

Module 25: Creative Writing

Stage		3					
Semester		1					
Module Title		Creative Writing					
Module Number		25					
Module Status		Elective					
Module NFQ level		8					
Pre-Requisite Module Titles		None					
Co-Requisite Module Titles		None					
Capstone Module?		No					
List of Module Teaching Personnel		Kevin Lavin					
Contact Hours				Non-contact Hours			Total Effort (hours)
Lecture	Practical	Tutorial	Seminar	Assignment	Placement	Independent Work	
36	12	12		44		96	200
Allocation of Marks (Within the Module)							
	Continuous Assessment	Project	Practical	Final Examination	Total		
Percentage Contribution	100				100%		

Intended Module Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, the learner will be able to:

1. Demonstrate ability to structure and present prose (novels, short stories), screenplays and theatre scripts to a professional standard
2. Analyse the development of narrative through history
3. Recognise and reproduce narrative conventions
4. Appreciate the complexities of creative processes
5. Identify the codes of a variety of genres as well as that of comedy
6. Embrace professional industry standards
7. Display enhanced colour, vibrancy and precision in writing
8. Exploit the rich potential of narrative
9. Appreciate modern developments in poetry and express themselves through poetic language

Module Objectives

This module aims to:

- Explore the nature of creativity itself and develop skills in the complimentary processes of developing, structuring, editing and presenting texts in a variety of media.
- Develop knowledge of the terminology and tools required for script production in prose and in theatre, film and television drama.
- Enhance poetic writing skills.

- Impart knowledge of the development of narrative through history, focussing especially on the modernist and post-modernist interrogation of narrative conventions.

Module Curriculum

Indicative Syllabus

Introduction to course

Exploration of the basic 'arc' structure of most narratives: exposition, conflict, climax, resolution, conclusion. We look at this arc as it functions in specific films and stories. We also refer to narrative theory for definitions of some basic terms and concepts: narrative, story, plot, fabula, syuzhet, diegetic, non-diegetic.

The exploration of creativity begins with a free writing exercise.

Angles and points of view in stories

The options available:

1st Person – Central, Shadowy, Straightforward, Colourful,
 Reliable, Unreliable, Rashomon Effect, Sequential Multiple Viewpoint, Separate Multiple Viewpoint
 2nd Person
 3rd Person: Omniscient, Restricted/Limited
 Free Indirect Style

How the donning of a mask allows one both artistic and moral licence – and imposes responsibility.

Exercise: Exploring points of view/writing in another voice.

Character delineation and development

Exploration of character arc and character indicators such as clothes, views, voice and opinions of others. Flat and Round characters (E M Forster) Outline and Shade. We also question some assumptions of individual uniqueness in a world of 7 billion people and examine the requisites for building convincing characters, looking, for example, at the solipsism of writers such as Tolstoy and Proust.

We do two character building exercise.

Dialogue

We look at the importance of dialogue for character delineation as well as for conveying information.

Also examine the balance that must be struck between authenticity and the necessity for streamlining, examining how a number of writers have struck this balance, among them, Pinter. We trace the increased importance of the human voice in English literature from Huckleberry Finn to the Butcher Boy.

We study styles and techniques in dialogue writing.

Dialogue writing exercise.

Genres

Analysis of genres by Description and Function. Why certain genres are popular at a particular time; why others die. The ideological functions of popular genres.

Narrative arc exercise with genre (group exercise).

Writing for different media

Particular strengths of Prose, Film, Plays, Radio. Adaptation from one media to another. Specifically, we look at how to adapt a short story for the theatre, looking at what is essential and inessential, what to dramatize and what to narrate. We then see how an experienced writer has already adapted this story.

Comedy.

Origins and elements of comedy: Exaggeration, Repetition, Character or characters with one exaggerated/repeated trait, Stereotype, Complicated (arbitrary) plot, Blocking Character, Repressed Characters, Cruelty, Unreality, Distance, Emphasis on body, Contrast, Thought Collision, Surprise, Set-ups and pay-offs

Character, movement and structure in comedy. To aid understanding of comedy we examine the reasons for comedy's not travelling across space and time as freely as tragedy.

Exercises: Analyse a humorous picture and Respond to a comedy commission.

Film.

We look at the importance of the visual in film and at visual storytelling.

Storyboarding exercise.

Collage and editing, from Dickens to Eisenstein.

We examine basic film structure and the importance of professional script presentation.

The writing exercise is to write a treatment (outline). In groups learners do a film treatment for a modern adaptation of a Shakespeare play. They then 'pitch' their treatment to another group and, in turn, judge treatments pitched to them. As well as enhancing knowledge of film, this exercise develops requisite skills for telling stories, making them interesting and holding an audience's attention.

Language and Style.

Rewriting and editing practices. An exploration of grammar, punctuation, layout and presentation as exemplars of professional standards and as aids to expression.

Various punctuation and editing exercises.

Historical Perspectives.

Greek origins of Western tragedy and comedy.

Major developments over time e.g. modernism, post-modernism, looking at political, technological and cultural imperatives and at developments in other artistic mediums, particularly painting. Specifically, we look at how perspective allowed artists to tell stories about the world from a seemingly objective observation point and at how this coalesced with the enlightenment, the industrial revolution and the rise of the bourgeoisie. We go on to examine the modernist dismantling of perspective (Cezanne to Cubism) and its post-modernist reassembly, exposed now as a mere convention devoid of its earlier authority. This focus on the visual arts is by way of tracing parallel developments in literature and drama.

Relationship between form and content, structure and creativity.

A deeper examination of the creative process, at creative practices and the creative mind, or zone, from Zen to Peak Performance. We also look at creativity and perception, again taking examples from the visual arts.

Poetry

Examination of modern (and modernist) developments in poetry in order to give learners enhanced awareness of the options available to them for poetic expression.

Industry Practices.

How to approach publishers, producers, agents. We look at industry practices and standards and the importance of productivity and persistence.

Reading Lists and other Learning Materials

Essential reading:

- Barry, Peter, 2002. *Beginning Theory*, Manchester: Manchester University Press
Butler Andrew, M & Ford, Bob, 2003. *Postmodernism*, London: Pocketbook Essentials
Chekov, Anton, 2002. *The Lady With the Lapdog*, London: Dover Publications
Costello, John, 2002. *How to Write a Screenplay*, London: Pocketbook Essentials
Friel, Brian, 2001. *The Yalta Game*, Dublin: Gallery Books
Goldberg, Natalie, 1990. *Wild Mind*, London: Bantam New Age Books
Joyce, James, 1994. *Dubliners*, London: Wordsworth
Kearney, Richard, 2002. *On Stories*, London: Routledge
King, Stephen, 2002. *On Writing*, London: New English Library

Lodge, David, 1992. *The Art of Fiction*, London: Penguin
Nichols, Ian, *William* 2002. *Shakespeare*, London: Pocketbook Essentials
Truss, Lynn, 2003. *Eats, Shoots and Leaves*, London: Profile Books
Strunk, William, & White, E.B. 1999. *Elements of Style*, London: Allyn & Bacon

Secondary Reading:

Barnet, Sylvan Berman, Morton, Burto, William, 1964. *Eight Great Comedies*, London: Mentor
Haddon, Mark, 2003. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*, London: Jonathon Cape
Harvey, David, 2001. *The Condition of Postmodernity*, London: Blackwell Publishers Inc.
Hughes, Ted, 1967. *Poetry in the Making*, London: Faber
Miller, J. Hillis, 2002. *On Literature*, London: Routledge
Newman, Sandra & Mittlemark, Howard, 2008. *How Not to Write a Novel*, London: Penguin
Mailer, Norman, 2008. *The Spooky Art*, New York: Little Brown
Sapphire, 1996. *Push*, Alfred A. Knof
Schlosser, Eric, 2012. *Fast Food Nation*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston

Online Resources:

<http://www.americanliterature.com/short-stories>
<http://brainstorm-services.com>
east of the web <http://www.short-stories.co.uk/>
<http://www.the-writers-craft.com>
<http://www.writersstore.com>

Module Learning Environment

The learning environment is designed to both engage learners and to encourage their critical thinking. This is achieved through lectures which are designed to stimulate discussions and questions.

Learners are also supported with resources offering structure and guidance. This includes lecture notes, reading materials, film and TV clips, as well as a detailed module curriculum which includes the learning outcomes, a class schedule, the necessary reading material and the assignment strategy. Participants also have access to Moodle, the College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

Timely and detailed feedback is given on assignments, particularly the earlier creative assignments.

Module Teaching and Learning Strategy

This module is supported with notes and presentations available on Moodle and, in some instances, distributed in class. Specifically, the module is delivered using:

- Formal Lectures
- Participative Lectures
- Illustration with examples from prose, poetry, film, theatre and television
- Group and individual writing exercises

The module is taught through a mixture of formal and participative lectures, allowing learner interaction and questioning. Examples from prose, poetry, theatre and television are presented to the class in order to give practical demonstration of the subject matter. The class environment is a 'creative zone' where risk-taking is encouraged and errors seen as inevitable consequences of the learning journey.

Module Assessment Strategy

Learners are required to complete 4 assignments. Three of these are creative and one is academic.

Element Number	Weighting	Type	Description
1	20%	Assignment 1, Creative	Reality based: Learners are required to write a story or theatre/film script, which should be based on real events. Poetry also acceptable.
2	20%	Assignment 2, Creative	Mythic Plots: Learners will write a story or script based on one or a combination of a number of given mythic plots
3	20%	Assignment 3, Academic	Academic: Learners will analyse the structure of novel, film, play or short story
4	40%	Assignment 4, Creative	Open: Learners will write a stand-alone story, script, or three poems