

Everyone Has a Story

English 124-125: Short Story Writing 1 and 2



Becoming a Storyteller...

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 in World War II in

Egypt—you can! It's all up to you to find your passion and create a credible

A Story of a Story

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

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



Saddest, shortest story ever . . .

For sale. Baby shoes. Never worn.



"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*

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

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 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!



Steps: How They Add Up

Grading Scale

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

Student Pop-in Hours: Humanities 121

M: 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Wed: 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

T and Th 1.p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

CLASS MATERIALS:

THIS IS A ZTC COURSE (ZERO TEXTBOOK COURSE—YAY!) OF COURSE, IF YOU LOVE PAPER BOOKS AS MUCH AS I DO, I CAN RECOMMEND SOME READERS; OTHERWISE FOR THE COURSE YOU WILL:

- 1) Download, read, and sometimes print stories from online sources and/or buy a collection of stories that you are personally interested in reading because its the type of writing you would like to do.
- 2) Copy costs, about \$20
- 3) To stay organized, also buy: a portable stapler, a light three-ring binder, a thin notebook (some class notes will be so important that I will suggest you keep this notebook forever and ever!)

SLOs Student Learning Objectives

Compare and value contemporary literature as a commodity in the publishing marketplace.

Experiment with the written word through a variety of creative exercises.

Plan, initiate and rework pieces of creative writing using strategies of invention and revision.

Revise creative pieces applying knowledge of techniques, forms, styles and genres.

Examine and evaluate psychological, moral and social meanings in works of contemporary fiction.

Classroom: ACA 1805

Section: #18489 (124)

Section: #18490 (125)

Days: Wednesdays

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

From the Catalog: "Students will develop skills in writing the traditional short story. Emphasis is on discussion of students' writing with some discussion of works of major writers. The course deals with marketing and preparing manuscripts for submission to publishers. Students may submit manuscripts to the college literary magazine."



Specificities Regarding the Reading and the Writing

Since this is creative writing, you do not need an MLA header, but you **DO need to write word count at the top of every submission**. If you go over, even by a word, your peers and I will not be required to read it. In the real “publishing world” your work gets deleted automatically if you go not follow the word count requirements—see LA Times submission for example or how to write a query (250 words) or length of author bio (50 words) or a general fiction novel (80-100,000 words). All these can change depending on the publication, press, and genre—and, of course, if you are a celebrity or already established in the field. More about this is class

1) DUE 9/4: Your short story

“Introduction” 200-250 words: 50 points (5%) The facts need to be “real,” but you should write it *creatively* and focus on whatever you wish. It can be a moment in time or collage of experiences—chronological or not. I’ll explain further in class.

2) Peer Reviews, Participation, and Weekly Writings:

150 points (15% of class grade) 10 points every week for 15 weeks for doing in-class critiques and other writing as well as following proper student conduct (see syllabus). If you are absent, you cannot participate; if you are late, you’ve only partially participated; thus you don’t receive all or some of these points. No make-up regardless of the reason. (I build in 50 points of extra credit though, so if something genuinely happens and you can’t be in class, you can take advantage of the extra credit to balance your points.)

3) DUE 9/25: First story: 500-600

words maximum. 150 points (15%) This will come from one of the prompts we have used in class. Only a few will get to share these out loud. These will use proper, creative, polished punctuation and grammar.

4) Homework: 50 points (5%) for other miscellaneous writing or work

5) Second short story (whole group peer-review) 500-600 words

maximum: 100 points (50 points: grade; 50 points: complete and on time as well as copies for entire class) (10%)

6) Second short story revision: 750 words maximum

100 points (10%) graded by me with changes highlighted compared to draft. I will explain this in class AFTER everyone has done gotten the entire class to do the peer review—in other words, at the end of the process.

7) Extended short story (small group peer-review): 1,000 words maximum

150 points (15%) 50 points for completion on time and copies for peers. 100 points for doing peer critiques BEFORE class. Checked in with me first.

8) Extended short story (revision):

1,000 words maximum 150 points (15%) Graded by me. Your final written mini-masterpiece applying all you learned!

Final: Presentation of your SELL SHEET (on final exam day): 100 points (10% of class grade) (see my sample).

Zeus, A Sword, and Soul Mates. Does Your Other Half Exist?

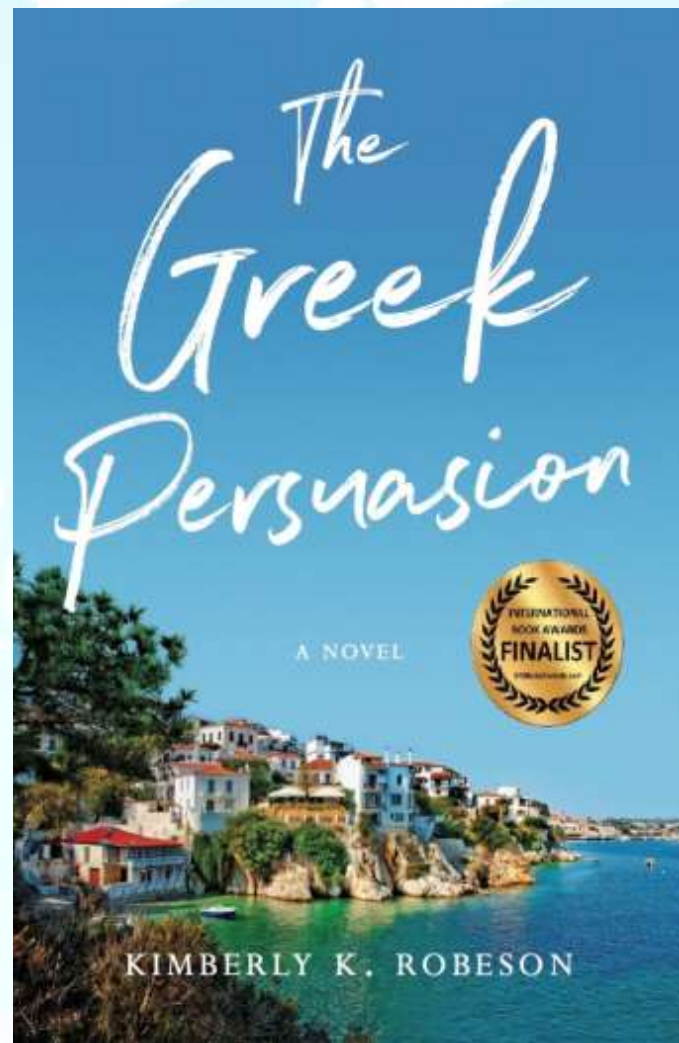
Greek-American professor Thair Mylopoulos-Wright has spent much of her life searching for her Other Half. At thirty-one, she spends a summer in Greece; there, alone on a tranquil island, she begins writing stories about her grandmother's experiences in 1940s Egypt, her mother's youth in 1960s Greece, and finally, her own life in contemporary America—trying to make sense of her future by exploring the past.

Spanning Thair's life from thirty-one to thirty-six, *The Greek Persuasion* explores human sexuality, the complexity of mother-daughter relationships, and the choices women of different generations make when choosing—or settling—for “Mr. (or Ms.) Good Enough.” Will Thair ever find that missing part of her that Zeus chopped off with his magic sword? Or is the concept of The One just one big fairy tale that has left her searching for someone who doesn't exist?

“Robeson protagonist's existential fretfulness about her future, and her feelings of uncertainty as she pursues a perfect romantic match, highly relatable. . . . Thair's narrative will resonate with readers who are confronting their own unpredictable futures.”—**Kirkus Reviews**

“A nuanced and meaningful exploration of both maternal relationships and female sexuality.”—**Jennifer Baumgardner, author of Manifesta and Look Both Ways: Bisexual Politics**

“A complete and masterful insight into a woman's mind. . . . an honest and brave encounter with her characters, making one become an invested spectator of women's lives throughout time and in distant lands.”—**Alicja Bachleda, actress, Ondine, Trade, The American Side**



Women's Fiction

ISBN-10: 1631525654

ISBN-13: 978-1631525650

368 pages, \$16.95

Publication Date: April 30th, 2019

Language: English

Rights: She Writes Press

Contact: Brooke Warner

brooke@shewritespress.com

www.kimberlykrobeson.com



Kimberly K. Robeson

Greek-American assistant professor at Los Angeles Valley College, Kimberly teaches world literature, creative writing, and composition, and is the co-advisor for the college's LGBTQ+ Club. She grew up in Greece, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and the United States. She received a master's degree in comparative literature and has taught English in Greece, Peru, and the United States for the past twenty-seven years. Kimberly currently resides in Los Angeles with her husband, Hugo, and their three bulldogs: Achilles, Oia, and Opa. *The Greek Persuasion* is her debut novel.

readings and topics that arise in class.

Everyone has ideas, and I want to hear from *all* the voices in the class; thus, we will learn to respect and be comfortable with *silence*—not everyone processes questions (and answers) at the same time, so we need to give people the chance to think and formulate



responses. I want to encourage confidence in these discussions, so they must be conducted in a respectful, supportive environment free of racist, heterosexist, homophobic, ableist, ageist, classist, etc. language. Keep in mind: we are all different, unique—and special. Let's try to learn from one another, build bridges instead of walls. Your responses to other's ideas and work should be thoughtful and courteous. This is how we stretch and learn and become more productive, compassionate people, better citizens in this place we call "our world."

Need Help?

We're all different and unique and may need some extra help . . . Accommodations

I want you all to have the best learning environment possible, so if you are a student with a disability requiring classroom accommodations, and have not contacted Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD), please do so in a timely manner. SSD is located in the Student Services Annex, Room 175 or call SSD at (818) 947-2681 or TTD (818) 947-2680 to meet with a SSD counselor. If SSD has already sent the memo confirming accommodations required by a student for this class, please meet with me to discuss arrangements.

Financial Aid

Financial Aid is available! Call (818) 947-2412. Go to the Financial Aid Office in the Student Services Center, first floor. For more info: <http://www.lavc.edu/financialaid>.

Immigrations Services

Know your rights!

<http://services.laccd.edu/districtsite/kyr/index.html>

Clubs, Groups, Extra-Curricular Activities and Making Friends

Attend "Club Day" to see all the groups you can join. If you are interested in the LGBTQA+ Club ask me! I'm the co-advisor. <http://www.lavc.edu/LGBT/LGBTQIA.aspx>

Bring Something Unique to Your Work

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is the use of others' words and/or ideas without clearly acknowledging their source. When you incorporate those words and ideas into your own work, you must give credit where credit is due. Plagiarism, intentional or unintentional, is considered academic dishonesty and is not tolerated. Anyone found to be plagiarizing or cheating on assignments (e.g., copying or giving answers, using the internet for quotes, photos, or any written work, etc. without giving proper credit) will (1) receive a zero (fail) on the assignment, and (2) be referred to the Vice President of Student Services for further disciplinary action, following due process. For further information on plagiarism, go to the Writing Center website (<http://www.lavc.edu/writingcenter/handouts/plagiarism.html>) and refer to the "Standards of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Action" in the current Schedule of Classes and Catalog

Communication

Listen, Learn, Reflect, and Reply!

Communication is appreciated. If you are absent and want to send me an email to let me know that you are sick or there is something else going on, I appreciate it, but

it's not required. If you do miss a class session, please be aware you will miss vital information, and it is your responsibility to find out what was covered. Thus, I recommend you find four classmates and exchange phone numbers and email addresses to contact for questions about what you missed, copy class notes, etc. If you have other questions or concerns, feel free to contact me.

Peers' Information

Four Classmates:

1) Classmate's Name:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

2) Classmate's Name:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

3) Classmate's Name:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

4) Classmate's Name:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

WELCOME! Now Let's Write!

