

Department of English  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

**ENGE3260 - Creative Writing**  
Time and venue TBA

Professor: Prof. Collier NOGUES  
Office location: TBA  
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Office hours: TBA and by appointment

**Description:**

In this course, students will develop mastery of the tools necessary to the serious creative writer. The course will begin by focusing on poetry in order to discuss fundamentals of creative language use, and then will build on those fundamentals to explore short fiction, life writing, and hybrid forms. Where and how does a poem or story or memoir begin? Once you have a substantial draft, how can you sharpen, enliven, improve it? How do you know it's ready for other people to read, and where can you send it to be published? We'll ask and answer these questions and more. Because creative writing reflects and even produces the concerns of its community, we will not only engage with each other's writing in a workshop setting, but also actively participate in Hong Kong's literary communities beyond our classroom walls.

**Learning outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of the course, you will have:

- deepened your understanding of the relationship between the practice of creative writing and the practice of literary criticism and interpretation;
- honed your skills in poetry, fiction, and life writing, as well as in critical analysis;
- produced a carefully revised work in one of those creative genres accompanied by a thoughtful critical reflection;
- practiced strategies to make each stage of the drafting and revising process more productive;
- gained experience in careful, constructive evaluation of your own and others' writing; and
- become familiar with the role of literary community, in Hong Kong and beyond, in the practice of a creative writer and in the social world more broadly.

**Learning activities:**

The learning activities in this course will take a variety of forms. During class meetings, we'll discuss not only creative works but also essays on the craft of writing, and we'll write together in a range of modes, sometimes modeling after the writers we admire and sometimes taking our cues from each other. Coursework will include weekly informal critical and creative responses, as well as more formal critical and creative assignments, giving us many opportunities to reflect on how a given piece of writing works, and to practice different approaches in our own writing. In workshop sessions, we'll read each other's work with an eye to becoming stronger critical readers of our own work. I'll also ask you to attend two literary events (online or in person) in order to develop your understanding of the role of literary community in the work of creative writing.

**Key concepts:**

Topics	Contents/fundamental concepts
Creative Genres: Poetry Short Fiction Life Writing Multimodal and Hybrid Genres	The genre-specific relationships among music, argument, and story; Strategies of voice, characterization and narration across genres; Language choice, including diction, metaphor, imagery, tone, clarity, pacing and surprise, also across genres; Genre boundaries and how/why writers cross those boundaries
Writing Process	The drafting process, including generating ideas, beginning a draft, revising, asking for and receiving feedback, and polishing your work; How to use works you admire as models
Literary Community	The relationship between writers and their social worlds; Hong Kong's own local writing communities; Publication and performance opportunities

**The following workload schedule per week may help you allocate your time this term:**

Interactive Lecture/Tutorial (as one 3hr block)	Reading	Writing, including creative works and discussion board responses	Attending literary events
In class	Out of class	Out of class	Out of class
3 hrs	2 hrs	3 hrs	2 hrs, twice in the term
M	M	M	M

All elements, both in and out of class, are mandatory.

**Assessment Scheme**

Task nature	Description	Weight
<b>In-class Participation</b>	Because this course involves building a community of writers together, attendance is required. Writers are expected to engage actively and curiously in all exercises, workshops, and class discussions.	10%
<b>Literary Event Response</b>	Twice during the semester, you'll attend a literary event (the events can be in-person or online). You'll write a 500-700 word response addressing both events, perhaps comparing and contrasting them, and articulating what, it seems to you, literary community means in the context of these events. The aim of this assessment is to give you an opportunity to articulate your own insights in preparation for our final course session, in which we will develop a collaborative definition of the relation between creative writers and their social worlds. Due week 13.	20%

<b>Discussion Board Responses</b>	Each week I'll post prompts on the discussion board, and you'll write 100-300 words in response. Sometimes the prompts will ask for critical or creative responses to assigned readings; sometimes they will ask for reflections on your writing process, or for comments on your peers' work. Occasionally I'll also ask you to respond to a peer's post. The responses will be informal, though you should proofread them to make sure your meaning comes across clearly. The goal of these responses is to enable you to engage more deeply than you can during fast-paced class discussion with the skills and strategies under review. I will also use them to help tailor our class meetings to your interests and questions. I will offer feedback and a provisional grade early in the semester so that you have a guideline about your performance in this assessment. Due weekly.	30%
<b>Final Project</b>	Your final project is designed to give you the opportunity to showcase all you have learned over the course of the semester. It will have both a creative and a critical component. The creative portion will be a short work of fiction or life writing, or a selection of poems (or one long poem), or a hybrid work. The critical portion will be a reflection describing your drafting and revision process and discussing your inspiration, imagined audience, and goals for your creative piece. Your project should include all previous drafts of the final piece, including any workshop and instructor feedback, preliminary exercises, and/or reflection writing that contributed to the final work. Due in Reading Week after our final class meeting.	40%

**Course Schedule (subject to revision):**

Class	Date	Topic	Activities/ Assessments
Week 1	TBA.	<b>Introduction.</b> Course Policies & Overview. Developing and supporting a critical reading.	Introduction email (in-class)
Week 2		<b>The Writer's Toolkit (Music, Story, Argument).</b> Poems: Sylvia Plath, Chen Chen, James Tate.	Discussion Board Post 1
Week 3		<b>Poetry: Literal Figures, Serious Play.</b> Essay: Richard Hugo, "The Triggering Town." Poems: Carl Phillips, Elizabeth Bishop, Mary Jean Chan, Charles Simic.	Discussion Board Post 2
Week 4		<b>Poetry: Structure and Speaker.</b> Essay: "Grammar for Poets," Michael Ryan. Poems: Frank O'Hara, Louise Glück, Gwendolyn Brooks, Terrance Hayes.	Discussion Board Post 3
Week 5		<b>Short Fiction: Character and Desire.</b> Essay: from <i>Bogombo Snuffbox</i> , Kurt Vonnegut. Stories: Clarice Lispector, Raymond Carver.	Discussion Board Post 4

----- Week 6		<b>Short Fiction: Magical Realism and Social Critique.</b> Stories: Gabriel García Márquez and Dorothy Tse Hiu-Hung.	Discussion Board Post 5
----- Week 7		<b>Life Writing: Author as Character.</b> Critical essay: <i>The Art of the Personal Essay</i> , Phillip Lopate. Essays: Sei Shonagon and Joan Didion.	Discussion Board Post 6
----- Week 8		<b>Life Writing: Object as Lens.</b> Essays: Nick Admussen and Karen Cheung.	Discussion Board Post 7
----- Week 9		<b>Multimodal Writing and Hybrid Forms.</b> Prose poems: Allison Benis White. Flash fiction: Lydia Davis. Essay Poems: Claudia Rankine, Lawrence Lacambra Ypil, and Nicholas Wong. Digital Literature: Shelley Jackson, Crows Crows	Discussion Board Post 8
----- Week 10		<b>Workshop: the Very Rough Draft</b>	Workshop submission and responses
----- Week 11		<b>Workshop: the Developing Draft</b>	Workshop submission and responses
----- Week 12		<b>Workshop: the Ambitious Draft</b>	Workshop submission and responses
----- Week 13		<b>Conclusion:</b> The Creative Writer and Literary Community	Literary Event Response

### eLearning/Course Announcements:

We will be using Blackboard Learn as the eLearning platform in this course. Blackboard Learn will be used for a) dissemination of course materials such as readings, discussion questions, assignment prompts, and rubrics, b) supplementary class discussion, and c) d) course announcements.

You can access Blackboard Learn at: <https://elearn.cuhk.edu.hk/>

A demonstration of how to access Blackboard Learn to post and respond to announcements, download resources, and use the discussion forums will be given in the first lecture.

### Feedback for evaluation

In any community of writers, constructive feedback is key, and in this class it is very welcome. Students may raise questions or offer comments during workshop sessions, as well as via email or during individual office hours. Midway through the term, there will also be an opportunity to provide anonymous feedback via a SurveyMonkey survey.

At the end of the course, students will be asked to complete Course Evaluations for both the lectures and tutorials for the course. Both I and the department value this information highly, as it allows us to understand what we are doing well and how we can improve. We use your feedback to revise our teaching methods and course content.

### Academic honesty and plagiarism

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>. With each assignment, students will be required to submit a statement that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures.

Statement:

I declare that the assignment here submitted is original except for source material explicitly acknowledged. I also acknowledge that I am aware of University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and of the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations, as contained in the website

<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student ID

### Grade descriptors

Course Grade Descriptors:

Grade A / Excellent: Outstanding performance on ALL learning outcomes.

Demonstrates the ability to synthesize and apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would surpass the normal expectations at this level and typical of standards that may be common at higher levels of study. The 'A' grade should be reserved for truly excellent work that exceeds the level expected for the majority of students and are expected to be achieved only by a small minority.

Grade A- / Very Good: Generally outstanding performance on ALMOST ALL learning outcomes.

Demonstrates the ability to synthesize and apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would fully fulfill the normal expectations at this level and occasionally reaches standards that may be common at higher levels of study.

Grade B+ / Good (Plus): HIGH performance on all learning outcomes, OR HIGH performance on some learning outcomes which compensates WELL for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance. Demonstrates the ability to apply WELL the principles or skills learned in the course in a comprehensive manner that would sufficiently fulfill

the normal expectations at this level WELL.

Grade B / Good: SUBSTANTIAL performance on all learning outcomes, OR SUBSTANTIAL performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance. Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a MORE COMPREHENSIVE manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level.

Grade B- / Good (Minus): GOOD performance on all learning outcomes, OR GOOD performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance. Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a COMPREHENSIVE manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level.

Grade C+ / Adequate (Plus): VERY ADEQUATE performance on the majority of learning outcomes. Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a SOMEWHAT SUSTAINED manner that would meet the basic requirement at this level.

Grade C / Adequate: ADEQUATE performance on the majority of learning outcomes. Demonstrates the ability to partially apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would meet the basic requirement at this level.

Grade C- / Adequate (Minus): SOMEWHAT ADEQUATE performance on A NUMBER OF learning outcomes. Demonstrates the ability to SOMEWHAT apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would meet the BARE basic requirement at this level.

Grade D+ / Pass (Plus): BARELY SATISFACTORY performance on A FEW learning outcomes. Addresses the task inadequately by meeting the basic requirement at this level only in some areas while responding minimally with possibly tangential content in others.

Grade D / Pass: ALMOST BARELY SATISFACTORY performance on VERY FEW learning outcomes. Addresses the task inadequately by meeting the basic requirement at this level only in very few areas while responding very minimally with possibly tangential content in others.

Grade F / Failure: Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements. Fails to address the task and likely does not understand what the task requires. In other words, the work completely misses the point.