Course Description: A workshop-style seminar in which students submit their own fiction to be read and critiqued by the instructor and the other members of the class.

Course Objectives:
--To help students gain a greater appreciation of the art of fiction
--To instruct students in the art of fiction writing as it is practiced today among publishing writers
--To help students discover new strategies for both composing and editing their creative work
--To help students develop the work habits and self-discipline necessary for the serious pursuit of creative writing
--To improve students’ reading and understanding of both canonical and contemporary fiction
--To provide students a forum for discussing their creative work and to instruct them in the appropriate modes of discourse for such a forum
--To instruct students on matters regarding the presentation of creative work for submission to magazines, anthologies, contests, etc that publish fiction

Prerequisites: At least one sophomore level English course or permission of the instructor.

Course Materials: 40 Short Stories: A Portable Anthology by Beverly Lawn, ed.; photocopies of stories to be read and critiqued by other students (one copy of each submitted piece for every student and the instructor).

Course Assignments: I anticipate each student submitting some three to four stories of 10 pages or more during the course of the semester. The exact number will depend on the amount of time available. In addition, students will also submit half- to full-page written critiques of their classmates’ creative submissions and one-page written responses to each of the readings from 40 Short Stories. Finally, at the end of the course we’ll be putting together an anthology of the best work produced in the class, and each student will be expected to submit a story in a set format for that anthology.

Course Grades: 25% of a student’s final grade will be determined by his or her performance on the (1) critiques of other students’ work, 25% on (2) story responses, 25% on adherence to the (3) story-submission schedule, and 25% on (4) class participation. Length and quality will be factors in determining the grade for parts (1) and (2). Failure to submit a story when due (or to submit a story that represents a serious effort at producing a quality piece of work) will have an adverse effect on part (3), but I will not otherwise place any grade on a student’s creative submissions. Every student will be expected to offer serious, conscientious, and constructive criticism about every story submitted and discussed in class. Part (4) of each student’s final grade will be determined by his or her performance as a critic during class discussions.

Attendance and Participation: Every student’s presence and avid participation is absolutely essential to the success of this course. Workshops are unlike any other classes in that the students provide both the materials and the criticism. Therefore, unexcused absences will adversely affect a student’s final grade—the greater the number of absences, the greater the adverse effect. More than three unexcused absences will result in a reduction of one-letter grade from the final average. Any student with more than six absences will be dropped from the course. Further, any student who does not display a deep and abiding appreciation for the art and practice of fiction, or who does not take seriously the roles of student-writer and student-critic, will find me harsh and unsympathetic when it comes to determining the final grade.