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## English 312

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**Gail Galloway Adams, ENGL 312, Spring 2004,  
Fiction Writing Workshop**

### English 312: Fiction Writing Workshop.

Monday 1600 - 1850 (4:00 - 6:50) Stansbury 46A  
Gail Galloway Adams, Stansbury Hall, Room 462, 293-3107 ext.  
434 (o), 292-2540 (h),  
[gadams@wvu.edu](mailto:gadams@wvu.edu)

Office hours: MW 2-3; Tuesday 2-4:30; other hours by  
appointment.

Texts (req): *Writing*

*Fiction: A*

*Guide to*

*Narrative Craft,*

sixth edition, ed. Janet Burroway;

*Crafting the*

*Very Short*

*Story: An*

*Anthology*, ed. Mark Mills.

Please get your writing organized, journal, notebook, folder, etc. Buy the books!

Creative Writing 312 is not a class for novice fiction writers. Everyone in this class should have the prerequisite of a 200 level class in prose--fiction/creative non-fiction and should be familiar with basic critical terminology and workshop process. The objective in this workshop is to learn how to write better fiction and how to become a better reader/critic of fiction.

Requirements for the work for the term will be the completion of the Burroway book and as many of the stories in the Miles anthology as we can manage. You will be responsible for keeping a reading journal of responses on the stories in both books. These responses will be used in class discussions and I'll call in the response journals periodically.

In addition to this reading, there will be required weekly exercises usually based on the Burroway suggestions, but sometimes a piece modeled on the Mills' stories can be substituted, one short short story (1500 words or less) and one short story of at least 8 double-spaced pages, but no more than 25 double spaced pages. It is possible that some writers will produce more work than this. Both small group and complete group critiques will be used and you will be expected to respond to your peers'work on the page; however, the first few times I'll review the responses in order to see what might be needed to help workshopppers become more effective critics.

## **JANUARY**

**Monday 12** Get acquainted. Short short story read and critiqued in class. In-class writing.

Be sure and start in on your work after this class. Sign up for story schedule.

**Monday 19 RECESS** in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Keep up with your work.

**Monday 26** To have completed: Chapter I: Whatever Works: The Writing Process. A short piece or a response in your journal to one of the questions following Lamott and do the same for the Cofer piece. These will help you place your writing in the context of questions asked about the form. Exercise assignment: # 3--choose from the list/outline/write first page. At any time in these chapters, if something else more inspires you in the exercises, you may choose that instead. To have completed: Chapter II: The Tower and the Net. Read William Carlos Williams, Mary Hood, Amy Bloom, Margaret Atwood--answer one question from discussion section or each story. Write a short story on a postcard--don't send it. Bring it to class. We may or may not do some work in class--probably have to do some re-introduction. First stories will be brought in to be distributed in class for critique the following week.

**FEBRUARY** Thursday Feb 12, reading by James Harms, Director of WVU's Creative Writing program; Saturday 21, Twelfth Annual Undergraduate Literary Symposium.

**Monday 2** Complete Chapter III: read all 3 stories, answer discussion questions--choose one--and choose one exercise. Some of the collaborative suggestions would work well for individual writing so feel free to choose one of those. Please remember that all exercises must be typed and professionally presented in order to be handed in. On these day we'll begin with stories from Mark Mills anthology. Read Jonis Agee's' Cata

1, 2, 3 and the Sherwood Anderson--respond with thoughVphrase/idea on each and or with a model. Critique peers' work. Distribute stories for following week.

**Monday 9** Complete Chapter IV: Characterization Part I. Do as the pattern has established: read stories and write a response and then tackle one exercise--you may use the collaborative which are more interesting than the individual but why should we have to work with others when writing ultimately is a solitary act--I'm taking Burro way on here--also move ahead with stories in Mills. Read Babel/Baroque/Beattie--try in your responses to decide which you are most drawn to--explain in response. Which one would move you to model? Critique peers'work and distribute stories for the following week.

**Monday 16** Chapter V: Characterization Part II. Read and respond. Do exercise of your choice. In Mills: Boccacio/Borges/Boyle. Peer critique and distribution of stories.

**Monday 23** Chapter VI: Fictional Time and Place. Read all. Responses and exercises. In Mills read Brecht/Bukowski/Calvino/Carter. Which is to your taste? On which would you model? Peer critique and distribution of stories.

**MARCH** Department Pizza Party Wednesday 3; Kevin Oderman/Gail Galloway Adams faculty reading, Wednesday 24th at 7:30, the Robinson Reading Room of the Wise Library; Friday 26, deadline for English Department writing contests.

**Monday 1** Chapter VII: Point of View, Part I. Read and respond. Choose an exercise. From Mills: Carver/Chaucer/Cheever/Chekhov. To which do you respond? Why? Peer critique and distribution of stories.

**Monday 8** Chapter VIII: Point of View, Part II. Read and respond. Choose an exercise. From Mills: finish up the C's: Chopin/Cisneros/Colette/Cortazar/Crane--by now your aesthetic taking its shape. Remember even in a story you don't click with there will be memorable lines. Try and find those. Peer critique.

**MONDAY 15 SPRING BREAK** GET RESTED AND RESTORED AND READ A LOT AND OBSERVE A LOT AND WRITE A LOT.

**Monday 22** Reacquaint with one another and we'll do in-class discussion and in-class writing and all the D's in Mills: Danticat to Dostoevsky. Distribution of stories.

**Monday 29** Chapter 9 Comparison. Read and respond. Do exercise. In Mills: the F's-Forche/Forster/Frame/Friedman. Peer critique and distribution of stories.

**APRIL National Poetry Month:** Wed 14, Calliope reading; Wed 21, Awards luncheon; Thurs 22, Terrence Hayes of Hip Hop Logic; Thurs 29, M.F.A. students.

**Monday 5** Chapter 10: Theme. Read all and respond and choose an exercise. In Mills: the G's from Galeano to Greene. Peer critique and distribution of story.

**Monday 12** Final chapter in Burro way: Revision. We will have been working all along on revision of central stories--I hope--and this chapter asks of us specific questions to address. In Mills: the H's--Hawthorne to Hughes. What variety. Peer critique and distribution of stories.

**Monday 19** Nothing but Mills reading here--we move from Jackson all the way through to De Maupassant. Would love some models coming in on these. The M's that follow are rich

but want to be sure we hit Nabokov. Peer critique. No distribution of story but each should be preparing to present the favorite short piece they've written during the term in addition to the presentation of a piece from Mills story we've not yet got round to this term.

**Monday 26 Final Class.** Portfolios of work should be completed on this day. Each person will choose one story we've not read in Mills and they'll present it in some way: a model and/or a critique and/or a reading aloud, etc. Each should have a favorite piece of their own work to be shared--might bring copies for everyone? We'll also have food and celebration for all graduating seniors.

This seems like a lot of work, but it will quickly fall into a routine: read the Burro way chapter and pay attention to the stories. Respond to them (the discussion suggestions act as helpful guide), then choose an exercise either individual or collaborative modified and write something every week. The Mills reading should constantly be stimulating you through its wide variety--use these as models and/or as a way to gauge your own aesthetic development--browse through it--pick your own favorites and respond.

Don't forget your own longer short story work; many of the exercises will develop into short short stories (less than 1500 words and might be used to satisfy that requirement), but the 8-25 pp piece should undergo at least one revision using the class critiquing and my comments and come back to me during the term, certainly in the end portfolio. You will, of course, be a good reader for your peers' fiction and spend the requisite time to do a careful critique. There perhaps will be time to do more than one story per writer depending on the size of the

workshop. The public readings are fun to attend and responses to those are subjective and personal. This will be a great semester and our writing will move forward in a supportive atmosphere.

Grades: Attendance is crucial in assessing the final grade. We meet only once weekly and there is no way to make up missed critiquing sessions. Attendance grades are calculated as follows: 0 - 1 (A); 2 absences (B); 3 absences (C); and from this point you'll be asked to reconsider your commitment to this class since more than 3 absences will constitute failure in attendance. I'd prefer you drop rather than fail. Attendance/participation/outside readings - 20%; reading responses/discussions - 20%; exercises 30 %; and short stories 30%. You must attend one outside reading and submit a reading response. There will be five opportunities in the Creative Writing series (includes the MFA and Calliope readings) as well as Open Mics at the Blue Moose, Perks, and 1-2-3. A final portfolio of the term's work will also be required.

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