



**ENG 211—Creative Writing
Elite Learning—Spring 2019**
Supporting Schools: MECC SVCC VHCC WCC

Southwest Virginia Education and Training Network

Instructor: David S. Burns

Office/Office Hours: M-F 3:20-3:45 p.m. by phone, or anytime by email.

Telephone: Northwood High School Phone: 276-496-7751

Email/Messaging: the easiest way to contact me is via a message through Moodle. On average, I will check my account four times per school day, meaning that if you message me, you will usually get a response within five to six hours. Alternatively, you may email me at davidburns@scsb.org.

Class Meeting Times: this course is asynchronous, which means that you may log in at any time, day or night. At a minimum, you are expected to log in once per school day.

Catalog Description: Creative Writing (3 credits): Introduces the student to the fundamentals of writing imaginatively. Students write in forms to be selected from poetry, fiction, drama, and essays.

Prerequisite: ENG 112 or divisional approval. A prerequisite means students are not allowed to take this course unless they have successfully completed English 111 and English 112. The only exceptions will be students who have successfully completed English 111, enrolled in English 112, and receive division approval from the community college. Parents and/or students should speak to their school's guidance counselor to make sure that qualifications have been met.

Students that successfully complete this course will earn 3 hours of college credit.

Textbooks/Supplies: None. All course materials are provided in Moodle by the Instructor.

Teaching Methods/Instructional Delivery: Instruction will be delivered in two ways: first, the class as a whole will receive indirect instruction via videos, unit notes, and regular class updates in the course news feed. Second, you will receive direct, one on-one instruction in the form of written notes and responses to all of your writing assignments, including long works, journals, and forum posts. These responses will be delivered to you within approximately seven school days after the close of each unit.

As you write, you will also be asked to share your draft material with other students in the class, and use feedback from others to aid you in the revision and review of your work. Your responses will be evaluated for quality and quantity: you are expected to post meaningful and insightful critical responses based on specified criteria in each response assignment. By posting and responding to each other's work, it is my hope that you will create a virtual "writing circle," getting and giving constructive criticism on your writing assignments.

The course will culminate in the submission of an original portfolio, featuring works in a number of different writing styles and forms.

Technology Requirements: Students are required to complete and submit assignments by using Moodle, the learning management system for Elite Learning. The course is accessible at www.svetn.org. Students will need use of the Internet for all coursework. Access to word processing software is also required.

Technical Support: Technical problems are not common but occur from time-to time. To receive prompt support, students must submit a trouble ticket by going to www.svetn.org, and then selecting the “Contact” tab. The trouble ticket form will be distributed to the informational support team. You should receive a response within 24 hours (usually much sooner). After you have submitted the trouble ticket, please send me a message to let me know what problems you are having.

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives: The goal of this course is to improve your skills as a writer, by completing each of the following units:

UNIT ONE: Biographical Narrative (Weeks 1-3)

Objective: to compose and evaluate a 1st person narrative, developing the student’s personal writing voice.

UNIT TWO: Satirical Narrative (Week 4)

Objective: to compose and evaluate a parody essay or story, using the conventions of literary satire.

UNIT THREE: Short Story (Comedic Themes) (Weeks 5-6)

Objective: to compose and evaluate a comedic narrative using 1st or 3rd person point of view.

UNIT FOUR: Short Story (Tragic Themes) (Weeks 7-8)

Objective: to compose and evaluate a comedic narrative using 1st or 3rd person point of view.

UNIT FIVE: Poetry I (Figurative Language and Rhyme) (Weeks 9-10)

Objective: to demonstrate the use of various forms of figurative language and rhyme schemes in poetry.

UNIT SIX: Poetry II (Meter and Styles) (Weeks 11-12)

Objective: to compose and evaluate various forms of metered poetry, including sonnets, haiku, and free verse.

UNIT SEVEN: Drama (Weeks 13-16)

Objective: to compose, appraise, and revise a one-act play, using the format and conventions of modern playwrighting.

UNIT EIGHT: Final Exam Portfolio (Weeks 17-18)

Objective: to combine knowledge and skills acquired in this course through instruction, instructor feedback, and peer review, and to utilize these skills in the composition of a final portfolio.

Method of Evaluating Student Achievement (Grading Policy and Scale):

Your final course grade will be averaged as follows:

Activities = 15%
Workshops = 20%
Forums = 15% Writing
Projects = 50%

Each assignment in this course is graded on a ten-point scale:

100-90 % = A
89-80 % = B
79-70 % = C
69-60 % = D
59 % or less = F

Grades will be reported to your community college in the form of a letter, not a percentage, using the scale above.

Grades will be reported to your high school with a numeric grade; assignment of a final letter grade for high school credit will be at determined at the discretion of the school.

Grading Criteria for College Writing: "A" writing is excellent, exceptional. It has the same qualities as "B" writing, but with some special concentration or intensity. It is more efficient, tighter in its logic, packed with meaning, and aware of the magic of language.

"B" means good. "B" writing is clear, and it has enough supporting details and examples to satisfy a reader's curiosity, and to develop the main idea. It seems to come from the writer's true thoughts and feelings, though sincerity is hard to judge. Finally, it seems to be worked out, to move from beginning to end without blips and glitches.

"C" is average. It is not an insult. The average writer in a beginning composition course can write coherent sentences, which is an important achievement. A frequent mark of the "C" is lack of development, not going far enough or deep enough, not providing reasons or details or examples or whatever the topic needs. Frequently, the writer of the "C" paper says, after receiving the grade, "If I'd put more into it, I could've done better." Frequently, that's true. A "C" paper often has minor problems that are distracting. A word is repeated seven times in one paragraph, or a paragraph may include sentences that don't work well together, or there may be an occasional verb problem.

Most "D" papers seem careless, though sometimes they seem that way only because the writer is following rules which are different from the rules of standard English. "I seen him" and "He don't know" are examples. Often "D" papers are not divided into paragraphs. The appetizer, the salad, the meat, and the pie are all on the plate at the same time. Many "D" papers are

extremely short, and sometimes they seem to be based on an incomplete understanding of the assignment. “F” papers in no way meet the standards of college writing.

Attendance and Late Work Policy: It is your responsibility to be logged on each and every school day. Students are expected to work on course assignments for a minimum of 60 minutes per school day. If you are absent or unable to log on, please send a message explaining your absence as soon as possible. If you do not log on for more than three school days in a row, your guidance counselor will be contacted.

This is a college course, and you are expected to plan ahead for due dates and give yourself plenty of time to complete all work: do not wait until the last minute. For example, if a writing assignment is open for an entire week, but you wait until ten minutes before the assignment closes and experience a technical problem, you will not be given an extension because ample time was provided for you to submit your work.

Late work will not be accepted unless a documented excuse (illness, family emergency, etc.) is provided by your school’s guidance counselor or administrative staff. Please be aware that SVETN’s schedule requires that we adhere to deadlines, even when schools are closed. If you have internet access at home, continue to log in and participate in class even if your school is closed. If you do not have home internet access, it is your responsibility to inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

How to be Successful in this Course:

1. Read all assignments and informational documents carefully.
2. Ask questions; I am more than happy to help at any time.
3. Plan ahead, using a calendar. Do not put off long term assignments until the last minute.
4. Turn in all work by the deadlines. Late work will not be accepted without a documented excuse.
5. Plan for technical problems. If an assignment is due on Monday by 11:59 p.m., do not wait until 11:57 p.m. to try to submit the work and risk dealing with a technical issue.

Logging In: At least once every school day, you should log on to Moodle and perform three tasks:

1. Check your inbox for new messages.
2. Check for new course announcements under “Latest News.”
3. Check the calendar under “Upcoming Events,” to see what work is due.

You should then proceed to work on the assignments within the current unit. At the beginning of the course, only Unit One (Weeks 1-3) will be accessible. New units will become available as the course progresses.

Submitting Work: All assignments for this course, other than quizzes and forum posts in Moodle, must be submitted as files saved using Microsoft Word or an equivalent word processing software format (such as Google Docs).

All file names should contain your name and the name of the assignment. For example: Jane Doe - Short Story Final Draft

All work should be written in Times New Roman 12-point font, double-spaced, and have one-inch margins. Please put your name, my name, the class name, and the date of submission in the upper left-hand corner of the first page of each assignment.

For example:

Jane Doe

Mr. Burns

English 211

March 1, 2019

When you click on a writing assignment in Moodle, you will see an upload bar, with a browse button to search for your file. First click on “browse,” then find your file on your computer, and then click on “upload this file.”

Using School Appropriate Language and Imagery: Because your work is going to be read by your fellow students and submitted for a class grade, please refrain from using obscene or explicit language or imagery in your works.

Providing Constructive Criticism: During this course, you will be asked to provide constructive feedback to your fellow students. Here are some simple rules to keep our discussions friendly and productive:

First, never attack the writer. Remember that it is okay to critique someone’s written work, but you should not make your critiques personal.

Unacceptable: Your main character gets into a fight, and he doesn’t even react. I don’t think that you are a very good writer.

Acceptable, but unhelpful: I don’t think that this character’s reaction to the fight is believable. That might be something to work on.

Constructive Criticism: I think that this character might be improved if he reacted more realistically after the fight scene on page three. Maybe instead of being unaffected by the fight, he should show some emotional reaction.

Also, try to pair two compliments with a suggestion. Whenever critiquing someone else’s work, try to point out not only what you didn’t like, but what you did like, as well.

Instead of “I don’t think that this character is believable,” try, “I like your plot, and some of the characters are really interesting, but this one, in particular, is a bit unbelievable.”

Of course, you are not going to like every piece that you read, but with a little effort, you can probably come up with something nice to say about everyone’s writing, even if it is only, “nice effort!”

Additionally, strive to avoid personal bias. Provide feedback based on what the writer was trying to accomplish, not on your own personal preferences. For example, don’t read a story

about alligators and criticize the work because it wasn't about football. Just judge how well the writer wrote about the subject he/she chose, not what you wish they had chosen.

Finally, try to take criticism well. We may all like to think that our work is perfect, but it almost never is, so don't be offended when others provide constructive criticism; instead, thank them for helping to make your work that much better!

Journaling: With any online class, there will be times when you have finished all current assignments and are waiting for new tasks to be assigned. During these down periods, you are to keep a running journal that will be turned in at intervals throughout the semester. Journals may include your own original diary entries, random thoughts, poems, song lyrics, ideas for stories or characters, movie/television/book/music reviews, etc.

All journaling should be saved in a single file, as "Your Name - Journal"

You will be required to submit your journal file during Unit Three, Unit Five, and Unit Seven. You are expected to write approximately two full pages per week in your journal.

INFORMATION LITERACY: Information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information. Information literacy also is increasingly important in the contemporary environment of rapid technological change and proliferating information resources. Because of the escalating complexity of this environment, individuals are faced with diverse, abundant information choices--in their academic studies, in the workplace, and in their personal lives. Information is available through libraries, community resources, special interest organizations, media, and the Internet--and increasingly, information comes to individuals in unfiltered formats, raising questions about its authenticity, validity, and reliability. In addition, information is available through multiple media, including graphical, aural, and textual, and these pose new challenges for individuals in evaluating and understanding it. The uncertain quality and expanding quantity of information pose large challenges for society. The sheer abundance of information will not in itself create a more informed citizenry without a complementary cluster of abilities necessary to use information effectively.

Information literacy forms the basis for lifelong learning. It is common to all disciplines, to all learning environments, and to all levels of education. It enables learners to master content and extend their investigations, become more self-directed, and assume greater control over their own learning. An information literate individual is able to:

- Determine the extent of information needed
- Access the needed information effectively and efficiently
- Evaluate information and its sources critically
- Incorporate selected information into one's knowledge base
- Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally

Avoiding Plagiarism: Plagiarism is using word for word, or in substance, someone else's words or ideas without giving the original author proper credit. Typical acts of plagiarism include:

1. Copying someone else's homework.
2. Turning in work previously submitted by another student or to another teacher.
3. Copying from a classmates' quiz or test.
4. Copying out of a book or from a webpage without introducing the source and putting direct quotes into quotation marks.

Plagiarism is a very serious offense. It is not only cheating, but it is also a form of theft that is just as punishable in the real world as it is in school. Fortunately, plagiarism is relatively easy to avoid, with a bit of diligence. To avoid plagiarism, you should,

A. *Never use someone else's words without putting them into quotation marks, and attributing the quotation to a source, like this:*

According to Shakespeare in *As You Like It*, "all the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players" (II.vii.139-140).

B. *Always acknowledge the source of an idea, even if you put the idea into your own words, like this:*

Shakespeare argued in *As You Like It* that we are all just actors in a great, big, universal play (II.vii.139-140).

Refer to an online MLA citation resource (such as Purdue's Online Writing Lab, <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>, or Citation Machine at <http://citationmachine.net>) for more information if you choose to quote from a source. More detailed instruction will be provided when we begin working on papers that require the incorporation of research.

Students committing any act of plagiarism will receive a grade of zero for that assignment.

Additional sanctions may be imposed if the Honor Code violation is severe. Violations may be reported to the community college, as all violations are also a violation of the Honor Code of your local community college.

Academic Integrity: Each student will be bound by the academic codes of their school. Any violations will be reported to the student's school for appropriate disciplinary action. Cheating will not be tolerated. Because these courses are considered college courses, each student is considered a responsible adult, and will face the consequences of their chosen actions. It is assumed that students will maintain standards of conduct appropriate to membership in Elite Learning as well as the community college. Emphasis is placed on standards of student conduct rather than on limits or restrictions. Guidelines and regulations governing student conduct are developed by the Elite Learning faculty, staff, and administration. More detailed information is found in the *Elite Learning Student Guide*.

Saving Your Work: Please backup all work and save it until after you have received your final course grade, in case of hardware or software failure.

Students with Disabilities: Students who participate in this class are also high school students. Each high school has resources available for students with disabilities (IEP). Please contact the guidance counselor at your school to request academic accommodations. Each community college also has the Office of Student Services, which may be able to provide additional services. A representative from your school (guidance counselor) may make a request for services at the college. That office will evaluate the request and make recommendations for appropriate and reasonable accommodations, which the student will provide to the instructor. Please contact your guidance counselor or SVETN for more information.

VHCC Only: The policy of VHCC will be followed. You may find this information on the college website. You are encouraged to discuss any special problems, needs or accommodations with the instructor during the first week of class. If you have a disability or other need for reasonable accommodation in order to successfully complete the requirements of this course, please contact ACA Coordinator, Karen Kilgore, to discuss this matter confidentially. (ISC Room 120, kkilgore@vhcc.edu, 739-2561. Office hours M-F 8:30-5:00).

Emergency Policy: Follow all emergency policies for your home school. In the event of a **college-wide emergency**, course requirements, classes, deadlines, and grading schemes are subject to changes that may include alternative delivery methods, alternative methods of interaction with the instructor, class materials, and/or classmates, a revised attendance policy, and a revised semester calendar and/or grading scheme.

It is critical that all students read the Elite Learning Guide for Students. This guide is located at www.svetn.org as well as within your course. Contact Dawn Stafford, SVETN Executive Director, if you have questions or concerns.

NOTE: This is a hybrid document, created through collaboration between the instructor, SVETN, and the various accrediting community colleges. If you have any questions about course or college policies, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Burns or your college.

Course syllabus and schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.