

Eng 4040 T/R 9:30-10:45am
Advanced Fiction Workshop: The coming of age writing workshop
POLICY STATEMENT

M. Evelina Galang
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Conferences: by appointment Tuesdays 11a.m.-12:00p.m. and Thursdays 10:30-11a.m.

Required Texts: Janet Burroway's WRITING FICTION: A GUIDE TO NARRATIVE CRAFT; Lois Ann Yamanaka's WILD MEAT AND THE BULLY BURGER; Sherman Alexie's THE LONE RANGER AND TONTO FIST FIGHT IN HEAVEN; Junot Diaz's DROWN and Heather Seller's GEORGIA UNDER WATER.

Course Description: This is an advanced fiction workshop with an emphasis on stories that explore characters coming of age. Together, we'll define what it means to "come of age" as we write, read and critique stories written by published authors and writers who are in the process of becoming (you). We'll be working on your writing and reading skills, but we're also going to focus on learning to write, collaborate and critique one another's work as a community. In this workshop, learning to give critical feedback to your peers and learning to hear critical feedback concerning your work are as important as writing the stories themselves.

Intention: My intention is to give you many tools so you might write the stories you desire. It'll be up to you to trust me, to take risks, to try new tactics and to challenge yourselves. My role is to encourage your stories into being. What's yours?

Attendance: Since we not only write extensively in class, but will also discuss, workshop and revise each other's works, regular attendance is essential. You may be excused for two class periods -- no questions asked. However, further absences may result in the failure of this class.

Workshops: In-class workshops allow for peer evaluation of your work. This type of critique provides you with a reader's perspective of your writing. It also improves your ability to critique a work. Please feel free to mark your peer's manuscripts and write them a short letter at the end.

LATE PAPERS MAY RECEIVE FEEDBACK BUT WILL NOT BE GIVEN ANY CREDIT.
ALL FINAL DRAFTS AND DRAFTS TO BE WORKSHOPPED MUST BE TYPED DOUBLE-SPACED AND PAGINATED OR RISK BEING RETURNED WITHOUT CREDIT.

Portfolios: You will be required to draft and revise your works. You will also be expected to include all drafts, letters of critique as well as any notes of response to workshops and reader comments in your final portfolio. Success in this class will not be measured by a finished piece -- rather it is understood from the start that all works presented, are works in progress with the ability to grow, to change drastically and in some cases, to take chances that are not always successful. I expect writers to challenge themselves and each other, to take risks in their writing, to be willing to write badly in order to push themselves.

Journals: In preparation for stories, you will explore ideas, writing technique, memories and exercises in an electronic journal and in class, a notebook. In addition to in-class exercises, you will use your journals to record your responses to weekly reading assignments. In other words, your response will be either theoretical, or practical. We'll spend time at the beginning of each class discussing your ideas. Journal entries are due within the week they are assigned. Entries that are over a week late will not be counted. Five or more missing journals may jeopardize the journal grade and result in failure.

Conferences: The best way for me to help your writing is to work with you one on one. Try to make an appointment with me at least twice this semester.

FINAL PORTFOLIO

50% of your overall grade
Due during final exam hour

What you must include in your portfolio:

1. Self-Assessment. Worth 40% of your portfolio grade.

Assess your growth as a writer. Talk about your writing process. How did your stories evolve? What were your strength and weaknesses during this semester? How did you address them? What risks did you take? Talk about specific moments where the risks you took brought your success and/or failure. Talk about discoveries in your work, in yourself as a writer. How did you employ our readings into your writing? The importance of this section is to determine your growth as a writer, your efforts to grow as well as your actual success.

2. One Short Scene Worth 10% of your portfolio grade. The scene should contain:

- a. original draft (with my comments)
- b. revision notes
- c. revised draft

3. Two Stories Worth 50% of your portfolio grade. Each one includes:

- a.) First draft
- b.) Exercises
- c.) Peer responses
- d.) Your response to critique. Summarize the response each story garnered during workshop. What did the class suggest? After reporting what they said, respond to their critique. Did you agree or disagree? Why
- e.) Revision plan
- f.) Revised piece

GRADE BREAKDOWN:

Reading quizzes: 05%
Class Participation 25%
Journals and Writing Exercises: 20%
Portfolio: 50%

Total 100%

SYLLABUS for Fiction Workshop: The Coming of Age

WEEK ONE

August 25:

INTRODUCTIONS

- * Email Journal Entry 1: PROCESS: What is your writing process? Describe how you come up with a story idea, take notes or prewrite (if you do) through to drafting, revision and workshopping and then revision (if you do). If you have answered this question for me before, expand on your conversation about process – how has it changed or deepened since you last studied with me? Due 8/30.
- * Read Burroway text, Chapter 1.
Email Journal Entry 2: Respond to Burroway’s discussion on process. What have you tried? What is new here for you? What is your greatest fear?

WEEK TWO

August 30:

DISCUSS WRITING PROCESS

- * Email Journal Entry 3: Create an intention for you, your writing and our class. What would you like to accomplish this semester? Tell me what your writing strengths and weaknesses are. Come up with at least three personal writing goals you’d like to attain. Again, if this question is one we’ve discussed in the past, let me know how your writing has grown and what areas you are stronger in now, what areas frustrate you and what new risks will you be taking in our work this semester? Come up with three class goals you think we should work towards. Due 9/1.
 - * Come to screening of *The Opposite of Sex* Wednesday August 31st at 8PM or go to Library Reserves to screen *The Opposite of Sex* before class on September 6th.
Email Journal 4: Define the phrase “Coming of Age.” Then come up with a list of incidents or events that might invoke the person’s coming of age. Due 9/6
 - * GO TO CONVOCATION CENTER. HEAR TONI MORRISON’S CONVOCATION ADDRESS. EXTRA CREDIT POINTS FOR STANDING AT THE MIC AND ASKING HER A QUESTION.
 - * SPECIAL EMAIL JOURNAL: Choose a statement or idea that Morrison brought up during the evening and talk about how it may or may not be relevant to your writing.
- September 1
- * GOALS AND INTENTIONS DISCUSSION.
Reading Assignment: Choose at least one story from each of the four texts (so there are four stories total) and read them.
 - * Email Journal Entry 5: Write about each story and tell me what each one was about, what each character’s conflict was and how the character addressed his/her issue. Did the author of each work write a good story? Why or why not? Due 9/6.

WEEK THREE

September 6

CLASS DEFINES “COMING OF AGE”

- * Read Burroway Chapter 3, “Showing and Telling.” Starts on page 74.
- * Email Journal 6: Summarize what Burroway says in this chapter on Scene and Exposition. Define each term and what is the best way to use them. Due 9/8.

September 8

DEFINE SCENE/EXPOSITION

- * Discuss elements of Scene and Exposition in *The Opposite of Sex*.
- * **For September 13, develop a scene that illustrates a teen’s struggle with coming of age. Your scene should be about two pages long, typed and double-spaced. Bring in two copies. One for me and one for your peer. Due 9/13.**

WEEK FOUR

September 13

IN CLASS EXERCISE ON SCENE.

- * Bring in two typed copies of your Scene.
- * Read *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* for 9/20.
- * Email Journal 7: Tell me about your scene assessment. Was your scene a scene? What

- elements of the scene worked well? What elements of scene did you omit? What will you change to make the scene stronger? Due 9/15.
- * Read Burroway Chapter 4 and 5 on Characterization. Begins on page 118.
 - * Email Journal 8: Respond to the Burroway chapters on Character. What elements of character development do you practice? What areas of character development must you work on? Have you anything different to add to her conversation of character? Any challenges for Burroway? What are they? Due 9/15.
- September 15 DEFINE CHARACTER
- * Email Journal 9: How do you see the theme of Coming of Age playing out in THE LONE RANGER AND TANTO FISTFIGHT IN HEAVEN? You can choose to write about one or several characters in the book and his/her journey of coming of age. Due 9/20.
- WEEK FIVE
- September 20th DISCUSS *LONE RANGER AND TANTO FISTFIGHT IN HEAVEN* FOR CONTENT.
- * Email Journal 10: Choose a character from *Lone Ranger and Tonto* ... and a scene where he or she is caught in a dilemma. Analyze how the choice he/she makes to get out of the dilemma defines him/her. Consider the way Alexi uses elements of dialog, action, thought and appearance to develop this character.
- September 22 DISCUSS CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT IN *LONE RANGER AND TANTO FISTFIGHT IN HEAVEN*.
- * PICK UP ASSIGNMENT WHO'S COOL, WHO'S NOT? DUE SEPTEMBER 27TH. **From your list of who's cool, who's not, choose two characters and come up with two short scenes that reveal each character. Include specific details about these people – what they look like, what they sound like, how they think and act. Use sensory details to make them alive. Assign a struggle that has become integral to that character's existence and it is the struggle unfolding that reveals whether or not the character is cool or not cool. Try not to use the word cool in your two scenes. We should be able to tell from what happens and how they handle what happens. Your characters will to audition for roles in other people's stories, so make it good. Type your two scenes to fit on one page (single spaced is okay for this exercise) and bring twenty-one copies to class.**
 - * Read *GEORGIA UNDER WATER* for 10/4
- WEEK SIX
- September 27 WHO'S COOL, WHO'S NOT: THE AUDITIONS.
- * For today, bring in twenty-one copies of this assignment to class. Typed. Single space is fine.
 - * Read Burroway Chapter 2 on CONFLICT and PLOT. Begins on page 30.
 - * Email Journal 11: Respond to Burroway's discussion on Conflict and Plot. What is she saying that you agree with? What do you challenge? How do you develop the conflict and plot in your stories?
 - * **DRAFT STORY #1: Place the characters in a conflict where they are struggling to come of age (or not). This story assignment IS due October 11th.**
- September 29 DEFINE CONFLICT
- * Email Journal 12: Find three scenes in *Lone Ranger and Tonto* ... where Alexi reveals Victor or Thomas's struggles (conflict) through the choices the character must make. Discuss why you chose those scenes. Due 10/4.
- WEEK SEVEN
- October 4 DISCUSS *LRTFH* FOR CONFLICT.
- * Email Journal 13: How does *GEORGIA UNDER WATER* explore issues of coming of age. In general, describe Georgia and her conflicts.
- October 6 DISCUSS *GEORGIA UNDERS WATER* FOR CONTENT.
- * Review Burroway Chapter 2 on plot.
 - * Email Journal 14: Define Burroway's plot. What elements must be present to create a plot? What is your own relationship with plots?

WEEK EIGHT

- October 11 DISCUSS CONFLICT AND PLOT IN *GEORGIA UNDER WATER*
- * Email Journal 15: Based on the film and two books we've read thus far, how has your definition of coming of age grown or changed? How has your definition be affirmed? Use specific examples from the works we've read and seen to discuss your definition.
 - * **STORY #1 is due today. Bring in five copies (typed, double-spaced, no longer than seven pages.) Break up into five groups of four.**
 - * **Draft Story #2: A story that reveals your character's struggle to come of age. DRAFT IS DUE 11/1.**
- October 13 IN CLASS, DISCUSS AND EXPLORE PLOT AND STRUCTURE. Talk about plot in *GEORGIA UNDER WATER*.
- * Email Journal 16: **Mid Term Check In:** Email me about: (1) Your progress in the class thus far. Are you meeting the goals you set up at the beginning of the semester? Are you keeping up with the writing and revision as well as the reading in the course? Are you taking risks in your writing? How have you grown? What areas need your attention? (2) Your perceptions of coming of age. How has it changed or grown as the semester moves on? (3) Looking at the criteria and expectations in this course, if you had to give yourself a grade today, what would it be? Why?
 - * Read peer two peer stories for workshop.
 - * Read *Drown* for 10/25.

WEEK NINE

- October 18 WORKSHOP STORY #1 (TWO OF FOUR AUTHORS) FOR SCENE/CHARACTER/CONFLICT
- * For 10/20, read two peer stories for workshop.
 - * Email Journal 17: **AUTHORS:** Email a summary and response to your workshop. What did you agree with? Disagree with? What will you do to revise the piece? What problems, if any did you have with your workshop? **READERS:** What worked well in the stories you read? What commonalities (other than themes) did you see occurring in the stories? What did you learn about craft and your process as you read and critiqued your peers' works?
- October 20 WORKSHOP STORY #1 (REMAINING TWO AUTHORS).
- * Email Journal 18: **AUTHORS:** Email a summary and response to your workshop. What did you agree with? Disagree with? What will you do to revise the piece? What problems, if any did you have with your workshop? **READERS:** What worked well in the stories you read? What commonalities (other than themes) did you see occurring in the stories? What did you learn about craft and your process as you read and critiqued your peers' works?

WEEK TEN

- October 25 DISCUSS *DROWN* FOR CONTENT
- * Email Journal 19: Choose a story from *Drown* and break down the plot. In a chain of events that create a relationship of cause and effect, map out the plot to the story and critique it for how well or not so well Diaz structures "what happens" and "how it happens" in the story. Due 10/27.
- October 27 DISCUSS STORIES IN *DROWN* FOR STRUCTURE
- * Email Journal 20: Make a plot diagram of your Story #2. Bring it to next class 11/1.

WEEK ELEVEN

- November 1 STRUCTURE IN YOUR STORY #2
- * (Bring in a draft of Story #2. We're working on the ms. in class)
 - * Email Journal 21: What have you learned about the way you used plot in Story #2? What will change to make the story move?
 - * Read Burroway text Chapters 7&8 for POINT OF VIEW. Begins on page 254.
 - * Email Journal 22: Respond to this chapter in Burroway. In the past, what problems have you had with point of view? What success? What confuses you about point of view?

- November 3 **DEFINE POINT OF VIEW.**
 * Email Journal 23: Choose one of the pieces from either *Lone Ranger and Tonto ...* or *Drown* and rewrite one of the scenes from another point of view. Look at how the details change and how the focus also changes. You can change the point of view to another character from the book or to a total stranger who is witnessing the same scene from an outsider's perspective. Due next class period.
 * Read *Wild Meat And The Bully Burger* for 11/8.
 Burroway Chapter 6 on SETTING for 11/8. Begins on page 198.
 * Email Journal 24: Do you agree with Burroway's conscious use of setting? How have you used setting to further plot and conflict in your own stories?

WEEK TWELVE

- November 8 **DISCUSS WILD MEAT AND THE BULLY BURGER FOR CONTENT**
 * Email Journal 25: 1. How does the choice of point of view determine the plot in Yamanaka's *WMBB*?
 * **REVISE STORY #2 based on what you learned regarding point of view, setting, plot, character development, conflict and scene. FIVE COPIES OF STORY #2 ARE DUE 11/22. Break into five groups of four.**
 November 10 **DISCUSS WMBB FOR POV**
 * Email Journal 26: 1. Revise a scene from your Story #2 in another POV (first, second, or third OR another character). 2. Talk about how that changes story's intentions, tone or actions. 3. Argue for or against your story's current pov. Take into consideration some of the pros and cons that come with different pov.

WEEK THIRTEEN

- November 15 **DEFINE SETTING**
 * Email Journal 27: If Yamanaka were to take the themes of this story and relocated them anywhere else in America and during any other time period, would the story change? Why or why not?
 November 17 **DISCUSS WILD MEAT AND THE BULLY BURGER FOR SETTING.**
 * Email Journal 28: How do you utilize setting in your stories to enhance character struggles and character choices (do you)?

WEEK FOURTEEN

- November 22 **EXCHANGE STORY #2 WITH PEERS**
 * READ Story #2 of two of four authors for 11/29 Workshop.

November 24 NO CLASS THANKSGIVING BREAK

WEEK FIFTEEN

- November 29 **WORKSHOP STORY #2, TWO OF FOUR AUTHORS**
 * Read Story #2, Remaining Authors for 12/1 workshop.
 * Email Journal 29: Summarize and respond to your workshop. What did you agree with? Disagree with? What will you do to revise the piece? What problems, if any did you have with your workshop?
 December 1: **WORKSHOP STORY #2, REMAINING TWO AUTHORS.**
 * Email Journal 30: Email a summary and response to your workshop. What did you agree with? Disagree with? What will you do to revise the piece? What problems, if any did you have with your workshop?

PORTFOLIOS DUE December 08, 8AM-10:30. LOCATION: GALANG Apartment, Hecht Resident Hall PT 113.