

Everyone Has a Story

English 127: Creative Writing



Becoming a Storyteller...

Through poetry, through prose...

Everyone has a story, but your story *does not have to be about your own personal journey* . . .

Writers usually start with what they know, but you don't have to. The choices—when creating fiction—are endless, unlimited; if you want to write about time travel, human monsters, creatures who shift shapes—you can! Or if you want to write about

your grandmother's interesting life, about a woman who worked on Jeeps

A Story of a Story

<http://www.snopes.com/language/literary/babyshoes.asp>

Hemingway: "Write a sad short story with six words?"



"There is no happiness like that of being loved by your fellow creatures, and feeling that your presence is an addition to their comfort."

— Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*



Saddest, shortest story ever . . .

For sale. Baby shoes. Never worn.

1

BE PASSIONATE

About your subject matter

2

LEARN

Some necessary creative writing techniques

3

REVISE

And revise and revise and revise and then give it to the universe

in World War II in Egypt—you can! It’s all up to you to find your passion and create a credible world to tell your story. Of course, there are some skills you need to learn (or improve upon based on your experience) to not only make your story interesting *for you* but also **for others**. Every story and/or poem should have an underlying purpose, a subtle message, a theme. Your reader should take something from your work. We do write for ourselves, but—ultimately—if you want people to read and enjoy (maybe even *buy*) your writing, you do need to also consider your audience. You should know your purpose, maybe not at the beginning when you are writing because you are simply inspired, but when you produce for other eyes and ears and touch, your text should be layered, and you should know what those layers mean. That does not mean that your reader will take away the same message, but start with an intention. After those steps have been followed (and we’ll do a lot of practice in class with short creative assignments), you’ll be ready to share “your story” with the world!



What You’ll Need To Complete Your Story

Attendance and Participation: 50 points (5% of class grade)

Homework: 50 points (5%)

Poem One: (“Where I’m From”) 50 points (5%)

Poetry Group Presentation: 50 points (5%)

Poem Portfolio: (3-5 poems, depending on length and complexity) 150 points (15%)

Short Short Story (whole group peer-review): 100 points (10%)

Short Short Story (revision): 50 points (5%)

Extended short story (small group peer-review): 200 points (20%)

Extended short story (revision): 50 points (5%)

Peer Reviews: 150 points (15%)

Final: Presentation of extended short story (on final exam day): 50 points (5% of class grade)

Final Portfolio (due on final exam day): 50 points (5%)

Steps: How They Add Up

Up
 Grading Scale
 90% = 900+ points
 = A
 80% = 800-899 points
 = B
 70% = 700-799 points
 = C
 60% = 600-699 points
 = D

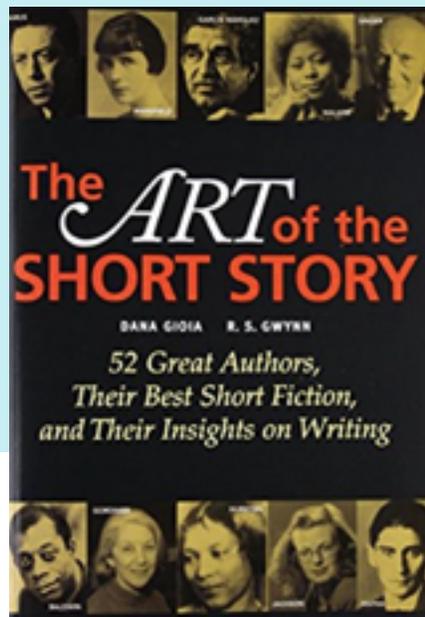


BOOKS AND THINGS YOU'LL NEED

- 1) Book: Milton Crane, Editor. *Fifty Great Short Stories*. 1952 ISBN: 978-0-553-277745-6 ; 2) About \$30 for copying costs

To stay organized, also buy:

- *A portable stapler
- *A light three-ring bind
- *A thin notebook (some class notes will be so important that I will suggest you keep this notebook forever and ever!)



SLO 1

Develop the technical skills and artistic insights necessary to craft imaginative literature.

We will use an assessment measure in the form of one or more portfolios of creative work in which students display their best technical and artistic output.

The instructor will grade such portfolios following a rubric coordinated to these outcomes.

Specific Schedule to Follow or See Canvas

Week I: Introductions and Prose
Poem "Where I'm From"

Week II - VII: Poetry and Other Exercises

Week VI - XVIII: Prose and Portfolio

Classroom: H 102

Section: #24898

Days: W

Time: 3:30 p.m. - 6:40 a.m.

Student Drop in Hours:

M: 5:45 - 6:45 p.m.

Wed: 2:30 - 3:30p.m. p.m.

T/Th 9:30a.m. - 11 a.m.

F: 12:45 p.m. - 1:45p.m.

“WHERE I’M FROM”

Where I’m From

The Sarawak headhunters wanted to kidnap me. They sought blonde babies, and I was the most beautiful baby she had ever seen. My mama told me this story for as long as I can remember. Obviously, she was seeing through mommy goggles because pictures of me at that time reveal a toddler with an alien-sized head, a non-existent nose, and a belly that matched Buddha’s. Though headhunting rarely took place in the early 1970s and cute babies had nothing to do with their choice of head, to my mother’s relief, we left Borneo when I was almost two years old.

Where I’m From

I grew up with stories—just like this one. My dad told strangers my mom was Miss Greece 1964 (In the early 60s, she worked as a hotel receptionist and never held the aforementioned title). In the 70s, an Arab Sheik wanted my mother to leave her engineer husband to join his harem; in the 80s, our airplane on the way to South Africa had to do a crash landing into a bed of foam; in the 90s, my Greek grandmother gave me twelve gold bracelets from a toothless gypsy who owed her money.;



Where I’m From

I continue to wonder if these stories are somewhat factual or entirely fictional—but I guess it doesn’t really matter. In Saudi Arabia, as an eight-year-old, I would make up long tales of camels and princesses; fire and sand dunes. In South Africa, as an eleven-year-old, my stories became more elaborate, a missing treasure, a leopard who could talk, and a Bushman who saved the day. But my favorite stories have always been about Greece. The place where everything tastes better, looks bluer.

Where i’m From

We always packed our bags. Nowhere was home. By the time I was three, we had lived in Venezuela, Borneo, and Greece. When my North American father got a new international engineering post, we packed our bags again. By the time I was thirteen, I had lived in six different countries and had visited countless more. In Venezuela, I ate *arepas*; in Saudi Arabia I rode camels;

in South Africa I walked alongside giraffes and lay with leopards, but my favorite memories are in Kamena Vourla, at my grandmother and grandfather’s summer cottage by the sea.



Where I’m From

I was lucky enough to swim in the Mediterranean almost every summer of my life. I ate watermelon and tomatoes from my *papoo*’s garden, and listened to stories that spewed from my *yiayia*’s mouth. *Yiayia*, who also grew up in several countries, told me about a green-eyed Bedouin woman who pawned her thick, silver ankle bracelets at my great grandfather’s kiosk in Egypt; because the woman never returned, *yiayia*’s father thought, with her other-worldly gaze, she was an angel. *Yiayia* would tell me stories of her youth in Egypt; Mama would tell me about her travels to Iran, Hong Kong, and Lesotho and about her life in Nigeria: “I would climb a tree, hang with the monkeys, instead of go to school.” Then she told me about her teenage years in Egypt, “I loved swimming in King Farouk’s palace. Those days it was open on weekends to the public.”

Where I’m From

I listened closely to the matriarchs of our family; I grew up with their stories and my father’s, so naturally enough, I too became a storyteller. At Kmart, my first job, I worked in the fitting room. Hidden behind a stack of clothes, I would write for hours in my Hello-Kitty palm-sized notebook. After high school, I got a Bachelor’s Degree in English, moved to Greece, and got my first job teaching English. Three years later, I returned to the U.S, pursued a Master’s Degree in Comparative Literature and became an Adjunct English Professor in San Diego. In my 12th year of teaching, I met my wonderful husband and moved to Peru for six years, securing the position as Head of Department at Colegio Roosevelt, a prestigious American I.B. World School. It was a great experience though seeing extreme poverty juxtaposed with affluence often left me questioning my own choices. It also filled my mental rolodex with new stories I want to tell one day.

Where I'm From

Stories have been my life. Teaching has been a happy accident. And, thankfully, I have been successful and have made great bonds with students over the years. But, in 2011, after twenty years of teaching, it was time to write the novels that have been in my head, the first one being RED GREEK TOMATOES, a work of fiction inspired by my mother's and grandmother's stories as well as my own life experiences.



Where I'm From

I live in gratitude. To have an excellent job with students I adore. To have three beautiful babies: Achilles, Oia, and Opa. To have a husband who is my passion, and I am his. To feel at peace despite tumultuous times.

Where I'm From

There are not too many things in this world that are certain. But of one thing I am certain: I was born to be a teacher and a storyteller.



Also contact me through:

www.kimberlykrobesson.com

www.redgreektomatoes.com