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Homestead Campus

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

## **Study Guide**

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# CRW-2001

# Creative Writing 1

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**Miami Dade College  
Gordon Rule Writing Rubric  
Spring 2007**

	<b>Demonstrates Emerging College-Level Writing 1</b>	<b>Demonstrates Satisfactory College-Level Writing 2</b>	<b>Demonstrates Proficient College-Level Writing 3</b>	<b>Demonstrates Exemplary College-Level Writing 4</b>
Addresses Purpose and Audience	Wavers in purpose.  Incompletely addresses assigned topic or directions.  Shows need for more study of issues.  Style uneven.	Adheres to purpose, fulfills assignment.  Shows adequate understanding of key issues.  Style generally appropriate to intended audience.	Communicates purpose clearly.  Shows full understanding of issues.  Style consistently effective for intended audience.	Communicates purpose with sophistication.  Beyond understanding of issues, shows insight.  Style engages audience, establishes writer's credibility.

	<b>Demonstrates Emerging College-Level Writing 1</b>	<b>Demonstrates Satisfactory College-Level Writing 2</b>	<b>Demonstrates Proficient College-Level Writing 3</b>	<b>Demonstrates Exemplary College-Level Writing 4</b>
Demonstrates Effective Organization of Content	Loose focus on central idea.  Contains some repetition and digression.  Paragraph structure weak.	Central idea evident.  Paragraph structure sometimes supports content.  Consistency, logic and transitions show some weaknesses.	Central idea clear.  Paragraph structure uniformly supports content.  Consistency, logic and transitions well managed.	Central idea clear.  Paragraph structure consistently and effectively supports content.  Clear logic and effective transitions.

	<b>Demonstrates Emerging College-Level Writing 1</b>	<b>Demonstrates Satisfactory College-Level Writing 2</b>	<b>Demonstrates Proficient College-Level Writing 3</b>	<b>Demonstrates Exemplary College-Level Writing 4</b>
Demonstrates Effective Development: Thesis Statement, Main points, Supporting Information, Conclusion	Thesis evident but support very general and/or inconsistent.  Several factual errors.	Thesis evident but supported by a mixture of generalizations and specific detail.  Some factual errors.	Thesis, stated or implied.  Presents a plan of development that is carried out.  Effective supporting details.  Consistent development.  No factual errors.	Stated or implied thesis developed logically, coherently and extensively with convincing, specific supporting details.  Strong evidence of critical thinking.  No factual errors.

	<b>Demonstrates Emerging College-Level Writing 1</b>	<b>Demonstrates Satisfactory College-Level Writing 2</b>	<b>Demonstrates Proficient College-Level Writing 3</b>	<b>Demonstrates Exemplary College-Level Writing 4</b>
<b>Employs Effective Language</b>	<p>Frequent errors in word choice.</p> <p>Sentence structure and mechanics seriously affect clarity.</p>	<p>Word choice correct but simple / without variety.</p> <p>Errors in mechanics and / or usage do not obscure content of assignment.</p>	<p>Word choice accurate, varied.</p> <p>Occasional errors in sentence structure.</p> <p>Usage and mechanics do not hinder writer's ability to communicate purpose.</p>	<p>Choice of language consistently precise, purposeful.</p> <p>Nearly flawless sentence structure.</p> <p>Usage, mechanics contribute to writer's ability to communicate purpose.</p>

The following descriptors will be used effective Spring 2007 as the MDC criteria for “college-level writing.”

The writing will:

- a. have a clearly defined central idea or thesis;
- b. provide adequate support for that idea;
- c. be organized clearly and logically;
- d. utilize the conventions of standard edited American English;
- e. be presented in a format appropriate to the assignment.

CRW2001 – Creative Writing 1

Text: Clark, Kevin. *The Mind's Eye: A Guide to Writing Poetry*. New York: Pearson-Longman, 2008.

Grade Criteria:	Journal.....	20%
	Portfolio of your writing.....	60%
	Collection of other writers' work.....	20%

**Week 1:** Begin your journal. Record whatever interests you, practice writing different kinds of writing, copy passages from other authors, jot down impressions – conversations you hear, sights you see, situations you encounter.

**Week 1:** Read the following beginnings of four works of fiction. Then write your own beginning of two pieces of short fiction by imitating two of the styles.

1. Ernest Hemingway:

In the late summer of that year we lived in a house in a village that looked across the river and the plain to the mountains. In the bed of the river there were pebbles and boulders, dry and white in the sun, and the water was clear and swiftly moving and blue in the channels. Troops went by the house and down the road and the dust they raised powdered the leaves of the trees. The trunks of the trees too were dusty and the leaves fell early that year and we saw the troops marching along the road and the dust rising and leaves, stirred by the breeze, falling and the soldiers marching and afterward the road bare and white except for the leaves.

The plain was rich with crops; there were many orchards of fruit trees and beyond the plain the mountains were brown and bare. There was fighting in the mountains and at night we could see the flashes of the artillery. In the dark it was like summer lightning, but the nights were cool and there was not the feeling of a storm coming.

## 2. Julia Alvarez

### **Antojos**

*Yolanda*

The old aunts lounge in the white wicker armchairs, flipping open their fans, snapping them shut. Except that more of them are dressed in the greys and blacks of widowhood, the aunts seem little changed since five years ago when Yolando was last on the island.

Sitting among the aunts in the less comfortable dining chairs, the cousins are flashes of color in turquoise jumpsuits and tight jersey dresses.

The cake is on its own table, the little cousins clustered around it, arguing over who will get what slice. When their squabbles reach a certain mother-annoying level, they are called away by their nursemaids, who sit on stools at the far end of the patio, a phalanx of starched white uniforms.

Before anyone has turned to greet her in the entryway, Yolanda sees herself as they will, shabby in a black cotton skirt and jersey top, sandals on her feet, her wild black hair held back with a hairband. Like a missionary, her cousins will say, like one of those Peace Corps girls who have let themselves go so as to do dubious good in the world.

## 3. Edwidge Danticat

His name is Sebastien Onius.

He comes most nights to put an end to my nightmare, the one I have all the time, of my parents drowning. While my body is struggling against sleep, fighting itself to awaken, he whispers for me to “lie still while I take you back.”

“Back where?” I ask without feeling my lips moving.

He says, “I will take you back into the cave across the river.”

I lurch at him and stumble, trying to rise. He levels my balance with the tips of his long but curled fingers, each of them alive on its own as they crawl towards me. I grab his body, my head barely reaching the center of his chest. He is lavishly handsome by the dim light of my castor oil lamp, even though the cane stalks have ripped apart most of the skin on his shiny black face, leaving him with crisscrossed trails of furrowed scars. His arms are as wide as one of my bare thighs. They are steel, hardened by four years of sugarcane harvests.

#### 4. Walter Mosley

I was surprised to see a white man walk into Joppy’s bar. It’s not just that he was white but he wore an off-white linen suit and shirt with Panama straw hat and bone shoes over flashing white silk socks. His skin was smooth and pale with just a few freckles. One lock of strawberry-blond hair escaped the band of his hat. He stopped in the doorway, filling it with his large frame, and surveyed the room with pale eyes; not a color I’d ever seen in a man’s eyes. When he looked at me I felt a thrill of fear, but that went away quickly because I was used to white people by 1948.

I had spent five years with white men, and women, from Africa to Italy, through Paris, and into the Fatherland itself. I ate with them and slept with them, and I killed enough blue-eyed young men to know that they were just as afraid to die as I was.

evaluation (1)

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**Week 2: *Mind's Eye*: Read Ch. 1.**

Try writing a haiku, a three-line poem expressing a thought on nature. The form originated in Japan, but has been adopted into English. Assignment: write two haiku.

Some things to keep in mind: Japanese writing is syllabic rather than alphabetic, so the haiku is a natural form for the Japanese, and they require five syllables in the first line; seven, in the middle line; and five in the last line. Translators sometimes have trouble maintaining the 5-7-5 syllabic arrangement when translating from Japanese to English while at the same time staying true to the tone and meaning of the original haiku.

Those writing in English can, however, work hard to get the 5-7-5 syllabic arrangement in English and end with a good poem.

A haiku contains a special season word (the *kigo*) representative of the season in which is a reference to the natural world, a pivot word that moves the reader to *satori* (a moment of understanding) and a cutting (through punctuation) that divides the haiku visually.

Here are some examples translated from Japanese.

- The first soft snow!  
Enough to bend the leaves  
Of the jonquil low.  
-- Basho
- The temple bell stops—  
but the sound keeps coming  
out of the flowers.  
-- Basho (1644 - 94)  
(tr. Robert Bly)
- The old man  
Cutting barley –  
Bent like a sickle  
-- Buson
- An old pond!  
A frog jumps in-  
The sound of water.  
-- Basho
- A man, just one –  
Also a fly, just one –  
In the huge drawing room  
■ Issa

The / temp / le / bell / stops –  
But / the / sound / keeps / com / ing  
Out / of / the / flow / ers.

This is a very good translation, maintaining both the structure (almost) and the tone and meaning.

A man, | just one –|  
Also a **fly**, | just one –| (**kigo, cutting**)  
**In** the huge drawing room (**pivot word**)

evaluation (2)

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**Week 3:** *Mind's Eye*: Read Ch. 2.

Fiction: Short Story: Use the paragraph below as the opening for a short story you then continue and complete. But, the closing paragraph below the first must be the closing – the ending of your story. Complete in two to four pages.

(your title)

She and her children had packed everything into two bags just as her husband had told her, so when he came for them, they would be ready. When he came, he seemed stressed and anxious. “Ok,” he said. “Let’s go. I’ll carry the bags.”

...

Now they were in a strange place. She could no longer read the signs along the roads, and she could not understand the speech of the people along the streets. Her husband put down the bags. “Well,” he said, “we’re here.”

evaluation (3)

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**Week 4:** *Mind's Eye*: Read Ch. 3.

Nonfiction: Read the following passage by William Least Heat Moon from his book *Blue Highways*; notice how descriptive the selection is. Then note his “list of nothing in particular.”

Produce your own “list of nothing in particular” based upon your own observations, following your introductory paragraph of description.

Straight as a chief’s countenance the road lay ahead, curves so long and gradual as to be imperceptible except on the map. For nearly a hundred miles due west of Eldorado, not a single town. It was the Texas some people see as a barren waste when

they cross it, the part they later describe at the motel bar as “nothing.” They say, “There’s nothing out there.”

Driving through the miles of nothing, I decided to test the hypothesis and stopped somewhere in western Crockett County on the top of a broad mesa, just off Texas 29. At a distance, the land looked so rocky and dry, a religious man could believe that the First Hand never got around to the creation in here. Still, somebody had decided to string barbed wire around it.

No plant grew higher than my head. For a while, I heard only miles of wind against the Ghost: but after the ringing in my ears stopped, I heard myself breathing, then a bird note, an answering call, another kind of birdsong, and another mockingbird, mourning dove, an enigma. I heard the high zizz of flies the color of gray flannel and the deep buzz of a blue bumblebee. I made a list of nothing in particular:

1. mockingbird
2. mourning dove
3. enigma bird (heard not saw)
4. gray flies
5. blue bumblebee
6. two circling buzzards (not yet, boys)
7. orange ants
8. black ants
9. orange-black ants (what’s been going on?)
10. three species of spiders
11. opossum skull
12. jackrabbit (chewed on cactus)
13. deer (left scat)
14. coyote (left track)
15. small rodent (den full of seed hulls under rock)
16. snake (skin hooked on cactus spine)
17. prickly pear cactus (yellow blossoms)
18. hedgehog cactus (orange blossoms)

19. barrel cactus (red blossoms)
20. devil's pincushion (no blossoms)
21. catclaw (no better name)
22. two species of grass (neither green, both alive)
23. yellow flowers (blossoms smaller than peppercorns)
24. sage (indicates alkali-free soil)
25. mesquite (three-foot plants with eighty-foot roots to reach water that fell as rain two thousand years ago)
26. greasewood (oh, yes)
27. joint fir (steeped stems make Brigham Young tea)
28. earth
29. sky
30. wind (always)

That was all the nothing I could identify then, but had I waited until dark when the desert really comes to life, I could have done better. To say nothing is out here is incorrect: to say the desert is stingy with everything except space and light, stone and earth is closer to the truth.

evaluation (4)

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**Week 5:** *Mind's Eye*: Read Ch. 4. Poetry: Read the following newspaper story and then the poem "Traveling Through the Dark" by William Stafford. Stafford wrote the poem in response to the story. Read and select a news story and then write your own poem based on the story.

GUERNEVILLE (AP) -- After David Koester accidentally ran over a pregnant doe with his pickup, he calmly knelt down at the side of the highway and used a \$6.50 pocket knife to perform a Caesarean section that saved the fawn's life.

"I just marvel . . . that he had the presence of mind to do that," said Marge Davis, a volunteer with the Sonoma Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, where Koester, a roofer, and his fiancé, Allison McCracken, were taking a drive after dinner Wednesday when the incident happened. Just before dusk, they were approaching Guerneville on Highway 116 and

were rounding a curve when the doe "came ripping down the bank and into the front of my truck. I'd slowed down quite a bit but I didn't stop and I hit her," Koester said.

Koester pulled off the highway and ran to the doe, but as a lifelong hunter familiar with wildlife, he realized immediately the animal was dead. He also noticed it was pregnant – and then he saw its belly jiggle.

I reached down and felt the shin of a front leg of a young one still kicking and moving inside," he said. With his dull, old pocket knife, Koester performed the delivery.

"I collapsed his ribs and cleaned his mouth," Koester explained. "He drew a breath."

Koester and McCracken cared for the fawn that night and took it to the wildlife center on Thursday. The center has about 40 Sonoma County volunteers willing to care for animals in their homes.

It is in perfect health," said Davis, who adopted the fawn until it can return to its habitat. "It is frisky and feisty and eating."

As for Koester, he admitted it wasn't easy letting go of the wide-eyed fawn. "It tore me up," he said, "Allison and I had a good cry."

### **Traveling Through the Dark by William Stafford**

Traveling through the dark I found a deer  
Dead on the edge of the Wilson River Road.  
It is usually best to roll them into the canyon:  
That road is narrow; to swerve might make more dead.

By glow of the tail light I stumbled back of the car  
And stood by the heap, a doe, a recent killing;  
She had stiffened already, almost cold.  
I dragged her off; she large in the belly.

My fingers touching her side brought me the reason –  
Her side was warm; her fawn lay there waiting.  
Alive, still, never to be born.  
Beside that mountain road I hesitated.

The car aimed ahead its lowered parking lights;  
Under the hood purred the steady engine.  
I stood in the glare of the warm exhaust turning red;  
Around our group I could hear the wilderness listen.

I thought hard for us all – my only swerving –  
Then pushed her over the edge into the river.  
evaluation (5)

**Week 6: *Mind's Eye*:** Read Ch. 5. Interviewing: Interview someone and then write a story from your interview. Or, have yourself be interviewed by someone else and write a story based your answers. Two to six pages.

1 - Plan ahead so that you use the interviewee's time wisely. Know as much as possible about the person before you sit down for the interview. It's an insult and a timewaster to ask information that you could have gotten in advance by asking the person to send you a resume, CV or clippings of previous coverage -- or by doing some advance research yourself.

2 - Plan out a rough list of what you want to ask. It shouldn't be a rigid script, because sometimes the person's answers will take you in an unexpected direction that's better than what you planned. But have an idea of the key points you want to address and a rough order of the questions. Focus primarily on questions that require more than a yes/no answer, and try to ask even the hard questions in a sympathetic manner. Also -- even if you're trying to follow a list of questions -- try to let the segues to different questions arise naturally so that it feels to the other person more like a conversation than being expertly grilled.

3 - Keep a comfortable level of eye contact for the other person. Let your face be relaxed and your body's position convey interest -- but not interest so intense that the person begins to feel like a steak in front of a hungry vulture. It's a delicate balance. Just remember that most people are either nervous or wary of being interviewed; they're putting a lot of trust in you by consenting to let you represent them in print. Do them the courtesy of trying to put them at ease.

4 - Don't rush to fill in the silences. Develop a repertoire of interested nods, puzzled glances, "hmm's" and other verbal and visual clues that you want the other person to elaborate. And when all else fails, you can continue to ask leading questions, like, "Can you tell me more about that?" or "How interesting. Can you help me put that in context with what else was going on at the time in your life?"

5 - Listening to what the other person is saying is only half the story. Look at his/her mannerisms, listen to the volume and steadiness of the person's voice, notice how he/she has dressed and groomed himself/herself, and notice details of the surroundings. I always prefer to meet in the person's home or office (as long as I feel safe with them) so that they can feel more comfortable on their own turf.

6 - Try to make your writing as unobtrusive as possible. I usually write with the tablet in my lap and my eyes on the person as much as possible. If you let the interview remain conversational and pleasant, people often will relax and chat much more naturally.

7 - Look over a news story that you particularly admire. Think of the specific and the general questions that the journalist had to ask in order to get that information. Try to think of what a logical order of those questions would be. Model your own interviews on the insights you glean from this.

evaluation (6)

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**Week 7: *Mind's Eye*:** Read Ch. 6. Imitating a poetic form. Below are three types of short poems: limerick, triolet, and acrostic. Try to write one of each.

### **Limerick**

A limerick has five lines, with three metrical feet in the first, second and fifth lines and two metrical feet in the third and fourth lines. The rhyme scheme is usually AABBA.

The first line of a limerick traditionally introduces a person and a place, with the place appearing at the end of the first line and therefore establishing the rhyme scheme for the second and fifth lines.

The most prized limericks incorporate a kind of twist, which may be revealed in the final line, or may lie in the way the rhymes are often intentionally tortured, or both.

Below are some examples of limericks:

There was an old man from Peru,  
Who dreamed he was eating his shoe.  
He woke in a fright  
In the middle of the night  
And found it was perfectly true.

Said an ape as he swung by his tail,  
To his off-spring both female and male;  
"From your off-spring, my dears,  
In a couple of years,  
May evolve a professor at Yale.

A tutor who tooted his flute  
Tried to tutor two tooters to toot.  
Said the two to the tutor,  
"Is it harder to toot or  
To tutor two tooters to toot?"

### **Triolet**

The name triolet comes from the repetition of the key line three times .

Of the triolet's eight lines, the first line is used three times and the second line is repeated once. So the requirement for rhyme words is easy, and the eight lines really come down to only five different ones--easier than it seems at first.

## Her Shadow

The moment I said her name in the night,  
her shadow moved among my senses.  
A shudder came in the moon's half-light  
the moment I said her name; in the night  
my face came flushing red and bright  
as when our love became intense as  
the moment. I said her name in the night—  
her shadow moved among my senses.

Larry Gross

## How great my grief

How great my grief, my joys how few,  
Since first it was my fate to know thee!  
- Have the slow years not brought to view  
How great my grief, my joys how few,  
Nor memory shaped old times anew,  
Nor loving-kindness helped to show thee  
How great my grief, my joys how few,  
Since first it was my fate to know thee?

Thomas Hardy

## Acrostic

An acrostic is a poem or other writing in an alphabetic script, in which the first letter, syllable or word of each line, paragraph or other recurring feature in the text spells out another message. The acrostic is only as long as the word or phrase which you are writing about.

*Elizabeth it is in vain you say  
"Love not" — thou sayest it in so sweet a way:  
In vain those words from thee or L.E.L.  
Zantippe's talents had enforced so well:  
Ah! if that language from thy heart arise,  
Breath it less gently forth — and veil thine eyes.  
Endymion, recollect, when Luna tried  
To cure his love — was cured of all beside —  
His follie — pride — and passion — for he died*

Edgar Allan Poe  
evaluation (7)

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**Week 8:** *Mind's Eye*: Read Ch. 7. Write a short scene for a play or movie.

Questions for writers of dramatic dialogue: Does the dialogue . . .

- contribute to dramatic incident?
- avoid talk for the sake of talk?
- maintain comprehensibility and interest?
- match character?
- link the beginning of one speech to the speech just ended?
- allot the most important things being said to the opening and close of a speech?
- convey only one important dramatic idea or ruling emotion in any speech?
- never mirror a complete reversal in emotion inside a single speech?
  
- represent a character's effort to remove an obstacle to getting what he wants?
- provide exposition only by having one character use information to propel another into action?
- use "forwards" to increase the thirst for what is coming up?
  
- grow from the character and the conflict, and, in turn, reveal the character and carry the action?
- derive from characters permitted to grow dialectically until the slowly rising conflict has proved the premise?
- show naturally and without strain, what has happened to the characters that is important to the action of the play?
- build up as the story builds up?
- convey the rhythm and meaning of each scene by sound as well as sense?
- reveal character by telling what he is and hinting at what he will be?
- reveal background and foreshadow upcoming events?
- save words?
- sacrifice "brilliance" for character?
- make clever language part of the play?
- stem from the character and not the author?
- let the character speak in the language of his own world?
- not break away from character and divert attention to itself?
- avoid pedantry?

## Testing 1 2 3

By Lee Moyer

[www.leemoyer.com](http://www.leemoyer.com)

Written & Performed 5/18/02

**Cast** (w/ intended players):

**Principal Skinner** (Greg Hays): Stern high school administrator. White male in his 50s

**Miss Conway** (Annaliese Moyer): A young teacher who tries too hard.

**Jerome** (Clinton Johnston): A 10 year old black student. Sits in the back. Smart and hip.

**Robert** (Lee Moyer): A 10 year old white student in front row. Smart and quite square.

**Scene:** An American classroom, a sign on the wall reads "Miss Conway - Grade 4". Skinner stands in the center of the room with his hand resting paternally on shoulder of Miss Conway (also standing). An experiment in testing methodology follows.

### [Full Lights]

**Skinner** (addressing the audience): Good morning class. As you all probably know, the old "Standards of Learning" scores have fouled this school's reputation and continue to threaten our funding for the future. With that in mind, and with Miss Conway's blessing, *[Conway winces]* I've decided to try a little "experiment" in your class today.

Today we'll be focusing on vocabulary, the building block of success in America.

**Conway** (whispers to Skinner): I must confess that I am skeptical about this exercise sir. *[Conway sits down]*

**Skinner** (ignoring her): So **class**, are we ready to begin? Good. What we need for this experiment is a young white male...

**Robert** raises his hand and waves it wildly to get Skinner's attention.

**Skinner:** Very good young man. Robert is it?

**Robert:** Yes sir.

**Skinner:** And we need a young black male of the same age. Any volunteers?

NO volunteers, eh?

Miss Conway, will you please help select a counterpart for young Robert?

**Conway** (reluctantly): Jerome, would you please volunteer?

**Jerome** nods once solemnly.

**Skinner:** The first word is "Fat". Will you please tell us what that word means... Jerome.

**Jerome** (speaking coolly): Hip. You know. Like "What a totally phat show" or "that chick is phat, man"

**Skinner**(chagrined): Hmmm... Robert?

**Robert** (Mr. Smartypants): Obese, overweight.

**Skinner:** Very good Robert. The second word is "Cool". Jerome, will you please tell us what **that** word means?

**Jerome** (seeming more nervous now): Awesome, tasty, fresh, y'know... cool.

**Skinner:** I'm sorry son, but you can't claim that a word means **itself**. That's redundant and just plain silly. Robert?

**Robert** (Gloating a bit): Moderately cold. Chilled.

**Skinner:** Thank you Robert. The next word is "Class". Jerome?

**Jerome** (Speaking up energetically): I know this one.

Class is America's caste system where the poor and disenfranchised are screwed out of their labor by rich folk who need another House in Palm Springs and a new paint job for their Lexus. The system where the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

People always goin' on about the Racism, but my mom says it's Class that's the biggest obstacle. Class keep people apart and allows the inequities that are the foundations of Capitalism to remain in place to benefit the few at the expense of the many. Class sucks.

**Conway** (smiling): Very **good** Jerome.

**Skinner** (ignoring Conway): I'm sorry son. I do so wish you'd pay more attention in "class". Robert?

**Robert:** A gathering of students- also a mark of high style or distinction

**Skinner** (to Miss Conway): I will **never** understand why the black kids always seem to fail at even the **simplest** standardized tests...

[Blackout]

evaluation (8) \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 9:** *Mind's Eye*: Read Ch. 8.

Imagine yourself as an animal. What kind of animal would you be? Write a short-short story (one to two pages) or a poem about yourself as that animal.

evaluation (9)

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**Week 10:** *Mind's Eye*: Read Ch. 9.

Imagine you are a superhero. What kind of superpower do you have? Do you have a secret weakness? Write about an event in your super hero life: You may write a story, a movie scene, or a comic strip (if you are also an artist).

evaluation (10)

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**Week 11:** *Mind's Eye*: Read Ch. 10.

Remember a moment in your life that was filled with emotion (either happy or sad or frightening). Using that moment, write a poem or song about the experience.

evaluation (11)

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**Week 12:** *Mind's Eye*: Read Ch. 11.

Creative nonfiction: As in week eleven, remember a life moment and write about it creatively in an essay or prose poem (examples below).

In a prose poem:

- The writing is continuous and without line breaks.
- The piece may be of any length and may be divided into paragraphs. A single sentence or sentence fragment can be a prose poem, as can multiple paragraphs.
- The natural rhythm of thought can lead to rhythmical cadences in a prose poem.
- Internal rhyme and alliteration and repetition can be used. Some such trait of poetry must be present. Otherwise it is prose, not a prose poem.

- It lies between free verse and prose.
- Usually has compressed thought and intensity.

And if sometimes, on the steps of a palace or the green grass of a ditch, in the mournful solitude of your room, you wake again, drunkenness already diminishing or gone, ask the wind, the wave, the star, the bird, the clock, everything that is flying, everything that is groaning, everything that is rolling, everything that is singing, everything that is speaking. . .ask what time it is and wind, wave, star, bird, clock will answer you: "It is time to be drunk! So as not to be the martyred slaves of time, be drunk, be continually drunk! On wine, on poetry or on virtue as you wish." – Charles Baudelaire

#### Beggar Woman of Naples

When I lived in Naples there was always a beggar woman at the gate of my palace, to whom I would toss some coins before climbing into my carriage. One day, surprised at never being thanked, I looked at the beggar woman. Now, as I looked at her, I saw that what I had taken for a beggar woman was a wooden case painted green which contained some red earth and a few half-rotted bananas... – Max Jacobs

## The Prose Poem

by Campbell McGrath

On the map it is precise and rectilinear as a chessboard, though driving past you would hardly notice it, this boundary line or ragged margin, a shallow swale that cups a simple trickle of water, less rill than rivulet, more gully than dell, a tangled ditch grown up throughout with a fearsome assortment of wildflowers and bracken. There is no fence, though here and there a weathered post asserts a former claim, strands of fallen wire taken by the dust. To the left a cornfield carries into the distance, dips and rises to the blue sky, a rolling plain of green and healthy plants aligned in close order, row upon row upon row. To the right, a field of wheat, a field of hay, young grasses breaking the soil, filling their allotted land with the rich, slow-waving spectacle of their grain. As for the farmers, they are, for the most part, indistinguishable: here the tractor is red, there yellow; here a pair of dirty hands, there a pair of dirty hands. They are cultivators of the soil. They grow crops by pattern, by acre, by foresight, by habit. What corn is to one, wheat is to the other, and though to some eyes the similarities outweigh the differences it would be as unthinkable for the second to commence planting corn as for the first to switch over to wheat. What happens in the gully between them is no concern of theirs, they say, so long as the plough stays out, the weeds stay in the ditch where they belong, though anyone would notice the wind-sewn cornstalks poking up their shaggy ears like young lovers run off into the bushes, and the kinship of these wild grasses with those the farmer cultivates is too obvious to mention, sage and dun-colored stalks hanging their noble heads, hoarding exotic burrs and seeds, and yet it is neither corn nor wheat that truly flourishes there, nor some jackalopian hybrid of the two. What grows in that place is possessed of a beauty all its own, ramshackle and unexpected, even in winter, when the wind hangs icicles from the skeletons of briars and small tracks cross the snow in search of forgotten grain; in the spring the little trickle of water swells to welcome frogs and minnows, a muskrat, a family of turtles, nesting doves in the verdant grass; in summer it is a thoroughfare for raccoons and opossums, field mice, swallows and black birds, migrating egrets, a passing fox; in autumn the geese avoid its abundance, seeking out windrows of toppled stalks, fatter grain more quickly discerned, more easily digested. Of those that travel the local road, few pay that fertile hollow any mind, even those with an eye for what blossoms, vetch and timothy, early forsythia, the fatted calf in the fallow field, the rabbit running for cover, the hawk's descent from the lightning-struck tree. You've passed this way yourself many times, and can tell me, if you would, do the formal fields end where the valley begins, or does everything that surrounds us emerge from its embrace?

evaluation (12)

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**Week 13:** *Mind's Eye:* Read Ch. 12. Portfolio: The final project is to collect the final draft of each of the writings you have done during this term into a portfolio to be turned in during week 15.

**Week 14:** *Mind's Eye:* Read Ch. 13. Portfolio work. A project of your own making. Consult the professor.  
evaluation (13)

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**Week 15:** *Mind's Eye:* Read Ch. 14. Submit your portfolio.

**Week 16:** *Mind's Eye:* Read Ch. 15. Review your progress as a writer with the professor.  
Evaluation of journal

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evaluation of assemblage of other writers' work

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Final Grade

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