

**English 418/C01**  
**Creative Writing Capstone**  
**Tuesday/Thursday 11:30 - 12:45**  
**Clark Hall - Room 111**

**Professor: Glenn Taylor and MFA mentors**  
**Office: G13 Colson Hall**  
**Hours: T/TH 10:00-11:30 and by appointment**  
**Phone: 293-4547**  
**Email: maurice.taylor@mail.wvu.edu**

### **Course Description**

The Creative Writing Capstone Course will be taught as both a traditional class and as a one-on-one independent study. You should see it as a culmination of the creative writing sequence in which you can work in poetry, literary fiction, or literary nonfiction. You will come up with a project proposal (due Thursday 1/17) to be reviewed and approved by the instructor and mentor. Class time will involve both the study of student and published work. We'll also hear from graduate students about the craft and perhaps about pursuing further study. For a semester, you will have the opportunity to feel about your writing projects the way Joe Gould (one of Joseph Mitchell's subjects) felt about his own:

“The Oral History has been my rope and my scaffold, my bed and my board, my wife and my floozy, my wound and the salt on it, my whiskey and my aspirin, and my rock and my salvation. It is the only thing that matters a damn to me. All else is dross.”

### **Books/ Materials**

- \**The Art of the Story*, Daniel Halpern, Editor (fiction)
- \**Up in the Old Hotel* by Joseph Mitchell (non-fiction)
- \* *The Interrogative Mood* by Padgett Powell (fiction or non-fiction?)
- \**Head Off & Split* by Nikky Finney (poetry)
- \**Ashland* by Gil Adamson (poetry?)
- \*Pocket binder or folder
- \*Copy costs and material

### **Requirements**

- \*Project proposal
- \*Two original, typed, proofread, and mass copied works, of roughly 20-40 pages (total count for semester, dependent upon genre), turned in on time for workshop schedule
- \*Typed or written comments on other students' workshop submissions
- \*Attendance of class and mentoring sessions
- \*Six critical responses to the assigned readings (roughly two pages each; two responses per genre)
- \*Three “Your Choice” selection (one page each; one per genre)
- \*One craft talk response (one page)
- \*Artist's Statement for the final project (as well as revised 20 to 40 page final project itself, of course)
- \*Final reading

### **Evaluation**

Your grade will be determined by me and by your graduate student mentor. Thus, final grades will reflect your work in class sessions as well as one-on-one mentoring. All work must be completed on time (see course calendar). Please note that participation and professionalism are also a factor in a class like this.

### **Attendance Policy**

\*Because this class is discussion-based, with in-class planning and writing, regular attendance is essential. I expect you to attend every class meeting. If you accumulate more than four absences, I will begin lowering your final grade. You also need to attend all meetings with your mentor. Missing these meetings will inevitably impact your grade.

## Important Guidelines

\*Not only must your work for workshop be turned in **on time** and with a copy for each class member, it must also be typed, proofread, double-spaced, and page numbered.

\*Comments written or typed on other students' manuscripts must be clear, readable, and substantial (including notes and roughly one page of end comments). Participation in class discussion must be based on respect for difference in taste, interest, and skill level. Mean-spirited attacks on other student work will not be allowed.

## COURSE CALENDAR

\*This calendar is tentative. I will announce revisions as needed.

### **WEEK 1**

1/15: Introductions to the course and each other; sign up for workshop; meet mentors/set up meetings  
Assigned for next class: Project Proposals (print one for me and email another to your mentor)

1/17: **PROJECT PROPOSALS DUE**

Briefly discuss proposals; workshop student story

Begin NON-FICTION readings

Assigned for next class: Mitchell's *Up in the Old Hotel* ix – xix (Introduction & Author's Note) and 52-70 ("Professor Seagull")

### **WEEK 2**

1/22: Discuss readings

In class writing

Workshop student story

Assigned for next class: Mitchell 622-676 (first half of "Joe Gould's Secret")

1/24: Discuss readings

Workshop student story

Assigned for next class: Mitchell 676-716 (second half of "Joe Gould's Secret")

Complete Critical Response #1

### **WEEK 3**

1/29 **Critical Response #1 due**

Discuss readings

Workshop student story

Assigned for next class: Powell's *The Interrogative Mood* 1-80

1/31 Discuss readings

In class writing

Workshop student story

Assigned for next class: Powell 81- end

Complete Critical Response #2

### **WEEK 4**

2/5 **Critical Response #2 due**

Discuss readings

Workshop student story

Assigned for next class: Find and bring in an example of literary non-fiction about which you feel strongly.

Type up a one page explanation for why this piece of writing matters. Be sure to highlight your favorite passage from the work itself.

2/7 Discuss students' non-fiction choices

Workshop student story

Begin POETRY readings

Assigned for next class: Finney's *Head Off & Split* 1-40

## WEEK 5

2/12 Discuss readings  
Workshop student story  
Assigned for next class: Finney 41-59

2/14 Discuss readings  
Workshop student story  
Assigned for next class: Finney 61-97  
Complete Critical Response #3

## WEEK 6

2/19 **Critical Response #3 Due**  
Discuss readings  
Workshop student story  
Assigned for next class: Adamson's *Ashland* 1-54

2/21 Discuss readings  
Workshop student story  
Assigned for next class: Adamson 55-end  
Complete Critical Response #4

## WEEK 7

2/26 **Critical Response #4 Due**  
Discuss readings  
Workshop student story  
Assigned for next class: Find and bring in an example of poetry about which you feel strongly. Type up a one page explanation for why this piece of writing matters. Be sure to highlight your favorite passage from the work itself.

2/28 Discuss students' poetry choices  
Workshop student story  
Begin FICTION readings  
Assigned for next class: *Art of the Story* 62-68 (Banks), 179-188 (Cisneros), 196-198 (Danticat), 199-202 (Davis)

## WEEK 8

3/5 Discuss readings  
Workshop student story  
Assigned for next class: *AOS* 211-219 (Diaz), 279-290 (Ford), 291-294 (Galeano)

3/7 Discuss readings  
Workshop student story  
Assigned for next class: *AOS* 307-315 (Hannah), 387-392 (McCann), 477-480 (Okri), 602-607 (Wideman)  
Complete Critical Response #5

## WEEK 9

3/12 **Critical Response #5 Due**  
Discuss readings  
Workshop student story  
Assigned for next class: Choose a story of your liking from *AOS* and complete Critical Response

3/14 **Critical Response #6 Due**  
Workshop student story  
Assigned for next class: Find and bring in an example of literary fiction about which you feel strongly. Type up a one page explanation for why this piece of writing matters. Be sure to highlight your favorite passage from the work itself.

### WEEK 10

3/19 Discuss students' fiction choices  
Workshop student story  
Assigned for next class: To Be Announced

3/21 Discuss readings  
Workshop student story  
Assigned for next class: To Be Announced

### \*SPRING BREAK\*

### WEEK 11

4/2 Discuss readings  
Workshop student story  
CRAFT TALK  
Assigned for next class: TBA

4/4 Discuss readings  
Workshop student story  
CRAFT TALK  
Assigned for next class: TBA

### WEEK 12

4/9 Discuss readings  
Workshop student story  
CRAFT TALK  
Assigned for next class: TBA

4/11 Discuss readings  
CRAFT TALK  
Workshop student story  
Assigned for next class: TBA

### WEEK 13

4/16 Discuss readings  
CRAFT TALK  
Help with Critical Preface  
Assigned for next class: Begin work on Critical Preface  
Complete one page response to Craft Talks

4/18 **Response to Craft Talk Due**  
Discuss Artist's Statements, project progress as a whole  
Assigned for next class: Complete draft of Artist's Statement and bring three copies to next class

### WEEK 14

4/23 Discuss Artist's Statement  
Discuss format of final project and revision strategies  
Sign up for individual conferences

4/25 Individual conferences

### WEEK 16

4/30 Individual conferences

5/2 CLASS READING: Thursday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> in 130 Colson Hall. Time: 11:30  
**Your final project is due at the time of the reading. Please bring two copies: one for your mentor and one for me. Please also remember to keep a copy for yourself.**