



CIEE Prague, Czech Republic

Course title:	Immersive Approaches to Sustained Creative Writing
Course code:	CRWR 2002 PRAG
Programs offering course:	Business, Arts and Sciences, Central European Studies, Communication, New Media, and Journalism
Language of instruction:	English
U.S. semester credits:	3.00
Contact hours:	45.00
Term:	Fall 2023

Course Description

This course is designed to give students an in-depth experience of the creative writing process and the personal and creative challenges faced therein. The focus is on creative self-development within an immersive context. The course encourages students' involvement with local environment as well as cooperation with local practitioners to explore topics that students find relevant to their study abroad in Prague, both academically and personally. Through writing and sharing their texts, students gain insights into personal experience in Prague that otherwise would not have been considered, and thus develop their self-awareness and cultivate their intercultural aptitude delving deeply into their abroad experience. Students engage with the process within themselves, but are also required to develop an understanding of how other writers and artists of note have met similar challenges and either overcome them or not (special attention is given to prominent Czech writers including Franz Kafka and writers who suffered from communist repression). This includes referencing a study of creativity and literature within the different published genres such as self-examination, memoir, biography, psychology and self-help (for example, 'The Artists Way' by Julia Cameron), and associated non-literary art forms. Over the course of the semester, students engage with each other to nurture a supportive environment, which develops critical thinking and encourages creative responses.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- demonstrate understanding of the demands of sustained creative activity in connection with the aim of publication as well as personal creative self-development;
- develop critical thinking skills, including reasoning and supporting arguments for defending and promoting their approach to their own creative work within a justifiable framework of critical study of different genres of literature both contemporary and historical contexts;
- produce deep reflections and self-examination of own experience abroad through the creative act of writing and share their insights with others;
- articulate personal, critical, social and commercial pressures and contexts within the creative process orally and in writing as well as constructive critiques to their peers' texts;
- produce a text for submission to a publisher or social media.

Course Prerequisites

None

Methods of Instruction

The primary activity is doing your own writing, i.e. sustaining a creative process in writing both in class and as home assignments. The second level of activity involves reading learning from analytical consideration of published texts. The third level involves reflective processes both individual examination and interactive giving constructive criticism on your peers' writing. Learning includes: in-class study and participation, peer discussion, workshops, field work (literary festivals and associated events, critique of live performance), in class exercises and short assignments. A one-day weekend workshop focusing poetry writing is an essential and mandatory part of the class.

Assessment and Final Grade

1.	Text Analyses	15%
2.	In-Class Exercises	20%
3.	Short Papers	20%
4.	Final Project	25%
5.	Class Participation	20%
	TOTAL	100%

Course Requirements

Text Analyses

Discussing Assigned Reading: Students will discuss assigned readings and produce 3 analyses of different genres (900–1,000 words each), which are due in weeks 2, 3, 5. Reading fuels the writer’s task. It is not passive reception, but delving into the texts pro-actively, with incisive curiosity, and a critical eye. Focus points for analytical reading can be based on the Critique Criteria for Literary Prose (see CANVAS).

In-Class Exercises

Critiquing Peers’ Creative Writing: Students will be evaluated on providing constructive feedback to peers on their writing during the weekend workshop on Week 6 (both in writing and orally). During their responses, students focus on specifics in the text (e.g., identify one strong point and one weak point) and explain clearly their standpoint, including convincing supporting argumentation.

Short Papers

Analyzing Creative Writing: students will submit two short pieces of creative writing (1,000–1,500 words each) over the course of the semester (weeks 4, 8). The assessment components include clarity of structure, application of concepts covered in class and the clarity of the line of reasoning and supporting arguments.

Final Project

Final project will be based on one extensive (3,000 – 3,750 words) piece of creative writing prepared for a submission to a publisher (e.g., Prague Monitor, Prague Journal, etc.) and/or social media (e.g. expat.cz, brnoexpatcentre.eu, etc.) in a form such as prose, lyric and other that the student chooses based on criteria analyzed and discussed throughout the course. The text will be assessed in a three-stage process: 1. First draft, 2. Revision, 3. Final Draft, submitted during Week 9, 11, 12. Students are not restricted on the topic they present for their final project apart from drawing a connection to their study abroad experience in Prague.

Class Participation

Assessment of students’ participation in class is an inherent component of the course grade. Students are required to actively, meaningfully and thoughtfully contribute to class discussions and all types of in-class activities throughout the duration of the class. Students are responsible for following the course content and are expected to ask clarification questions if they cannot follow the instructor’s or other students’ line of thought or argumentation. Students are required to search for and bring relevant texts to each class based on weekly schedule (more information will be provided during the first week of classes). Students will be required to discuss the reasons for their choices of material. Students are expected to actively participate in discussion over teacher provided material. Class participation also includes students’ active participation in Canvas discussions and other additional tasks related to the course content as specified by the instructor. If missing a class, the student is expected to catch up on the class content and to submit well-reflected and in-depth contributions to Canvas discussions on the particular topic or reflections to the instructor to ensure that his/her absence from the class will not significantly affect his/her participation grade. Students will receive a partial participation grade every three weeks via Canvas Participation Assignment, including comments on their progress and achievement, and suggestions for improvement.

Attendance

To encourage engaged learning, regular class attendance is required throughout the program. This includes any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as internship, service-learning, or other required field placement.

An excused absence in a CIEE course will only be considered if approved by a CIEE Center Director/Academic Director (not the Instructor), and:

- it is a self-certified absence for illness (only once per course, requires formal request before or within 24 hours, cannot miss assessment worth more than 5% of final course grade)
- a doctor's note from a local medical professional is provided
- evidence of a family emergency is provided
- it is a pre-approved observance of religious holiday

Unexcused absences include personal travel and/or travel delays, as well as missing more than 25% of a single class period (including tardiness and early departure). Assessments missed due to unexcused absences will be marked as zero. Students with over 10% unexcused absences will be contacted by CIEE staff. Students with over 20% unexcused absences will be contacted by CIEE staff, receive a formal warning letter (shared with their home institution) and lose 10% of the final course point total (e.g., a final A grade of 93% will be lowered to a B grade of 83%).

For more detail, please consult your CIEE Academic Manual.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is essential to a positive and inclusive teaching and learning environment. All students are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness, respect, and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in grade penalties or disciplinary action. See the CIEE Student Academic Manual for further information on academic integrity.

N.B. Course schedule and co-curriculars are subject to change. The final duration and distribution of content and assignments will be determined and presented to students at the onset of the course.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1

Class: 1.1 Creativity and self-expression

Decisions and opportunities associated with choosing creative writing as a viable career path across a variety of literary and media platforms or as a way of self-development. Note this topic will background other weekly topics.

Reading:

McDermid, V., 2007.

Dillard, A., 1990.

Week 2

Class: 2.1 .

Making the choice of the subject material and a decision whether the material and subject is within the writer's capabilities and skill range.

Students will read extracts and bring to class for discussion.

Students to be briefed about Final Paper and their options of the genre.

Reading:

Cameron, J., 2002.

Herodotus, 2013.

Due: Analytical Text Considerations 1

Week 3

Class: 3.1 Form

Considerations of literary forms and how the writer decides which one(s) best suit their expression and abilities.

Students to bring to class: one chapter of a novel, one short story, one poem, one comic book,

one strip cartoon, one song, one piece of advertising copy.

Visit to Kafka Museum and reflection of contexts

Reading:

Kafka, F., 2009.

Barnes, J., 2011.

Due: Analytical Text Considerations 2

Week 4

Class: 4.1 Content

Considerations on how content is constrained or enabled by form. Aspects of censorship. Aspects of self-censorship. Understanding the host country in connection to censorship and self-expression of an individual. Launch of Final Paper.

Guest speaker: Petruška Šustrová (journalist, former opposition leader)

Reading:

Winston, B., 2014.

Parker, H., 2016.

Due: Short Paper 1

Week 5

Class: 5.1 .

Structural demands of narrative and the relation to variety within prose and poetry.

Reading:

Selected poems:

Levine, P., 1991.

Ferlinghetti, L., 1993.

Olds, S., 2004.

Due: Analytical Text Considerations 3

Week 6

Class: 6.1 Midterm Exam Period

One-day weekend workshop (6 hours) on creativity and self-expression with guest speaker Dr Katerina Kovačová. Workshop will include assessed (written and orally presented) peer reflection exercises.

Week 7

Class: 7.1 Midterm Exam Period

No classes

Week 8

Class: 8.1 Style

How writers develop and use style. Students to bring one extract each of: a novel/short story from 2 different centuries, 2 different genres, 2 different cultures, i.e. 6 extracts in total. Students will discuss why the styles attract them and consider how they develop, perceive and present their own 'style'.

Reading:

Winton, T., 2009.

Barbery, M., 2006.

Due: Short Paper 2

Week 9

Class: 9.1 .

In class review of progress and sharing of difficulties encountered within the individual writing process.

Reading:

Speake, J., 2003, pp

Week 10

Class: 10.1 Publication

Demands and opportunities within traditional publishing approaches and the impact of new media platforms and distribution models / social media.

Reading:

Morris, T., 2015

Final Project: stage 1

Week 11

Class: 11.1 Legal and Business considerations for writers.

Copyright. Use of literary agents. Commercial pressures and other challenges in publication.

Due: Final Project: Stage 2

Week 12

Class: 12.1 Writing as a career and as a way of further self-development.

Areas of support, development and financial implications.

Due: Final project: Stage 3

Week 13

Class: 13.1 Final Exam Week

Presenting creative writing projects and peer critique

Course Materials

Readings

Barbery, Muriel. *The Elegance of the Hedgehog*. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2006.

Barnes, Julian. *Homage to Hemingway*. The New Yorker, 2011.
<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/07/04/homage-to-hemingway>. Accessed 4 July 2011.

Cameron, Julia. *The Artist's Way*. Deckle Edge. 2002.

Dillard, Annie. *The Writing Life*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1990.

Herodotus. *The Histories*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Kafka, Franz. *Metamorphosis*. Classix Press, 2009.

McDermid, Val. *Why I Write*. Guardian Media, 2007.

Morris, Tony. *The Filmmakers' Legal Guide*. Bath: Brown Dog Books, 2015. Kindle Edition.

Parker, Harry. *Anatomy of a Soldier*. London: Faber&Faber, 2016.

Speake, Jennifer, Fitzroy Dearborn. *Literature of Travel and Exploration: An Encyclopedia*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2003.

Winston, Brian. *The Rushdie Fatwa and After: A Lesson to the Circumspect*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Winton, Tim. *Breath*. London: Picador, 2009.

Poetry

Levine, Philip. *What Work Is*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991.

Ferlinghetti, Lawrence. "Autobiography." *These are My Rivers: New & Selected Poems, 1955-1993*. New York: New Directions. 1993.

Olds, Sharon. "I Go Back To May 1937." *Strike Sparks: Selected Poems, 1980-2002*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004.