

# Middle School Creative Writing

Instructor: Devon Kelly

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Live Class: Mondays from 1:00-2:00 p.m. ET

## Course Description

Middle School Creative Writing will introduce students to the power of language through creative texts and assignments while helping students to develop voice and analytical skills. Creative writing helps us to see—to see ourselves, other people, the world around us, and beyond. We will study short stories, poetry, flash fiction, a novella, and a novel to gain inspiration and grow as creative thinkers. Students will study the elements of fiction and literary techniques that they will apply to their own writing.

In a supportive and interactive environment, students will write, revise, edit, and publish flash fiction, a fairytale, two short stories, and a collection of poetry.

## Required Texts

*The Creative Writer, Level Two: Essential Ingredients* by Boris Fishman

ISBN 9781933339566

<https://www.amazon.com/Creative-Writer-Level-Two-Ingredients/dp/193333956X>

*The Tale of Despereaux* by Kate DiCamillo

ISBN 0763680893

<https://www.amazon.com/Tale-Despereaux-Being-Princess-Thread/dp/0763680893>

*The Tolkien Reader (for Farmer Giles of Ham)* by J.R.R. Tolkien

ISBN 0345345061

<https://www.amazon.com/Tolkien-Reader-J-R-R/dp/0345345061>

Additional stories and poems will be provided in PDFs.

## Course Structure

We will meet weekly to discuss creative texts and student work. Students will find the following elements in Canvas:

- Weekly writing prompt or part of larger writing project
- Grammar exercises (quizzes) that help students to add clarity to writing
- Freewriting and journaling
- Vocabulary discussion questions
- Discussion boards to practice creative writing and encourage literary analysis
- Comprehension quizzes
- Videos to watch

In addition to receiving instructor feedback, students will have the opportunity to receive feedback from one another. At the end of the semester, students will select pieces of writing for a class literary journal to be published in PDF format.

Please use Canvas to see assignment information and due dates.

## Course Outline

### First Semester

#### **Introduction and Flash Fiction**

*1 week*

Students read flash fiction and introduce themselves through a creative memoir.

#### **Short Stories and Elements of Fiction**

*6 weeks*

Students write flash fiction and other writing prompts in preparation for a short story.

#### ***The Tale of Despereaux* and Your Story**

*5 weeks*

Students plan, draft, workshop, revise, edit, and finish a short story.

Students continue to complete weekly writing prompts as they build their skills.

#### **Narrative Poetry**

*4 weeks*

Students draft, workshop, revise, edit, and finish a narrative poem.

### Second Semester

#### **Fairytales and Fables**

*3 weeks*

Students write their own fable and put their own twists on “Beauty and the Beast.”

#### ***Farmer Giles of Ham***

*3 weeks*

Students study the novella while completing writing prompts in preparation for their short stories.

#### **Short Stories and Your Story**

*5 weeks*

Using inspiration from the stories that they are reading and building on the skills they mastered in the first semester, students write their own short stories.

#### **Poetic Forms**

*5 weeks*

Students study a variety of poetic forms and write a collection of lyric poetry.

## Grading

Shorter assignments (such as parts of a larger writing project) will be graded within 7 days from the due date. Longer assignments (such as a full-length short story) will be graded within 14 days from the due date.

### Grading Weights

- Writing Assignments—45% of total grade
- Class Participation—10% of total grade
- Discussion Boards—30% of total grade
- Grammar and Comprehension Assignments—15% of total grade

## Communication

I encourage and welcome questions, and you may email me at any time. Please use your Canvas Inbox to do so. I do my best to respond to emails quickly, and I guarantee a response within 24-48 hours (excluding on weekends).

## Late Work

Because the assignments in this course build on one another, submitting work on-time is essential to success. Late work receives a 5% grade deduction for each day that an assignment is late. Students are allowed one late submission for full credit per semester.

Although I cannot guarantee an extension for all circumstances, in cases such as illness or vacations, I am happy to provide an extension of an assignment due date. Please email me to request one.

## Live Class

Live class meetings will take place on Mondays from 1:00-2:00 p.m. ET. Attendance is part of students' class participation grades, and students are strongly encouraged to attend as many live meetings as possible. Students may earn full participation credit, however, by viewing the recording within a week of its posting and emailing me a brief summary or notes from the class.

Students must turn on their webcams for at least the beginning of class to confirm their identities. I encourage them to keep their webcams on for the duration of our meetings, because research has shown that this encourages stronger class participation and mastery.

### Technology Requirements

- High speed, broadband Internet
- Web cam, sound card, and microphone (for live sessions)
- Streaming video capabilities to watch recorded lectures

## Plagiarism

As stated in the Aim Academy Student Handbook, I “will contact the parent in the first instance [of suspected plagiarism] to solicit the parent’s involvement and preferences for handling the

situation. All incidents of this nature must be reported to the Aim Academy administration and documented.

Ongoing failure to comply with Aim Academy's plagiarism policy will result in disciplinary action that may include any of the following:

- A conference with student, parent, and teacher.
- Requiring the student to redo the assignment.
- A failing grade for the assignment.
- Other consequences determined by the teacher, including dismissal from the course.

Disciplinary action will depend on the severity of the plagiarism. In administering any disciplinary actions, our posture will be gracious and restorative—even while upholding a high standard for academic integrity.”

## Student Behavior

Students are expected to behave respectfully to their classmates and instructor at all times. Remember, in an online setting, other people cannot always see your face or hear your tone of voice. Because of this, it is particularly important to choose clear, kind words when commenting in discussion boards and offering constructive feedback in peer reviews.

## Technical Difficulties

The Canvas Helpdesk is an excellent resource for students who may encounter technical difficulties in Canvas. <https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Student-Guide/How-do-I-get-help-with-Canvas-as-a-student/ta-p/498>

If you encounter issues in Zoom, such as blurry or frozen videos, moving closer to a Wi-Fi router or using an ethernet connection may be helpful. In the case of major technical difficulties, such as a power outage, students are always welcome to catch up with the Zoom recording. Please see the information on **Live Class** above.