

**The Art of Storytelling: Memoir/Memory, Poetry, Prose, Plays & Fiction**  
**E66-08 Writing for Media aka Writing Workshop (First Years )**  
**EW3-17: Writing Workshop (Advanced Version Coming for Second Years)**

Instructor: Derrick Brown

Email:[derrickweston.brown@gmail.com](mailto:derrickweston.brown@gmail.com)

Classroom: 252 & 253

M-W-F 2:00PM-3:30 (2<sup>nd</sup> Years) M-W-F: 3:30-4:50pm (First Years)

“They ask me to remember, but they want me to remember their memories, and I keep on remembering mine.” –*Lucille Clifton, Poet. Why People Be Mad At Me Sometimes.*

There is nothing like a good story. A good story, whether it is fiction or fact, can keep us glued to our seats, just as well as any suspenseful film or breaking news report. A good story can creep up from anywhere and snatch your attention swiftly or it can slowly pull you in like a fisherman’s rod and reel, and you have taken the bait. Before books, before the written word, information was transferred orally. Storytellers, bards, minstrels and griots were, prized in their communities not only for their memory, but also for their storytelling skills. A good story is one thing, but without a skilled storyteller and without a skilled writer, no matter how compelling the story, if it fails to reach the reader or the listener and hold their attention, then its as if the story has never been told.

“Tis strange- but true; for truth is always strange; Stranger than fiction; if it could be told.” –*Lord Byron. Don Juan*

This quote above, in its modern form simply means that sometimes, “The truth is stranger than fiction.” Some of the best fairy tales, folk tales, and epic fictional novels are born from the boundless imaginations of writers. But many times, reading about the actual lives and experiences of others can be just as exciting, shocking, frightening, and unbelievable as fictional stories. There are millions of true stories out there; in autobiographies, in biographies, memoirs, and anthologies, that are just as amazing as any fictional tales, but the question remains, how did these stories make it to the same shelves as the fictional ones? Why are they compelling and how do you begin to tell, write or share such a personal story?

Writing about the self can be both challenging and enlightening, this Creative Writing Course will utilize the practice of oral storytelling, personal narrative, and various writing tools used in the areas Creative Writing, to help you, to write, recite, and present compelling stories across all genres. Whether, Fiction, Poetry, Creative Non-Fiction or Monologues, students will explore the creative processes and structural elements of said genres and others, in order to hone their own abilities to tell their own stories. We will also have guest artists visiting our class to share their work and discuss their craft and roles as community storytellers. I’ll be giving you information about them, prior to their visits, so it is important that you are aware of their work and prepared to ask them questions.

### **Course Requirements:**

Class participation will count for a portion of your final grade. But that's the easiest portion you'll ever earn. All you have to do is come to class **on time** and participate in the in-class writing exercises, class discussions, and make yourself an **active** and **vocal** presence in the class. There won't be much take home work to do either. You will need to create a Google docs folder and a journal to use for both in class writing, out of class writing and collecting your work. **Keep in mind, that any take home work from handouts or in class writings will need to be turned into a Word.doc or Google doc. and available for me to access at my request.**

### **Revision, Revision, Revision**

This is a Creative Writing Class. But also keep in mind that as writers, you are striving to make your work better. When you turn work into me, I will go over your writings and provide comments and suggestions on elements of your pieces that I feel need work. I will return them and provide a **deadline** letting you know when an updated or revised version of your writings need to be turned in. **Missing a deadline means you lose class points, which means your grade for the day is lowered as well. Keep this in mind. However, there will be opportunities to get points back. Stay tuned.**

### **In-Class Peer-to-Peer Critique/Visiting Artists (Every Fri or Every other Friday)**

You are a part of a Writing Community and that means you need to become both familiar with giving constructive critique, accepting constructive critique and reading in front of your peers and audiences larger than your parents, friends or loved ones. That said, specific Fridays will be designated for in class critique and sharing of new work and work that needs a critical eye beyond your own.

Set up a [\*\*Dropbox Account\*\*](#): This is to insure that all work done in class via laptop, pad or phone can be saved automatically so work is not lost and is easily retrievable or make sure ALL work is saved to your Google Docs Account.

### **Responsibilities**

This class is an interactive class and class participation is important. In fact, most of the work we will do, we'll do in class. So you have to be present, aware, and involved. Class participation will count for **a strong majority** of your grade as will in-class writing. This is the easy part. But all you have to do is come to class, on time, participate in the in-class writing exercises, engage in class discussions, and make yourself an **active** and **vocal** presence in class.

Homework will mostly consist of taking home in-class writing we've started in class and your goal will be to revise what you've written and bring back completed drafts. If you prefer to write drafts by hand, you must at least convert them to a Google Doc form or take a picture of said written work and save it to Google docs as a Pdf or JPEG if you have your phone.

**I also accept work that is emailed or submitted to me through Google Docs.. However if I do not receive the assignment in my inbox by the designated time or deadline, it will be considered late and or incomplete.**

**One thing about smart phones;** I tolerate their presence in my class when they are used constructively. Therefore, be prepared to use them as reference tools to look up important information to aid our class room discussions and in-class assignments. Your phones will be returned to you if the lesson for the day permits the use of a smart phone. Texting or talking on phones during class will not be tolerated. Phones will be collected at the beginning of class and are available during the mid-period break and at the end of class except when used as reference tools. When you come into my class please mute your phones completely.

### **Submissions**

All poems handwritten, or typed into your phone, or **otherwise must be saved in a Microsoft Word file.** Do not send it to me in the body of an email. I want a document. I'll accept Google Docs as well.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

- 1. CRITICAL ANALYSIS:** Demonstrate critical writing, reading, discussion and thinking ,through the exploration and evaluation of ideas presented in poetry and a deeper understanding and synthesis of the social issues expressed through Poetry and Hip-Hop songs. Students will also learn how to be constructive peer editors.
- 2. CREATIVE WRITING:** Write fully formed Poetry, Prose, and some content analysis that showcases considerable growth in literary skills in order to clearly express ideas, arguments, and independent thought within written work
- 3. PERFORMANCE/PUBLIC SPEAKING/ORATORY:** Successfully develop competent abilities to speak in public settings. Whether on the stage or on the page all poems, all prose, performs. Students will practice the ability to do both

You are expected to read the assigned reading sent via email (There will be a few of those) and be ready to discuss what you've read the following class. Most importantly, **always ask questions!!!!** There's no such thing as a dumb question so ask if you don't know something or if you need further explanation please ask me to repeat what I've said earlier if you are unclear on something. Email me or ask me before, during, or after class.

## Requirements Per Advisory

**20 points:** *Must participate in every in- class Peer-to-Peer written and vocal critique on Production Fridays: There will be 5 of these worth 4pts each advisory: NO DAYS OFF!*

**20 points:** *There will be 5 major in-class written assignments that I will request. Each is worth 4pts. You will still write every day however some assignments won't be a major one.*

**30pts:** *You will need to revise 6 drafts of workshop produced writing, ( All genres will count) all work must have a 2<sup>nd</sup> draft accompanying the first (along with notes from critique). Growth has to be seen.*

**15pts (Midterm Project)** *1st years must produce a collaborative project with at least 2 or more fellow freshman. 2<sup>nd</sup> years must collaborate with at least two or more sophomores to develop and teach a 15 minute LMC lesson to the class.*

**5pts:** *One, one page written critique/ criticism piece on a series, podcast, book, comic, play, film, music (song or album) to be revised and published online or in the forthcoming LMC Literary Magazine.*

**10pts:** *Prepared written questions for visiting artists to our class during the advisory.*

**Total Possible Points:** 100pts per advisory

### Grading Scale:

100-90 = A    89-79 = B    78-68 = C    67-57 = D (56 and below) = F

### Required Texts:

**Sentences: The Life of MF Grimm** by Percy Carey and Ronald Wimberly  
128 pages \$14.24 paperback

**The Poet X** by Elizabeth Acevedo  
357 pages \$11.00 Paperback

## Tentative Visiting Writers Guest List

### Visiting Dates Tentative but Confirmed on Availabilitiy

Teshonne Powell: [Young Playwrights Theatre \(1<sup>st</sup> Advisory\)](#)

Alan W King: [Pen-Faulkner Foundation Writers-In-Schools & Generations United \(1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>\)](#)

Goldie Patrick: [Kennedy Center Women Playwrights Fellow & F.R.E.S.H.H. \( 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>\)](#)

Rion Almicar Scott: [Fiction, Short Stories \(3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>\)](#)

### Virtual Visitors

Nijla Mumin: [Filmmaker \(1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>\)](#)

Elizabeth Acevedo: [Poet, Teen Lit Author \(1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>\)](#)

### **Ground Rules for the Art of Storytelling:**

1. "The Class" shall not be defined as a group excluding or cutting down anyone on the basis of race, ethnicity, language, gender, class, or age.
2. "The Class" shall consciously undertake to respect and to encourage each other to feel safe enough to attempt the building of a community of trust in which all may try to be truthful and deeply serious in the messages they craft for the world to contemplate.
3. The Art Of Storytelling rests upon the belief that the art of both telling the truth and telling a good story is a necessary and a healthy way to create powerful, and positive, connections among people who, otherwise, remain (unknown and unaware) strangers. The goal is to not kill connections but , rather to create and deepen them among truly different young people.

Please sign below:

---

- **Signing and completing this document provides you with an extra 10 pts which can come in handy later on.**