*Mrs. Rutan* CREATIVE WRITING COURSE SYLLABUS *Room #226*

***Wordle:*** *What is creative writing? Highlight the word/phrase you think is the best. Be ready to share and discuss.*

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*Assignment #2: As I read through the syllabus, underline/highlight parts of my writing that show creativity—either because it has voice, style, grammar, or humor. I want you to look for creative writing and see how it can be used, even with the most humdrum of writing activities (like a syllabus!)*

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I have often wondered:

Where has all the creativity gone?

*Real* creativity and *real* writing—

I want to read something with life, gusto, and panache.

To be inspired and so engrossed that— I want more.

If you can write me something that touches my soul,

No matter what the topic or theme is and

Go to that place in my heart, then yes—you are a creative writer.

HOW TO TAKE CREATIVE WRITING:

Below is a step by step guide to follow when you enroll and partake in Harper Creek’s Creative Writing class…



Step One: Gather vital class materials:

* Composite Journal/WRITER’S NOTEBOOK\*
* Flashdrive
* Binder
* Highlighter
* Reading Books for SSR Days\*
* 5 Divider Tabs for Your Binder *(mentor text, grammar, writing, reading, misc.)*

**Note:** *Remember to keep these vital class materials with you at all times, and for every class.*

Step Two: Get into the right mindset:

This class is about finding your creative writing identity. If you are sitting here, listening, and getting nervous because you don’t have any clue what your writing “identity” is—breath. *Take a breath.* It’s okay. That is what this class is for. You need to realize that it will take time, experimentation, and hard work.

This is an elective class; you are ***CHOOSING*** to be here and write, so if you aren’t dedicated and responsible when it comes to reading and writing, this isn’t the class for you. I am expecting diligence and a respectable work ethic.  *Don’t do your homework—****why are you here?*** *Don’t want to write during workshop time—****why are you here?*** *Don’t care about reading—****why are you here?***

I can give you the tools, skills, and the inspiration to grow as a writer, but you need to give me your time, attention, and reliability as a student. No excuses. No regrets. Let’s write!

**Step Three: Be prepared and get started when the bell rings:**

Every day you need to have your writer’s notebooks and silent reading book, along with the other daily necessities (pen, highlighter) ready at the start of the hour. If you have forgotten something, see me to borrow it—I am more than willing to share, but don’t make it a bad habit.

Also, I am super-duper religious about my class opening activity and you can expect to do something at the very start of the hour, even without my direct instructions. So when you hear that bell, you need to be ready to start the day.

Step Four: Turn in your work to add up your points:

Our class will work on a point scale *meaning—*every point counts in this class. Everything will have its own value and while a homework activity may be worth 20 points, a paper could be worth 100 points.

*So how do you get points in the grade book?*

Simple. Turn in your work, on time, and with effort. The more you turn in and participate, the better your points will be at the end of the semester. Every point counts!

Step Five: Some of that work is going to be homework:

Homework is a chance for you to practice two of the most important skills you will learn in this class: reading and writing. Most of our homework will involve choice reading, and you will be responsible for reading—on your own—several hours every week. You will also have writing homework and will spend time finishing up your major projects and writings at home.

NOTE: **I will accept late homework during the appropriate units, but there will be a late work deduction of 50%.** Harsh, I know, but publishers will never be that generous. Think about it—if you have a deadline as a future writer, and fail to deliver, well…have fun finding another job. You don’t want to create reputation as a slacker. Slacking is lame, so follow through on what I assign to you!

Any other late/missing work arrangements need to be made with Mrs. Rutan beforehand. **Final Assessments and** **major projects (worth over 40points) are also subject to a 20% deduction** unless you speak to me beforehand. See the student handbook for the policy on late work and absences.

* **WHEN A UNIT IS FINISHED AND HAS PASSED, ANY AND ALL MISSING WORK (HOMEWORK, ETC.) WILL NO LONGER BE ACCEPTED.**

Step Six: You are not alone; seek help when you need it!

Harper Creek High School provides a late bus home for students who choose to stay after school to get help with a teacher. Ask Mrs. Rutan for details.

I can almost always make myself available afterschool to any student, you just need to ask and sign up on my white-board! Let me know what days and times so I can be here to help.

Step Seven: Respect the rules, avoid the detentions:

If a student is asked to serve a detention it is because of one of the following reasons…

1. *The student has shown disrespect towards the teacher, another student, or school property.*
2. *The student is repeatedly violating the technology policy of the school (see technology policy).*

Parents may receive a phone call if a student needs to serve a detention so we can organize a time and date, and also so I can explain the situation. Students will use their detention time to make up work or work on other classroom assignments and reading.

I don’t give detentions very often, and as long as you are respectful and productive in my classroom, you should be fine.

Step Six: Get ready to read and write! What is SSR/SWT exactly?

SSR stands for **silent sustain reading;** SWT stands for **silent writing time**. Every day for the first 10-15 minutes-ish of class you will get to do SSR/SWT. That means you need to bring in a book to read to yourself every day OR have your writer’s notebook ready and write.

Just to clarify, SSR needs to be a book you will personally enjoy, and will help inspire your writing, *and* organization *and* structure *for writing*. SSR is silent reading we will be doing in class and is a grade. SSR will also take place outside of class weekly for homework. You will be expected to read—start to finish—several choice books by the end of the semester, and write, reflect, and present on them. You may bring in book from home, or borrow from the school or my personal library, and need to make sure your parent/guardian approves what you are choosing to read.

Ideally I promote SSR three times a week (Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays), but I also allow SWT as well because some students really want to do their own free writing. Either works for me as long as it is productive, relevant to my class, and SILENT!

Step Seven: Bathroom breaks are a privilege.

You should use the passing time in-between your classes to take care of your bathroom needs. I understand that needs arise and will try to be flexible; however, students who abuse their bathroom privileges are subject to lose these privileges during the semester. The bathroom is **just down the hall**, so you should return to class in a timely manner. No wandering the halls, or picking the bathroom in Varsity Hall to waste time—take care of your business quickly!

Step Eight: Turn off and put away all technology devices.

See Harper Creek’s student handbook for the specifics, but cell phones and IPODS/Mp3 players are not allowed; therefore, if I see it, I will confiscate it and it with be placed in the classroom organizer, and/or given to the office. No exceptions. Cry all you want, but if you are an habitual offender, you won’t see your beloved tech device until the end of the day. That would create total agony, I know.

Teacher rant: I HATE CELLPHONES. Seeing your little shifty eyeballs looking intently in your laps is a pretty good indication you are being sneaking little texters. Or even better yet—when I see the unnatural glow of the cell phone screen on your faces when the lights are off for a film study. I’ve gotten really good at catching you, so don’t tempt me.

Step Nine: Get ready to explore and create a lot of creative writing techniques!

Curriculum: *(schedule and assignments are tentative and subject to change)*

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| **Unit #1:** POETRY | Focus on: structure, diction, syntax, literary devices, and organization |
| **Final Assessment:** *Poetry Anthology* | **10-12 Poetic Works** |

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| **Unit #2:** NON-FICTION | Focus on: personal narrative, memoir, real-life stories |
| **Final Assessment:** *One Traditional Memoir, One Non-Traditional Memoir* | **2 Complete Personal Narratives** |

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| **Unit #3:** MUTLIGENRE RESEARCH | Focus on: researching, getting ideas for writing, exploring different creative genres. |
| **Final Assessment:***Multi-Genre Research Final Project* | **5-7 pages of writing pieces and at least 5 valid resources** |

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| **Unit #3:** FICTION and SHORT STORY | Focus on: fiction short stories, plot structure, and applying research. |
| **Final Assessment:***One Key Piece of Fiction Writing* | **10-15 pages of writing (either in one piece, or several pieces)** |

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| **Unit #4:** PUBLISHING | Focus on: researching, finding publishing opportunities, and submitting a work to be published. |
| **Final Assessment:***Publishing Brief and Reflection* | **Students must publish a piece of writing (local newspaper, contest, poetry slam etc.)** |

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| **Unit #5:** PORTFOLIO AND CELEBRATION  **(end of the semester)** | Focus on: celebrating, sharing, and reflecting on how you have grown. |
| **Final Assessment:***Electronic Portfolio* | **Student must do a presentation and organize their portfolio.** |

***Class Texts:*** *(list will grow—this is only the second semester I am teaching this!!)*

* Assorted mentor text including: poetry, editorials, short stories, etc.
* The Encyclopedia of an Ordinary Life, by Amy Krouse Rosenthal
* The Zombie Survival Guide by Max Brooks
* On Writing by Stephen King
* The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven by Sherman Alexie
* *Stranger than Fiction* directed by Marc Forster (Rated PG13)

6

* *Pride and Prejudice* directed by Joe Wright (Rated PG)

Creative Writing Techniques…

Mrs. Rutan’s Contact Information:

Mrs. Amber Rutan

12677 Beadle Lake Road

Battle Creek, MI 49014

**Phone: 269-441-8450 Ext. 8483**

**E-mail:** rutana@harpercreek.net

**Contact me any time, e-mail is the best!**

Final Step: Homework Assignment!

Fill in your name in the line below and sign your name stating you have read through the syllabus. You will **Thursday September 10, 2015.**

I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ have read through the class syllabus and understand the rules and expectations for ***Creative Writing.***

Student’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent’s E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent’s Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Best Time to Contact:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Information:** Please indicate if there is anything else I should know about your student to help me teach them this semester: