

Writing 4880F/English 4871F (Fall 2024)
Seminar in Creative Writing

Course description and objectives

This isn't a theory course. Some background in literary theory might help, but this course is neither a replacement for a theory course nor a course that requires any prior knowledge of theory. Think of it as a series of creative writing assignments with different kind of constraints, much like constraints of form in composing a villanelle or a sonnet. We will read passages from over 2000 years of theoretical work, ranging from such thinkers as Aristotle and Longinus to Gerard Genette, from classical considerations of rhetoric to discussions of what constitutes the fantastic. The graded work of the course will be four creative exercises in different genres based on our critical readings, and the objective is to become better writers by having more tools at our disposal.

Required texts

None. Everything that I'd like you to read will be available on the course website, and we won't be reading all that much. We will, in addition to considering theoretical approaches, read some shorter works (poetry and prose) that model the effects we are trying to achieve.

Learning outcomes

We'll talk more about learning outcomes for individual modules, but this course can be reduced to two:

1. Students will become, if not better writers, at least better equipped to consider their options as writers.
2. Students will improve as members of a writing community.

Recommended texts

Should you have time and wish to read some works that will help you with two of the modules in the course, you might read Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw* and William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*

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