



Southwest Virginia Education and Training Network

Creative Writing

Elite Learning—Fall 2022

Contact Information

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 Canvas. 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.

Course Description: Creative Writing introduces students to the fundamentals of writing imaginatively. Students write in forms to be selected from poetry, fiction, drama, and essays.

Textbooks/Supplies: None. All course materials are provided in Canvas 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 will be required to complete and submit assignments by using Canvas, the learning management system for Elite Learning. Students will need use of the Internet for all coursework. Google Docs, or an equivalent free word processing software, should be used for all writing assignments.

Technical Support: Technical problems are not common but occur from time-to-time. Students should refer to the *How to Receive Technical Support* document to receive prompt support. This document is found in the *Elite Learning Guide for Students*. You should receive a response within 24 hours (usually much sooner). After you have submitted a trouble ticket, please send me an email or message to let me know what problems you are having.

Method of Evaluating Student Achievement (Grading Policy and Scale): Your final course grade will be averaged as follows:

Weekly Writing Assignments = 50%
Classwork Activities (Forums, Peer Review Workshops, etc.)= 25%
Final Portfolio = 5%
Midterm Exam = 10%
Final Exam = 10%

Each assignment in this course is graded on the following scale:

100-93 % = A
92-85 % = B
84-77 % = C
76-70 % = D
69 % or less = F

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

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.

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. Plan accordingly if you will be out of school on trips. All work must be completed before leaving for a school trip to prevent them from being late. Due dates are located on the calendar and throughout the course.

If you do not turn in an assignment on the deadline, you will be allowed to submit it with point deductions for one week (exceptions may apply). For example: If an assignment is due on August 10, you will have until August 17 to submit it for partial credit. There will be an automatic 25-point deduction for all late submissions.

- Sue doesn't turn in her work by the August 10 deadline. On August 11, the instructor posts the following into Sue's gradebook: *"This assignment was due on August 10 but not submitted. You may submit the work until August 17 with a 25-point deduction."*
- Sue turns in her work three days late. After grading the assignment, her instructor believes it is quality work. He assigns her a 90, but he then deducts 25 points because the assignment was late. Sue will see a 65 in the gradebook. Students will be made aware of the last day to submit the assignment within the gradebook.
- If Sue doesn't turn in her assignment by the final deadline, she will see the following statement in her gradebook: *"This assignment is now closed. It was not submitted by the final deadline. You may no longer submit this assignment for a grade. Previous message: This assignment was due on August 10 but not submitted. You may submit the work until August 17 with a 25-point deduction."*

Exceptions to the late work policy will only be allowed IF a documented excuse is provided by your school's guidance counselor or administrative staff (illness, family emergency, etc.). Message the teacher if problems occur so they can be handled on a one-on-one basis. 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.

Elite Learning Inclement Weather or School Closure Policy: Asynchronous online courses have many advantages over the traditional classroom. Among those advantages are the availability of the instructor, the opportunity to "attend" class from many locations, the flexibility of schedule, and no make-up days due to snow. To provide the required amount of "seat-time" for students, Elite Learning instructors will continue to present class material and require assignment submissions. When some schools are temporarily closed, it is necessary to require a continuation of assigned work even if students are absent from school due to weather or school closures. It is the responsibility of the student to access the class via the Internet during this type of absence. *Students without Internet access beyond school hours will need to discuss this with their instructor at the beginning of the semester.* This policy will also be in place due to Covid-19 school closures or any other unexpected closures.

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

- Check your inbox for new messages.
- Check for new course announcements.
- Check the course calendar to see what work is due soon.

You should then proceed to work on the assignments within the current module. At the beginning of the course, only the first module will be accessible. New modules will become available as the course progresses.

Submitting Work: Many of the assignments in this course, such as forum posts, will be completed in Canvas. Long-form writing projects, however, should be submitted as files

saved using Google Docs, or an equivalent word processing software format (such as MS Word).

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

Creative Writing

September 5, 2022

When you click on a writing assignment in Canvas, 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 weeks three, six, nine, twelve, and fifteen. You are expected to write approximately 1-2 full pages per week in your journal.

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:

- Copying someone else's homework.
- Turning in work previously submitted by another student or to another teacher.
- Copying a classmate's quiz or test answers.
- 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,

1. 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).
2. 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.

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.

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. It is assumed that students will maintain standards of conduct appropriate to membership in Elite Learning. 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: Each high school has resources available for students with disabilities (IEP). Please contact the guidance counselor at your school to request academic accommodations. You may also SVETN for more information.

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