

IWP/AUB Writing Workshops

Spring 2011

Instructors:

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Course Introduction:

Welcome to our online fiction & poetry workshops, hosted by the International Writing Program and funded by the U.S. State Department. My name is Marcela Fuentes and I'll be leading the fiction side of the upcoming semester's creative writing workshops. My colleague and co-instructor, Blueberry Elizabeth Morningsnow, will be leading the poetry side of things. We both live in Iowa City and are graduates of the Iowa Writers' Workshop. Hiba Krisht is our colleague at AUB; she will be assisting with the coordination of this venture.

Course Format

We'll be using Elluminate Live! a software program something like Skype (although much more robust and heavier on the machine) to facilitate these sessions. You'll need a computer, a webcam, headphones and a mic. The Elluminate Site will be up all semester long. Feel free to login and poke around at any time to familiarize yourself with the program.

As a complement to our group interactions, there are two other components included in this distance learning course. They are 1) the Writing Repository, an online filing cabinet where you will post your workshop letters, submit manuscripts and collect supplemental materials and 2) the Discussion Forum, a space for you to continue discussions about the workshops outside of our hour-long session. There is no book or 'required reading' material for this group other than your own work and occasional supplemental materials I post to our web repository. Through this kind of multi-layer online discussion, we'll work on our drafts, polish material and get reader reactions.

Writing Repository: <https://sites.google.com/site/aubwritingworkshops/home>

Discussion Forum: <http://groups.google.com/group/AUBWritingWorkshop>

Elluminate Live! Site:

https://globalcampus.uiowa.edu/join_meeting.html?meetingId=1262309709089

Fiction Workshop:

This workshop will be conducted through face-to-face online interactions. For the fiction workshop, we will be meeting once per week. Students will put up stories twice during the semester.

Please note that I will be recording our Elluminate Live! workshop sessions. This is so that if someone misses a session he or she will be able to listen to the workshop later in the week. This recording will be available as an embedded file on a private site only. **I will not publish or distribute anything with your likeness or voice to a public forum without first getting your permission.**

At each session, which will be about an hour, we will talk about two stories. These stories will be submitted by group members—at least a week in advance of the workshop date. Later during the week, I will skype-conference with each writer individually. The rest of the group will offer commentary during the session and write a “workshop letter” to the writers according to the guidelines I have provided. These workshop letters should be about a page long and will be due at the time of the workshop.

I'm happy to look at flash fiction, short stories, and novel excerpts. If you are working on a large manuscript (a novel), you may turn in a maximum of 25 pages or one chapter per workshop. However, I will work with you individually via email correspondence and skype sessions and I am happy to read the whole manuscript.

Poetry Workshop

There is no required text for this class, but I will create a packet of poems and e-mail it to all of you a week before our class meets. I will also post the packet to our Writing Repository. Every time we meet, we will discuss this writing in the packet a bit before we start talking about each other's work. I also expect that we will be discussing and workshopping one poem each from two people during every class. To that end, I will also post a discussion thread for each poet's workshop. That way, if we do not get to your comment during the live session, we can still discuss the work at length.

In each packet that I create, I will include at least one poetry “assignment” or experiment. This assignment will be optional—it will be for those who are feeling stuck and uninspired, or for those who simply want to experiment and see what it's like to work with restrictive formal stipulations.

Poems should be no longer than 2 pages—in the interest of giving us enough time to adequately cover what needs to be covered during your workshop. I am definitely able to look at longer work, however, via personal e-mail correspondence.

Everybody turns in a poem for every class session, even if we will only workshop two of those poems in the upcoming class. This way, by reading each other's work all semester, we start to gain familiarity with each other's writing in a way that wouldn't be possible if we only turned two poems in during the entire run of the class. It tends to make workshopping more productive.

As we have a small group, we will be meeting once every two weeks. That being the case, I believe we will all have enough time to turn in a poem each class meeting. You will be allowed to turn in the same poem twice or even three times, especially if there was a particular poem that you really wanted us as a class to help you with when it came your turn for workshop.

An advantage to this is that if everyone was able to turn in a poem for every class, we could occasionally have a workshop session in the style of the Squaw Valley Poetry Workshops. Squaw Valley is a national writers' conference here in the United States, and holding a workshop Squaw Valley style simply means that everyone in the class would read aloud his or her poem from that week, and that each poem would also get a short critique—basically, a fast-forwarded and compressed workshopping session.

Fiction & Poetry Workshop Notes

- Please turn in your manuscript and letters as PDF files. These are much easier to open and read.
- Please be prompt with turning in your work. Everyone needs time to read and respond.
- Please be respectful and courteous in the workshop and in your letters. We are here to be supportive of each other.
- If you cannot upload your files to the Repository, please email Marcela or Blue and she will help you post them.