

Professor Herman's office is in 165 DE. Drop in hours: Mondays, 3-4PM, Tuesdays, 11:30AM-12:30 PM. Other days and times by appointment (email: herman.2@osu.edu; phone 292-5767)

Course goal and content: This seminar introduces all genres of creative writing taught at Ohio State—and then some—and explores these questions (this is by no means an exhaustive list!): *What does it mean to be a writer? What are the possibilities for writing, in and out of the classroom? What is there to write about, anyway? What is “writer’s block” and what’s the cure for it? How does a writer turn what he or she has experienced or is thinking about or feeling into a piece of writing? What do we mean when we talk about good writing?* As we consider these questions—and others—we’ll read good writing, meet many practicing, successful writers, and try our hands at writing in every genre introduced.

Week One: An introduction to the course—and to the pleasures of writing. Discussion: the art of word choice. Short reading assignment (hand-out)

Week Two: What are we talking about when we talk about “concrete” writing (hint: it has nothing to do with cement). Finding the right words for what you have to say. In-class exercise. Short writing assignment for next week.

Week Three: Discussion of choosing subject matter and figuring out what to do with it. Memory and five senses exercise in class. How to get the entirety of an experience down on paper. Short writing assignment for next week; short reading assignment (hand-out).

Week Four: The Perfect Sentence. What does it mean to get a sentence exactly right? Examples offered; experiments in class; short writing assignment for next week; short reading assignment (hand-out).

Weeks Five through Seven: Creative nonfiction writing. Discussions, short reading assignments (hand-outs of short personal essays and other examples of literary nonfiction, including lyric essay/nonfiction prose poems), one short writing assignment. Visits from writers of creative nonfiction.

Weeks Eight through Ten: Fiction writing. Discussion, short reading assignments (hand-outs of short-short stories and flash fiction), one short writing assignment. Visits from novelists and short story writers.

Weeks Eleven through Thirteen: Poetry writing (including song lyric writing). Discussion, reading assignments (hand-outs of poems), two short writing assignments. Visits from poets and a songwriter.

Weeks Fourteen and Fifteen: Playwriting. Discussion, short reading assignment (hand-outs of monologues and scenes), one short writing assignment. Visit from a playwright.

Final: turn in portfolio of all writing; choose at least 2 pieces to revise, and turn those in along with the original versions.

Herman, Freshman Seminar

You will also be invited—but not required—to attend all events hosted by the Creative Writing Program (readings, workshops, talks by visiting writers as well as OSU faculty and graduate students). A calendar of events will be distributed at the first class session.

Re attendance: That you are expected to attend every class should go without saying, but I'll say it anyway. If it is inevitable that you miss a class because of illness or emergency, e-mail me. If you are unable to come to class, I not only expect you to get in touch with me so that I know what's going on, but that—if you're well enough to work—you keep up the work you're missing. (In the event of class cancellation due to emergency, I will contact you via e-mail and request that a note on be placed on the door and/or the blackboard, and I'll let you know how we're going to make up the missed session.) Two unexcused absences will result in the reduction of your grade by one letter.

Re plagiarism: It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term 'academic misconduct' includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487).

Please note that the Office for Disability Services, located in 150 Pomerene Hall, offers services for students with documented disabilities. Contact the ODS at 292-3307. Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs.

This course will be letter-graded. An **A** student will by the end of the quarter have worked hard on revising his or her work, demonstrating an ability to use critical feedback to re-envision a piece of writing. This student will have turned in "final" work that meets a high standard of artistry and originality. The language used will be specific, fresh, concrete, interesting; it will be free of cliché and "ready made" images. This student will have learned to make choices. He or she will also be a good citizen: attending class regularly, meeting deadlines, participating intelligently.

A **B** student will turn in competent work, free of errors, but less ambitious, the language less precise and lively and fresh. But this student will also be an exemplary citizen: attending, turning up on time, meeting deadlines, participating, etc.

A **C** student will turn in work that contains significant errors and shows a lack of facility. C students are also passive participants and tend to have poor attendance records.

D students don't show up reliably and turn in poor work.

E students are those who miss deadlines altogether and/or rarely show up for class.

Herman, Freshman Seminar

Biographical statement:

Professor Michelle Herman, the Director of the Creative Writing Program, is the author of two novels, *Missing* and *Dog*, the collection of novellas and stories *A New and Glorious Life*, the essay collection *The Middle of Everything*, and the Kindle Single *Dream Life*, a novella-length personal essay. Her short fiction, nonfiction, and poems have appeared in *American Scholar*, *O, the Oprah Magazine*, *The Southern Review*, *Redbook*, *StoryQuarterly*, and many other journals, and her one-act play, “Tyler and Althea,” received its world premiere at Ursinus College. Her many awards and honors include a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in fiction, a James Michener Fellowship, numerous individual artist’s fellowships in fiction and nonfiction from the Ohio Arts Council and the Greater Columbus Arts Council, and two major teaching awards—the Ohio State University Alumni Award for Distinguished Teaching and the Rodica Botoman Award for Distinguished Undergraduate Teaching and Mentoring—as well as a citation for Outstanding Teaching from the Colleges of the Arts and Sciences. Along with directing the undergraduate and graduate programs in creative writing, Professor Herman directs the Graduate Interdisciplinary Specialization in Fine Arts (for artists in all disciplines at Ohio State) and the Young Writers Workshop (for Columbus City Schools high school student writers). Her current projects include the forthcoming collection of essays (2013), *Stories We Tell Ourselves*, a new booklength work of nonfiction, and a novel.

Undergraduate courses taught:

English 662/5662: Literary Publishing (mixed undergraduate and graduate lecture/discussion)

English 265/2265: Introduction to the Writing of Fiction (undergraduate lecture/workshop/discussion)

English 565/4565: Advanced Workshop in the Writing of Fiction (undergraduate workshop/discussion)

English 568/4568: Advanced Workshop in the Writing of Creative Nonfiction (undergraduate workshop/discussion)

English 398/3398: Introduction to Critical Writing (the “gateway to the major” course in literature for Ohio State undergraduates: a lecture/discussion class that introduces the art of thinking and writing about novels, stories, poems, and plays)

English 4591.01H: Undergraduate Honors Seminar in Creative Writing, a special topics course (Special Topics: Art and Life: A Living Writers Seminar; The Art of Talking Back [Retellings & Responses]; Call and Response: Creative Writing and Music)

English 4596: Studies in Literature and Other Arts, a special topics course (Special Topic: The American Book Musical)

Previous Freshman Seminars: Life Into Art: An Introduction to Artistic Process in Literature; Interdisciplinary Seminar for Young Artists; Why Do Fools Fall In Love? (Portrayals of Romantic Love in Literature, Theater, Film, and Song)

Professor Herman has also been the longtime course director for all sections of English 265/2265 (Introductory Fiction Writing) and 268/2268 (Introductory Creative Nonfiction Writing), supervising all sections taught by TAs.