

Rachel Basch

## **From Reader to Writer: A Fiction Writing Workshop**

### **WRITING**

We will begin the semester with brief, weekly writing exercises (1-2 pages). Later in the term each student will write two short stories (approximately 15 pages) for workshop discussion.

We will establish a fixed schedule for “workshopping” student writing at the start of the semester. Student writing will be distributed via email five days prior to the date the material is to be discussed in class. All work is to be typed, double spaced. And all student submissions are to be printed out by the members of the workshop.

### **READING**

*From Where You Dream: The Process of Writing Fiction* by Robert Olen Butler

Publisher: Grove Press; Reprint edition (January 9, 2006)

ISBN-10: 0802142575

*Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft* by Janet Burroway and Elizabeth Stuckey French

Publisher: Pearson; 8th edition (January 13, 2010)

ISBN-10: 0205750346

ISBN-13: 978-0205750344

**N.B. This book is ridiculously expensive. Any edition will be fine. Try to find a used copy of an older edition.**

**Course Packet** (To be provided by the instructor at the first class. Cost not to exceed \$25) Containing stories by:

Bloom, Bush, Carver, Chabon, Cheever, Cunningham, Doctorow, Ferris, Gallant, Jen Jones, Joyce, Kincaid, Lahiri, McDermott, Moore, Munro, Pritchett, Roth, Russell, Salinger, Singer, Strout, Updike, Welty, Williams, Wolff and Trevor

Reading assignments and writing exercises will be given at each class meeting. If you should miss a class, please contact another student about the reading assignment and the writing exercise.

A note on the reading: In this course, we will be attempting to read as writers. Our chief aim in examining published work will not be the identification of symbols or the analysis of themes. Rather, we will be reading in order to learn how to write. We will be approaching stories as apprentice craftsmen. We will be dismantling stories and inspecting their component parts - voice, tone, mood, character, dialogue, etc.

## **PARTICIPATION**

This class will be run as a workshop. As a member of this cooperative, each student is entitled to a careful and considerate reading of his or her work. Along with that entitlement comes an obligation. Everyone is expected to come to class having read and considered the work to be discussed that day. You will be responsible for a detailed written commentary on each of your fellow students' manuscripts. Your job in this course is to function as both writer and editor.

## **GRADING**

**Given the structure of this course, attendance and class participation are crucial.**

If you miss more than one class, your grade will be reduced by five points (e.g., a B becomes a B-). If attendance is problematic for you, you could easily end up with a failing grade in this course.

**Class participation will count for 40% of your total grade. Each student is expected to come to class ready and willing to share her/his ideas on what is to be discussed that day.**

## **HELP**

Writing can be a lonely business. As you embark on the longer work assigned for the class, you may find yourself in need of some additional guidance. I'm happy to meet with you prior to class and/or to talk with you over the phone or via email.