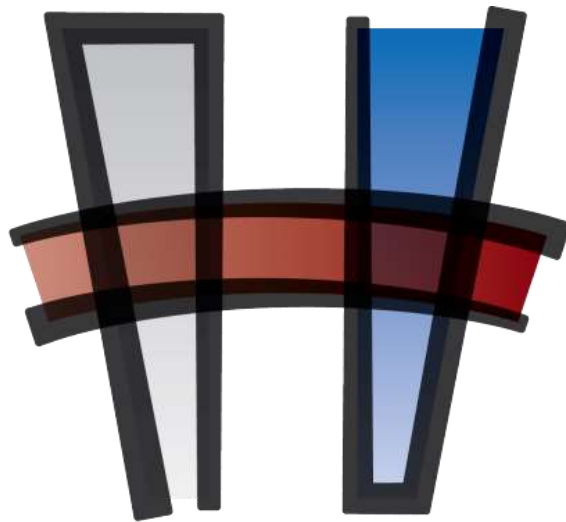


Creative Writing



HARRISON

SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS

**Department Handbook
2016-2017**

Welcome to Creative Writing!

Philosophy and Mission

The goal of the creative writing department at Harrison School for the Arts is to prepare students who are capable, clear communicators, inspired thinkers, and discerning consumers and producers of the written word. The practice, revision, and exposure to new voices provided by the department forms a solid foundation for students wishing to pursue the literary arts in college and beyond. In addition, the editorial techniques imparted to students help ensure that they are coherent, proficient writers for both academic and workplace settings.

The “Write” Attitude

Before beginning any writing, the author must establish a positive mental climate in which to work. This means overcoming any negativity, pessimism, procrastination, or distraction. Strategies to establish the proper writing mindset will be presented in class. Use them. The student’s focus must be free from interferences beyond the page. Likewise, in class and workshop, creative writing department members are expected to be helpful, kind, respectful, responsible, and attentive. Sarcasm, negativity, and rudeness toward others or their work will not be tolerated. Students are preparing to be writing professionals, and a positive attitude about learning our craft is the first and most crucial step in this process.

The “Write” Discipline

Generations of writers have attested to the power and positive outcome of making writing a habit, even a lifestyle. To become the most effective writer possible, students should establish a personal writing routine and stick to it. In our class and in its associated activities, students are expected to demonstrate a level of self-control that is consistent with the honorable profession of author. Disciplining oneself is another essential ingredient in becoming a respectable writer at any level. Inappropriate conduct, inside or outside class, reflects poorly upon our entire program, and compromises the integrity of our department. Use sound judgment at all times.

Being a member of this department means more than “dressing the part” of an author. Writers write. Be prepared for prompts you don’t like, readings that aren’t your favorite, speakers and authors you might not relate to, and disagreements with fellow writers. These are all parts of becoming a well-rounded author. The attitude and discipline with which you handle difficulties will reflect your maturity as an emerging writer.

Fundamental Expectations of Creative Writing Department Members:

I. Respect

- A. Yourself** – Excusing or explaining away your work’s quality is not okay. Similarly, you should not harm yourself (physically, mentally, or otherwise).
- B. Others** – It is expected that you will show respect to classmates, teachers, parents, and guests. When others are reading, pay attention. No devices and no writing when listening should occur.
- C. Property** – Treat our classroom and its materials nicely. Don’t vandalize, don’t borrow without permission, and don’t litter. Be a good person.

II. Responsibility

- A. For tasks** – Being in our department means being an active member. Attending our three big yearly events, showing interest in and dedication to assignments, and demonstrating thought leadership on a regular basis demonstrate this kind of responsibility.

B. For materials – Being a writer means having materials with which to accomplish writing. As near-graduates, you are expected to bring with you every day something to write with and something to write on (by hand – not devices). “I forgot” is not an acceptable excuse at this level of study. Be intentional.

C. For deadlines and performances – Everyone in our department will eventually be selected for a public reading. This is one way we demonstrate our writings’ excellence. Selected readers are required to be at their venue, barring life-impacting events like radical sickness, sudden death of a loved one, or similar circumstances. Meet assignment deadlines and performance requirements.

III. Attentiveness

- A. To directions** – Every assignment or writing task will have specific guidelines. It is expected that you will follow these guidelines to the letter. This level of scrutiny serves as preparation for submitting your writing to respectable publications and literary venues.
- B. To speakers** – Give your full attention to whomever is addressing our class, whether it is the teacher, a fellow student, a guest author, or someone else. It’s polite, and it’s good training for the world beyond our classroom.
- C. To details** – Part of becoming a good author is paying attention to the little things. When we’re reading, be on the lookout for stylistic devices and unique diction that may positively affect your own writing. Notice fine flourishes in others’ work that sets it apart. Being able to identify the unique is a powerful tool. Develop it.

GRADING

To ensure fairness, every assignment given in creative writing will come with an associated **RUBRIC**. It is of utmost important that you review the criteria stated on the rubric to attain the highest possible score on any task. Fiction, nonfiction, and poetry assignments alike are assessed using these checklists and point value guides, and full explanations for achieving excellence are included on each. Questions or concerns regarding scoring decisions can be discussed with writers individually at an equally agreeable time and location. *Grades and editorial feedback will not be publicly discussed in class before your fellow writers.*

PUBLISHING

Part of the evidence of students' writing proficiency includes publication in journals inside and outside our department. To meet this objective, students **MUST** submit their work to journals, websites, e-zines, and other literary venues with regularity. During our first week together, we will review how to set up a SUBMITTABLE account online, which will allow students to submit their writing to the aforementioned venues. For a full listing of available publication opportunities, please see Mr. Davis's board in class. At the end of first semester, each student will choose his or her strongest work for submission to LINGO, our flagship publication. This work must represent the student's development, strengths, and character as a writer. Lingo submissions are not optional.

AWARDS

Another marker of writing excellence is the receipt of writing awards. Due to the prevalence of scams in the writing community, however, contests entered by students will be filtered and announced by Mr. Davis. YoungArts, Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, and similar competitions will be made available for students, especially at the outset of our school year when there are multiple deadlines for such contests. Likewise, senior awards for our department include: Excellence in Poetry, Excellence in Prose, and Emerging Writer Awards. These will be presented at the annual awards recognition ceremony. Should students desire to enter a contest outside of our department that has not been announced, it is strongly encouraged that the student check with Mr. Davis prior to entry. Doing so may avoid loss of money, prestige, and self-respect. Not all contests are fair, and not all contests are run in accordance with CLMP (Council of Literary Magazines and Presses) guidelines for quality. Writers beware!

A NOTE ABOUT OPEN MICS

We are fortunate in our community to have access to a number of “open mic” events. As members of the Harrison Creative Writing Department, it is expected that you will attend and participate in these kinds of events at your leisure and according to your interest. Southeastern University, PlatformArt Forum, Florida Southern College, and many other local venues provide opportunities for our writers to display their talents, and all are encouraged to do so.

Expectations for CW Department members at Open Mics:

1. Be respectful. Don't text, play games, or otherwise “fiddle” during readings.
2. Watch your words. Remember that you are a reflection of our school. Excessive profanity, grotesque violence, graphic sexual content, explicit drug use, or other controversial diction decisions are discouraged for open mics. For clarification and further explanation, please see Mr. Davis.
3. Don't hog the stage. Everyone wants to read. Be courteous. Stay within time.
4. Applaud each writer/reader equally. Give dignity to our art form.
5. If food or drink are offered free, leave plenty for others.
6. Thank the hosts. It's just good form.
7. Dress like a writer. Avoid performance personas unless they're necessary.
8. HAVE FUN. You're there to enjoy what you do. Act like it!

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

PGTV: Each year, two students are featured on the TV show “Writers Den,” hosted by Jane Waters-Thomas. This show provides an excellent opportunity for students to showcase their work, their knowledge, and their passion for writing. Students interested in being considered for this broadcast are encouraged to notify Mr. Davis before Spring Break.

Summer Programs: The Juniper Summer Writing Institute, Blue Ridge Young Artists and Writers Retreat, Sewanee Young Writers Workshop, LEAP program, and other conferences are available to students who would like to further pursue writing and leadership over the summer. Information can be obtained by asking Mr. Davis or going online. Parents must give consent.

Creative Writing Library: Students have the opportunity to check out books about writing from our department library. These books are to be treated with utmost care and respect, and returned within two weeks of check-out. See Mr. Davis for checkout permissions and procedures.

STUDENT/PARENT INFORMATION FORM

This form is due no later than September 2, 2016. Please print legibly.

Student Information

Name: _____
Grade: _____
Address: _____ City: _____
Zip: _____ Home Phone: _____
Student Cell: _____
Student
Email: _____
Birth date: _____

Parent/Guardian Information

Parent(s)
Name(s): _____
Parent Cell Phone: _____
Secondary Cell or Other Phone: _____
E-mail 1 : _____
Email 2: _____
Occupation of Parent 1: _____
Occupation of Parent 2/ other guardian: _____

Please Circle:

Yes, I am interested in being an approved parent volunteer/Chaperone

No, I am not available to be a parent volunteer/Chaperone

CONSENT FOR CREATIVE WRITING ACTIVITIES

This form is due no later than September 2, 2016

Statement of Acceptance

I hereby acknowledge that I...

1. have read the Harrison Creative Writing Handbook and agree to the procedures and policies therein;
2. accept the penalties for not following the rules of the organization;
3. recognize the importance of attending performances and events that pertain to the group(s) in which I am participating;
4. understand that I will be held responsible for equipment and books checked out;
5. recognize that it is a privilege to participate in any department activity and will strive to earn respect for my department, my school, my community, and myself.

Student Name: (print) _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent Name: (print) _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____