



Introduction to Creative Writing
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PCA-1-1CW

Faculty of Arts and Human
Sciences

2007-2008

become what you want to be

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7.4	Blackboard - This Unit Guide is also available online through Blackboard. To access Blackboard you will need a University IT account. You can register for this as soon as you have your student ID number. All students who have an LSBU computer account will have a Blackboard account automatically. Usernames and passwords for Blackboard will be the same as for other LSBU computer resources. To find out how to activate your IT account and use Blackboard, go to the New Student Checklist at www.lsbu.ac.uk	8
7.5	Self managed study - It is essential for the successful completion of this unit that all students acknowledge the responsibility they have for their self-managed learning. Students will be given independent reading, research and other seminar preparation each week. You should aim to spend about 5-6 hours a week reading and preparing for this unit. The more you read, the more substance you can bring to an issue or topic under discussion. You should always read the core texts and any other material that is given out by the lecturer. You should also try to seek out secondary works on the core texts and issues and build a foundation of material on which your written work can be based.	8
7.6	Effective learners complete tasks from all four boxes every day. If you only complete the urgent tasks, you will create a backlog for the future. In addition, tasks are often done more easily when they are not urgent and can be approached in a more relaxed and creative way. Remember to multi-task – it is often better to start several jobs, even if you don't finish them all, that out all your time and energy into one job.	9
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1. UNIT DETAILS

Unit Title:	Introduction to Creative Writing 1
Unit Level:	1
Unit Reference Number:	PCA-1-ICW
Credit Value:	30
Student Study Hours:	150
Contact Hours:	45
Private Study Hours:	105
Pre-requisite Learning (If applicable):	None
Co-requisite Units (If applicable):	None
Course(s):	
Year and Semester	Year 1, Semester 1
Unit Coordinator:	Mr Simon Smith
UC Contact Details (Tel, Email, Room)	Room 28, Caxton House Tel: 020 7815 5421 07970076889 Email: smiths22@lsbu.ac.uk As above
Teaching Team & Contact Details (If applicable):	
Subject Area:	Creative Writing & English
Summary of Assessment Method:	Class Participation 30% Portfolio of creative work 70%

2. SHORT DESCRIPTION

This module introduces students to the essential skills and techniques of the creative writing process. Reading, analysis and discussion of both relevant methodology and literature will allow students to develop the necessary critical and theoretical skills that will enable them to begin producing their own creative work. The module will focus on the development of specific writing skills (building/broadening vocabulary, deciphering tone, using grammar/punctuation effectively, avoiding overused expressions, structuring ideas and revising drafts), and the promotion of productive writing strategies and methods. Class sessions will use interactive workshops, peer-review exercises, oral presentations and directed writing activities to encourage successful creative writing practice. Students will also produce a range of creative works, including pieces of short fiction and short drama. These documents will form part of a portfolio that will constitute part of the student's assessment for the unit.

3. AIMS OF THE UNIT

To enable students to:

- Place their work in the appropriate critical context

- Apply relevant critical and theoretical concepts to their work
- Establish practical writing skills
- Develop appropriate and effective writing strategies
- Produce a portfolio of creative work

4. LEARNING OUTCOMES

4.1 Knowledge and Understanding

- An awareness of the basic elements of creative writing
- An understanding of a variety of critical approaches to creative writing
- An awareness of different genres, the assumptions on which they are based and the audience to which they are meant to appeal

4.2 Intellectual Skills

- An ability to produce original creative work, demonstrating a successful application of the basic elements of: character, narration, plot, dialogue and theme
- An ability to edit, rewrite and improve one's own work

4.3 Practical Skills

- An understanding of proofreading skills, and the ability to apply them
- A competency in critiquing and revising their own and peers' work

4.4 Transferable Skills

Students have an opportunity to develop:

- Critical vocabulary and analytical skills
- Effective verbal and written communication skills
- Practices for composing and evaluating writing

5. ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIT

The pass mark for this unit is 40% overall.

Class participation (30%)

Student portfolio (70%): three pieces of creative work in the genres of short fiction or short drama (2 of short fiction and 1 of drama, or 1 of short fiction and 2 of drama). Total 2,500 words. And one reflective essay of 1,500 words.

6. FEEDBACK

MARKING AND FEEDBACK

Portfolios will be returned with feedback and a percentage grade between 0% and 100%. The grade remains provisional until confirmed by the July Examination Board. Any student who would like to discuss their coursework in more detail should make an appointment to see the Unit Co-ordinator.

After your work has been marked by the Lecturer, it is internally moderated by a second member of the teaching team to check that the marking is fair and consistent.

Feedback will normally be given to students 15 working days after the submission of an assignment.

COURSEWORK EXTENSIONS

If you are unable to complete the portfolio by the deadline due to extenuating circumstances, you must follow the following procedure:

- talk to Simon Smith, Creative Writing and English Course Director or Margaret Kinsman, English Studies Course Director as soon as possible and get their agreement to an extension of the deadline for submission before the due date
- get a Late Submission Coursework Form from the Student Information Centre on the 2nd Floor of Borough Road (or download from the web site), complete Part A and ask the Course Director to sign the form agreeing to the extension
- hand in the form with the coursework on the agreed extension deadline

If you request an extension for medical reasons you must supply a medical certificate. Applying for an extension does not guarantee getting one. The maximum extension of the deadline date is two calendar weeks. Coursework submitted within this extended deadline will be marked in the normal way.

MARKS FOR COURSEWORK SUBMITTED LATE

The maximum marks for any coursework submitted up to two weeks after the deadline date or after an agreed extension is 40%. Coursework submitted more than two weeks after the deadline will be **failed**. The July Examination Board will decide whether the student is to be given the opportunity to redeem failure, provided that the student has submitted a claim for extenuating circumstances which has been accepted by the Board.

Refer to your Course Guide for more information on extenuating circumstances.

STUDENT FEEDBACK AND UNIT EVALUATIONS

Students are strongly advised to speak to the lecturer as soon as possible if they have any concerns about the unit. This is the best way to ensure that the lecturer is aware of your concerns immediately and can address them as best as possible. Alternatively, students can see their Course Director.

Once a term, students may ask the student representative to raise specific issues regarding units at the Course Board meetings.

Students will be asked to complete an anonymous unit evaluation in Week 10, 11 or 12. Unit evaluations are an important part of the University's quality assurance systems and provide a valuable mechanism for obtaining student feedback and identifying ways in which the unit can be improved and updated. Unit evaluations are distributed to the Unit Coordinator, Course Director, Head of Department and the Dean of the Faculty.

7. INTRODUCTION TO STUDYING THE UNIT

7.1 Overview of the Main Content

This unit is based on a combination of informative seminars on different aspects of creative writing and on practical workshops. Students will have

an opportunity to critique and evaluate a range of short stories and writing for theatre by a variety of authors and also to present their own creative work for group discussion and evaluation. Seminars and independent study time offer students a chance to draft and revise on their own and in collaboration with their peers. The unit coordinator will also be available for email correspondence and consultation during office hours about on-going writing projects.

7.2 Overview of Types of Classes

Most classes will commence with an informal discussion of a given topic. Some time will then be given to writing exercises or to the setting of assignments. This will be followed by a group discussion of students' work.

This unit will use a range of teaching and learning methods, summarised below:

7.3 Seminars - Seminars are a place for learning through the discussion and analysis of texts, which enable students to explore key issues in detail. Seminars are also used for the development of core skills such as effective reading and discussion. Seminars are student-led and all students are expected to participate fully and to come prepared each week with questions and comments on the readings and subject matter. All students will be expected to present individual and group research in seminars. Although not formally assessed, the work done in preparing for seminar presentations is essential for successful completion of the coursework and portfolio.

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It is very easy to procrastinate when it comes to self managed learning. Just thinking about work is wasteful and miserable, and getting stuck in straight away creates genuinely 'free' time when you finish early. To be successful at university, and later in your career, you need to set deadlines for yourself and stick to them.

Break tasks up into manageable chunks and make good use of short time slots.
Make sure you prioritise your tasks – they could be:

Urgent but not important	Urgent and important
Neither urgent nor important	Important but not urgent

7.6 Effective learners complete tasks from all four boxes every day. If you only complete the urgent tasks, you will create a backlog for the future. In addition, tasks are often done more easily when they are not urgent and can be approached in a more relaxed and creative way. Remember to multi-task – it is often better to start several jobs, even if you don't finish them all, than put all your time and energy into one job.

7.7 For more information on study skills, refer to

- LSBU Learning and Development Centre Core Skills Survival Guide, available online
- LSBU Learning and Development Centre Level 1 book, Don't Panic, available online
- The LSBU Learning and Development Centre online Study Skills materials
- Or visit the Learning Development Centre in Caxton House on Borough Road.

7.8 Importance of Student Self-Managed Learning Time

It is vital all students should read the assignments before class, and the core materials are compulsory for this course. Reading leads to well informed and more provocative discussion. Students are encouraged to write and re-write material for their portfolios throughout the semester rather than leaving it to the last minute. Students are strongly encouraged to submit work for group discussion, to share their own work; receive constructive feedback; and learn from the diverse work they are exposed to.

7.9 Presentation of Portfolios

- Portfolios must be word-processed using one side of the paper only.
- Font size should be 11 or 12 pt.
- All work should be line spaced at 1.5 with enough space in the left and right margins for comments and corrections.

- Carefully proof your work before submission. Make sure that you have answered the question, you have identified the key issues clearly, you have used sufficient examples and references to support your points, the essay is well structured and ideas are appropriately linked, and the style is not too colloquial or flippant. Check the grammar and spelling carefully as errors make your work appear careless and will reduce your overall mark.
- Include a cover page which states your student identity number, your course, the name of the unit, the name of the lecturer, the title of the assignment and the due date.

Submission of Portfolios

All work must be handed in to the Student Information Centre, Room 266, on the 2nd Floor of Borough Road by the deadline. When you hand in your work you will be asked to fill out a cover sheet and be given a receipt which you must keep. If the office or the lecturer loses your essay, your receipt is proof that you handed it in. It is a good idea to keep your work on disk and as a hard copy.

8.0 Employability

This unit with its structure of workshop, seminar and independent learning and writing production, reinforces students' understanding that self-management of skills is part of the professional good practice of writers. It also helps develop critical thinking; independent working; clear verbal and written communication; problem solving; time management; planning; teamwork; and interpersonal skills.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING (PDP)

What is Personal Development Planning (PDP)?

PDP is a structured and supported process undertaken by a student to reflect upon their own learning, performance and/or achievement and to plan for their personal, educational, and career development.

Personal Development Planning is a way of articulating existing principles and practices. Academic tutors have always encouraged students to make progress towards intellectual independence, to become more self-aware, and to plan for and take responsibility for their own development. PDP makes explicit the

presence and value of established processes that are central to learning in Higher Education, and the concept that the dialogue between tutor and tutee supports not only the student's deepening understanding of their subject, but also the student's growing ability to think critically about their own performance and how to improve it.

Why is PDP important?

There are good reasons why you should do PDP, other than the fact that you are required to do so. University is not like school or college as students are expected to take greater responsibility for their own learning. Examining what is expected of you on your programme, and reflecting on where you are in relation to this, increases your chances of success. Participating in PDP can also help you gain an advantage in a competitive job market and equip you with transferable skills for lifelong learning and your chosen career.

The main aims of PDP are, therefore, to help students:

- Become more effective, independent and confident self-directed learners
- Understand how they are learning and relate their learning to a wider context
- Improve their general skills for study and career management
- Articulate their personal, education and career development goals
- Evaluate their progress towards the achievement of their goals
- Develop a positive attitude to learning throughout life

WHAT RESULTS FROM THE PDP PROCESS?

PDP RESULTS IN TWO MAIN OUTCOMES:

- THE FIRST IS ENHANCED SELF-AWARENESS OF STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES AND DIRECTIONS FOR CHANGE. THE PROCESS IS INTENDED TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND THE VALUE ADDED THROUGH LEARNING, THAT IS ABOVE AND BEYOND ATTAINMENT IN THE SUBJECTS YOU HAVE STUDIED. IT IS HOLISTIC AND RELATES TO YOUR DEVELOPMENT AS A WHOLE PERSON.

- The second outcome is a **Personal Development Record (PDR)**. The information in the record is owned by you and its maintenance, authenticity and use is your responsibility. Your PDR is the product of the PDP process. It is your property and will only be seen by yourself and your personal tutor. Your PDR is the place where you keep evidence of:

- O YOUR PERSONAL GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENTS
- O AREAS YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED FOR IMPROVEMENT
- O PLANS OF ACTION TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS
- O THE ACTIONS TAKEN TO ACHIEVE IMPROVEMENT
- O REFLECTIONS ON YOUR PROGRESS

You can maintain your Personal Development Record in any electronic or paper-based format that works for you, but it is probably best assembled as a collection of documents, notes, reports, reflective statements, feedback etc in a 3-ring binder. It is a portfolio of materials that you will use as evidence of your personal development.

What is reflection?

PDP can involve different forms of reflection and reflective learning. Reflection involves more than consideration of what we have achieved; it looks in more depth at how and why we achieve. If you can recognise this 'how' and 'why', you can capitalise on it to maximise your efficiency in many ways. Reflection is not just an add-on extra to academic learning but is an essential component of good quality learning and the representation of that learning. Reflection supports learning by providing the right conditions for learning.

A useful way to approach the process of structured self-reflection is to think about the skills you have used to succeed in certain tasks and to analyse how competent or confident you feel in using those skills. You can find more information on how to do this in the **Personal Development Planning booklet, Don't Panic**, published by the Learning Development Centre, which can be obtained from Caxton House or online at www.lsbu.ac.uk/caxton. The guide provides really useful information on surface learning and deep learning, learning strategies and principles, carrying out skills and diagnostic audits, personal

development planning tools, SMART goals, SWOT analysis as well as templates you can adapt.

PDP in this unit

In this unit, knowledge, understanding and skills will be developed through a range of teaching and learning methods, specific exercises in class seminars, in private study time, and through discussion with your Personal Tutor. During the unit you will be asked to prepare notes and a short reflective statement about yourself and your development during your first semester at LSBU. The purpose is to help you focus on your own goals and ambitions, and to help you discover areas in which you feel you need to build on your present abilities. It will also show you the areas in which you are making progress, and there will be many. You should keep all your notes in your Personal Development Record.

The Palgrave Study Guide, **Skills for Success: The Personal Development Planning Handbook** by **Stella Cottrell**, available in the Perry Library, is an excellent resource and highly recommended.

8. THE PROGRAMME OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Week One

Introductory talk: class etiquette, discussion, reading, and the writing workshop. Notebooks, the writing journal. An introduction to the idea of the authorial voice. What makes a writer's voice unique? Why this notion is important to students of creative writing. How do you find your voice? Writing exercise and setting some assignments.

Set Texts (**for this session only, supplied in class**): Anais Nin [diary extract]; 'Deliverance,' James Dickey [extract]; Flannery O'Connor, 'Writing Short Stories': Raymond Carver, 'On Writing'.

Week Two

Short fictions: a short history of the short story. What are the qualities of a short story? In what circumstances is the short story 'the right tool for the job'? The idea of the short story collection. Why might you group together particular stories: theme, characters, style. Writing assignments, group workshop and student feedback.

Set Text: Raymond Carver, *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*

Week Three

Structure: the building blocks of the story: dramatic action and time and their arrangement in the story. How do these two essential elements go together to create narrative structure? What does 'action' mean in this context? Discussion of students' work and writing exercises.

Set Text: Ernest Hemingway, *The First 49 Stories*

Week Four

One-to-one tutorials in Room 28 Caxton House. Students to bring work from classes, ideas and work in progress, to discuss contents and progress of portfolio work.

Week Five

Story and Reader/Long and Short Stories: the idea of the 'sudden' fiction. Questions of scale. Consider the reader and where she is in the story. Re-cap on the elements of a short story. Back to Flannery O'Connor and planning a short story (or not). Endings.

Writing assignments, group workshop and student feedback.

Set Text: Patricia Highsmith, *Little Tales of Misogyny*

Week Six

READING WEEK

Week Seven

A trip to the Young Vic to see a performance of *In the Red and Brown Water* this week.

Week Eight

How does the performance of a play relate to its text? How far is a director (and her actors) the 'authors' of the play? Or are they merely the instruments of the text? Is a play 'dead' on the page? Can it only live in the theatre?

Writing assignments, group workshop and student feedback.

Set Text: Tarell Alvin McCraney, *In the Red and Brown Water*

Week Nine

Blocking a scene in a play, discussion of power relations between different characters. How are these relationships manifested through dialogue?

Some theatre games. Discussion of student work in workshop.

Visit from a theatre director to discuss the interaction between directors, writers, texts and actors in the development of text for (and in) performance. Possible read through of a play.

Set Text: R.C. Sherriff, *Journey's End*

Week Ten

Students to bring all texts they are working on to small group tutorials at Room 28 Caxton House this week.

Week Eleven

Stage or screen? What is the difference between drama in the form of the play and that for the big (or small) screen? What makes a work suited to one medium or the other? Read through of some sections of the screenplay for *My Beautiful Laundrette* followed by a screening of the film.

Writing assignments, group workshop and student feedback.

Set Text: Hanif Kureishi, *My Beautiful Laundrette: Screenplay*

Week Twelve

Revision: detailed discussion one-to-one on portfolios.

9. LEARNING RESOURCES

9.1 Core Materials

Carver, R (2003) *Cathedral*. London: Vintage

Carver, R. (2003) *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*. London: Vintage

Hemingway, E (1995) *The First 49 Stories*. London: Anchor Books

Highsmith, P. (2002) *Little Tales of Misogyny*. New York: W.W. Norton

Kureishi, H. (2000) *My Beautiful Laundrette: Screenplay (Faber Reel Classics)*. London: Faber and Faber

McCraney, T.A. (2008) *In the Red and Borwn Water*. London: Faber and Faber

Sherriff, R.C. (2000) *Journey's End*. London: Penguin Books

9.2 Optional Materials

Bailey, J. (1995) *Ways with Words: BBC Guide to Creative Writing*. London: BBC Books.

Bell, J. and Magrs, P. (2001) *The Creative Writing Coursebook*. London: Macmillan.

Bishop, W. (1992) *Working Words: The Process of Creative Writing*. London: Mayfield.

Burroway, J. (2003) *Imaginative Writing: The Elements of Craft*. London: Penguin.

R. Chapman and S. Parker, 1993, *The Craft of Writing*, Oxford: OUP.

Dianne Doubtfire, 2003, *Creative Writing*, Teach Yourself series, London: Hodder.

Forster, E.M. (2005) *Aspects of the Novel*. London: Penguin Books

Steve Gooch, 2004, *Writing a Play*, London: Black.

Peter Hall, 2000, *Exposed by the Mask*, London: Oberon.

R. MeMaria, 1991, *The College Handbook of Creative Writing*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

D. Murray, 1991, *The Craft of Revision*, New York: Holt Rineheart Winston.

W. Nash and D. Stacey, 1997, *Creative Texts: An Introduction to the Study of Composition*, London: Longman.