# Course Information Sheet: EWRT 30

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| Instructor**:** Becky Roberts  Email: [robertsbecky@fhda.edu](mailto:robertsbecky@fhda.edu)  Office hours in Zoom: Tues/Thurs 5:30-6:30 Wed. 12:30-1:30 |

**Course Description:** Creative writingis an incredible journey—developing words and worlds that move other people; exploring voices, images and ideas that expand readers’ minds (maybe even blow their minds). What could be more exciting than that?

As I chart our course, I am trying to strike a balance between developing control and freedom, creative play and rigorous effort. Please be willing to experiment and try new things in the course. The course exercises will help you generate ideas for poems and short stories and get more acquainted with the tools of creative writing. You will also draft and revise at least one short story, read and discuss your classmates' work, read and discuss the work of published writers, and submit a final portfolio. Try it out, dive in, push yourself a little. It can be exhilarating to write a poem or a story that you never imagined before, and the support of a generous community makes it even sweeter.

**Course Goals:**

**•** Write something every day

• Read and appreciate a variety of fiction and poetry

• Expand awareness and confront your assumptions about creative writing

• Participate in a community of working creative writers

• Give and receive supportive, thoughtful feedback

• Get better at talking about the elements of poetry and fiction

• Revise new poems and stories

**Course Requirements:**

• Be involved in Canvas; be devoted to our community online

• Hand in 2-4 new pieces of writing per week from among various prompts

• Give written feedback to classmates

• Create a final portfolio of 15-20 pages of revised work

• Read and respond to model poems and short stories

**Class Participation:** We do not have weekly meetings with the whole class, but you’ll sign up for **two** small groups meetings in Zoom. Those meetings are not a lecture. You need to bring a question you want to ask and a piece of your own writing 10-35 lines long for discussion. You will also be expected to respond to your classmates’ writing with honest, helpful and specific ideas.

Save your work! Write in a constantly *saved* word processing file before you paste/post in Canvas so that you don’t lose something you spent hours on. E-mail me if you have any questions or technical difficulties.

**Late Work:** Most everything can be turned in up to a week late if you need more time (unless it’s the last week of class) but you will lose 10% the grade once it’s late. Be careful about the snowball effect! Summer is intense, and skipping several days can be disastrous. Larger assignments, the short story draft for example, must be turned in on time, because a late story will throw off the whole workshop schedule. The final portfolio cannot be turned in late since that’s the last day of class. No work for the course will be accepted after the final due date.

**Grades:** You can choose to take this class pass/no pass or for a grade. Passing is a grade of C or better. These are the grading criteria:

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| **Assignment** | % of grade | **Grading Scale** |
| Weekly typed homework  Longer Story  Final Portfolio  Participation (substance, consistency, and leadership in Zoom and written discussions) | 40  20  20  20 | 93-100%=A 90-92%=A-  87-89%=B+ 83-86%=B  80-83%=B- 77-79%=C+  70-76%=C 60-69%=D  59% and below = F |

**Final Portfolio**: Your final for this class will be a portfolio 15-20 pages long including:

* A selection of 3-5 revised poems and/or flash fiction pieces that you select from work you've produced over the quarter
* A short story you've written and revised for the class
* A letter to me of 500 – 800 words in which you discuss what you've learned about your writing process, what you’re most proud of, what you still want to learn, and what it has been like for you to do creative work with language.

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism and cheating include copying someone else’s homework, lifting sentences from someone else without quoting (whether the source is published or not), using artificial intelligence to write for you, and any small or large act of academic forgery in the work that you submit as your own effort in this class. Please do not waste our time by submitting any writing that is not your own. The penalty is, at minimum, a “0” on that assignment. I will also file a report with the dean of students who may impose additional penalties.

Important Note on Privacy: If you write on a private subject that you don't want to share with the class, *e-mail the piece to me* directly. For some poems, maybe it will be that way. That's normal. Write what's true and vital and important—be free and brave as a writer— and *then* decide if you are able to share it with the class or not. I hope you do, but it is always up to you.

Good luck and enjoy our creative community—it’s always incredible and amazingly supportive (the best kind of community).

Just dive right in!

Basic Course shape and *tentative* schedule of topics

Overview of weekly content

Week 1, July 3-7: Course and student introductions. We’ll touch on among themes such as: metaphor as a language of liberation; poetry, like storytelling, as oral and ancient; literature and poetry as determining *what words mean*; poetry as a subversive function of language; the pleasures of *words themselves;* the nominal subject vs. the true subject of a poem; literal & figurative imagery, *concrete language.*

Week 2, July 10-14: Poetry, animals, and the body; poetry as a narrative with a leap; poetry of witness: poetry as a political act; writing about work; poetry and gender; poetry and the ode, the homage, the riddle, the dream, synesthetic mystery.

Week 3, July 17-21: Poems in sections, poem in strict forms and various free verse forms; *ekphrastic* poetry; slam and performance poems; group poems; love poems.

Week 4, July 24-28: Flash fiction. Significant detail. Voice. Point of view. Immediacy and urgency in narration; writings of Elizabeth Tallent, Jane Martin, Jayne Anne Phillips, Studs Terkel, Jamaica Kincaid, Tobias Wolff, Toni Cade Bambara and others.

Week 5, July 31-August 4: The short story, continued: conflict, shape & structure, dialogue, development, flashback, tone. "Leaving out” vs. “putting in.” Model writers including: Raymond Carver, James Baldwin, Edwidge Danticat. Online and in-class fiction workshops.

Week 6, August 7-11: Final portfolios due including peer & instructor fiction feedback. Possible requirement to send something you wrote out to a magazine.

See you online! Happy to be doing this work with you over the summer. Hope you find some pleasure, meaning, fulfillment in the work, and in the writing community.

Becky Roberts