 Detailed line-edits
3. 5 General responses to initial writing posts
4. Revision writing post
5. 7 General responses to revised writing posts
6. Creative research journaling & bibliography post
7. Creative research writing post
8. 7 General responses to creative research writing posts

### Reading Responses & Discussion

1. Grammar revival reading & response
2. Relevant discussion on grammar responses
3. Craft book reading & response
4. Relevant discussion on craft book responses
5. Faculty Sampler reading & response
6. Relevant discussion on Faculty Sampler responses
7. Relevant discussion on research journaling posts
8. 1 Recommended Work post

## J. Summary of Key Dates

Monday, August 26<sup>th</sup>: Syllabi Due

Monday, August 26<sup>th</sup>: Online Workshop Begins

Tuesday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>: Post new work of 5-10 pages

Sunday, September 15<sup>th</sup>: Enrichment Project Proposals Due

Monday, September 16<sup>th</sup>: Last day for general peer comments on new work

Monday, September 16<sup>th</sup>: Post response on grammar work

Monday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>: Last day for peer detailed editing posts

Monday, September 30<sup>th</sup>: Last day for discussion on grammar work

Monday, September 30<sup>th</sup>: Post response on craft book

Monday, October 4<sup>th</sup>: Post proposed research topic

Friday, October 11<sup>th</sup>: Instructor to respond on research topics

Monday, October 14<sup>th</sup>: Last day for discussion on craft book

Monday, October 14<sup>th</sup>: Post revised work of 5-10 pages

Friday, October 18<sup>th</sup>: Midterm Point

Monday, October 28<sup>th</sup>: Last day for peer comments on revised posting

Monday, November 4<sup>th</sup>: Post response on Faculty Sampler readings

Monday, November 18<sup>th</sup>: Last day for discussion on Faculty Sampler

Monday, November 18<sup>th</sup>: Post creative research journaling & bibliography, and writing post

Wednesday, November 27<sup>th</sup> - Sunday, December 1<sup>st</sup>: Thanksgiving Recess

Monday, December 9<sup>th</sup>: Last day to post a Recommended Work

Thursday, December 12<sup>th</sup>: Last day for peer comments on creative research writing posts, & discussion

Tuesday, December 17<sup>th</sup>: Semester Ends

Friday, December 20<sup>th</sup>: Final Grades Due

TBD: Course Evaluations Due