

Special Topics: Writing Process

SPRING, 1985
Tuesday, 4:30 - 8:30

Instructor: Dr. Carolyn Mamchur
Location: On Campus

It is the principle purpose of this course to improve the writing skills of the participants. It is the underlying belief of the instructor that a process oriented approach is superior to any remedial/diagnostic approach to improve the participant's writing skills.

Students will be asked to concentrate their writing on those subjects they know about, care about, and can communicate. The first two aspects involve an introspective, subjective orientation; the latter, an objective style-related, audience-aware-orientation.

The format of the course shall consist of:

- 1) brief, demonstration lectures in which expectations will be made clear, various methodoligies will be presented, and specific writing skills will be illustrated.
- 2) workshops in which students will learn a) to recognize their own writing style preferences (using Insights as a guide) b) to develop a new comprehension skill, that of reading as a writer. (journals will be kept to aid in achieving this end)
- 3) weekly in and out of class writing sessions in which a first draft copy will be produced - the point of the exercise being to find one's own voice, to write from one's own perspective. A variety of writing gendres will be attempted.
- 4) seminar sessions in which the revision procedure occurs, during which the instructor and the other students are available in a structured setting to work out technical problems.

Ideally, students will learn to become independent editors of their own work. It is an expectation of the instructor that these four aspects of writing should be experienced each week by students:

Ideation: forming of ideas
Immersion: becoming immersed in the topic
Incubation: the time for reflection
Interaction: sharing of results

This requires a careful pacing of time, with energy put each day on the assignments. Thinking is the MOST IMPORTANT aspect of writing.

Being a process-oriented course, precise assignments cannot be determined in advance, but will grow and of the needs and interests of the students as made apparent from the way assignments are completed. It is a general expectation that ten pieces will be attempted and three completed at an acceptable level, in which the writer communicates with clarity and impact.

All phases of the writing process - prewriting/writing/rewriting will be explored, and students will be expected to attempt all these phases. However, students should be satisfied with mastering the most difficult stage, the pre-writing stage which involves - finding a subject, - focussing, - awareness of audience.

The following grading system will be suggested:

- C - attendance and active participation in all classes, with each assignment being attempted.
- B - the above, plus three pieces of writing completed as a finished product, (the quality of which must be deemed acceptable by the instructor).
- A - in addition to the requirements needed to earn a B, the student is expected to complete a wild card project, designed to meet his/her own particular needs and interests. A contract negotiated between instructor and student accomodates this process.

Texts (Required)

Mamchur, Carolyn Insights
Murray, Donald A Writer Teaches Writing