

LMC 3234–Creative Writing

Writing Stories: Fiction & Creative Nonfiction / Memoir

Semester: Fall 2026

Credit Hours: 3

Prerequisites: ENGL 1102

When and where does the class meet?

Days/Time: MW 9:30

Building/Room: Skiles 343

How can you contact me?

Name: JC Reilly

Email: jc.reilly@lmc.gatech.edu

Phone #: 404-385-7546 (email is better though!)

Office: Skiles 332



How can you meet with me?

Office Hours: M 11-12; we can meet in my office or on Teams. We can also meet at another time, by appointment, if it's more convenient for you.

Where do I find course materials and texts?

There are no required textbooks for this class, other than a book of contemporary fiction, and one of contemporary memoir, which you'll choose in consultation with me.

All other course materials are available as handouts or on our Canvas course site. There you will also find other critical course content including detailed descriptions of assignments and examples of assignments for reference.

How will this course be delivered?

This course meets in person.

What digital technology tools and equipment will you need for this course?

Something to write with and write on (so paper and pens or a computer/ tablet). Please be prepared to write every day!

What is this course about?

I am excited for you to join me and your fellow students on this journey of learning together as we delve into the topic of creative writing for fiction and memoir. You might wonder how a course in narrative storytelling can benefit you. For one thing, it allows you to engage your creative, authentic self in a class that's about imagination and ideas. Let's face it, sometimes GT can wear you down and stifle your creativity. This class is designed to embrace your creativity. Another benefit of this class is that it gives you the opportunity to write and focus on storytelling—something which you're obviously interested in already. Finally, the class will help you to develop a writing practice that you can employ throughout the class and potentially your life, helping you to be more mindful and engaged with your own learning, thinking, and creative vision.

Humans, by nature, are storytellers, and the world is filled with stories—invented, imagined, reimagined, and real. As writers we want to “capture” these stories on paper so that they can be shared and read, enjoyed and experienced. This course will help you develop creative writing techniques in **short** literary genres, including flash fiction, flash memoir, short memoir, and short fiction. We will discuss elements of craft, language, plot, style, theme, character, literary conventions, etc. and examine published works for inspiration as well as direction. You'll develop several pieces of your own work, from ideas to drafts...to drafts...to drafts... to polished literature, through invention exercises, small group feedback, large group workshops, etc. You'll also have the opportunity to attend readings and performances in any genre of creative writing to enhance your experience of the public nature of creative work. At the end of the semester, you'll gather your writings in a portfolio of work, reflect on process, and demonstrate your progress.

Because this is a humanities course, we will be focusing on creating work that tells human stories, that deal with characters who are complex, who have needs, and who may be different from ourselves. We get to explore how what is humane influences the art we produce. The small size of the class allows for more individualized support, the opportunity to build deeper connections, and engaged, active learning.

What are my hopes and vision for the course?

I believe in a community of care, compassion, connection, and active engagement. This means that I envision this course as a supportive and inclusive learning community where we can share experiences, engage critically with any relevant texts, discuss our thoughts and ideas, and celebrate creativity. This means that the success of this class and your own and your peers' learning relies on your thoughtful contributions. There will be readings, projects, creative assignments, and reflective learning experiences.

I also hope that you will actively engage with me and with each other. I invite your feedback on the course content, the clarity or any confusion about the structure of the course and/or the assignments, and my facilitation of the course. Your feedback is invaluable to me as I care deeply about making your learning in this course a good experience for you.

Please know that I will always be here to help you. Email me to schedule a meeting or personal video chat with me.

Names & Pronouns: Our commitment to use a person's chosen name & pronouns

Everyone has the right to be addressed by the name and pronouns that they use for themselves. I am committed to ensuring that I address you with your chosen name and pronouns, and expect everyone to do so. A student's chosen name and pronouns are to be respected at all times in our classroom. Please let me know what name and pronouns we should use for you.

Let me introduce myself to you

I have been writing creatively since I was young, and have been fortunate to make it part of my career. I have four books of poetry (traditionally published), a romance novel on WattPad, a YA novel in search of a publisher, short stories and creative nonfiction in many different literary journals, and plays and screenplays. Creative writing is my passion, and I'm as passionate about your writing as I am my own.

I believe that we all have the ability to write compelling stories that demonstrate empathy, excitement, and creativity. Even if you're not familiar with writing fiction and memoir—or if you've never taken a creative writing class before—I know you have imagination and a desire to turn your ideas into work you can be proud of. I want to help you to embrace your inner creative writer and bring your ideas to life. For two free points, email me the title of your favorite book by 9:30 a.m. on the second day of class.

What will you learn in this course? What are the learning outcomes?

Course readings, lectures, discussions, in-class activities and assignments are designed to facilitate the following **learning outcomes**. You will be able to:

- Advance your understanding of what constitutes readable, interesting, and dynamic creative writing;
- Develop, revise, and polish several short pieces of narrative creative writing
- Read, analyze, and communicate more contextually and skillfully;
- Engage in critical discussion of creative works by fellow students as well as published writers;
- Assess your own writing for strengths and areas for improvement, and be able to articulate this information; and
- Co-create knowledge in a collaborative learning environment.

Additionally, per LMC and the Board of Regents, you will be able to:

- Cultivate awareness of the traditions and conventions of literature, film, and other forms of narrative art, analyze those traditions and conventions in specific cultural contexts; and
- Describe relationships among languages, philosophies, cultures, literature, ethics, or the arts.

How will I assess your learning?

You will have a variety of ways to demonstrate your learning. This includes how and what you contribute to class discussions, how you engage with course concepts, and how you complete written assignments both in and out of class.

When are assignments due, and what happens if I miss a deadline?

The following table lists all the assignments, grade weights, and due dates for the work we will do in class. Specific guidelines for these assignments can be found in Canvas under the “Assignments” tab. An overview of assignments appears in the following section.

Project	Point Value	%age
Attendance and active, engaged participation in all discussions and activities.	50 pts.	10%
Out-of-class, <i>unintentional</i> timed writings, 15 minutes each, dated and numbered	30 @ 2 pts. each	12%
Creative writing, on-time and turned in for comments	6 @ 10 pts. each	12%
Attendance & response to one poetry reading, fiction reading, nonfiction reading, OR dramatic performance	40 pts.	8%
Peer critique: Written critiques to other student’s work	2 @ 40 pts. each	16%
Response/ critique of one contemporary novel and one contemporary memoir	2 @ 45 pts. each	18%
Midterm Conference	20 pts.	4%
Final Portfolio	100 pts.	20%

There are 500 points available for you to earn in this class.

A=500 to 450 B=449.999 to 400 C=399.999 to 350 D=349.999 to 300 F= <299.999

With the exception of the individual fiction and memoirs and accompanying materials which must be turned in on paper in class, assignments should be submitted to Canvas by the due dates posted on the syllabus. Most assignments will be due at 9:30 a.m. on the day of class to align with course content and in-class activities.

If you need more time to complete an assignment, flexible deadlines are available. Completed assignments will be accepted for full credit until 9:30 a.m. the day **after** the due-date, after which a 40% partial credit based *on the earned grade* will be awarded until the last day of classes. Assignments not turned in at all will receive a 0.

If you anticipate missing class for more than one week due to illness or other reasons, please contact me to make alternative arrangements for completing assignments.

Remember, deadlines work both ways, and I promise to provide timely feedback on your assignments to ensure you stay on track with the course.

Overview of course assignments

All work should be typed in 12 pt. font and double-spaced (this means skip every other line), and include the word count on the top of the first page.

1. *Creative Work/ Portfolio*: You'll craft 6 pieces of (more or less) polished creative writing, breaking down into one short-short piece of fiction; one fiction story of approximately 1000 words, one fiction story of 1500-2000 words; two pieces of flash creative nonfiction/memoir; and one creative non fiction story of 1500-2000 words. You'll develop these pieces through invention writing exercises that we do in and out of class, through writing multiple drafts, experimentation with drafts, getting class feedback on drafts, and polishing pieces for the portfolio.

I don't grade individual pieces for *content*, but rather for *completion*. Drafts with any accompanying developmental material must be turned in on their assigned due date to receive thorough feedback and suggestions from me for revision and polishing. You must produce a complete draft with attempted revision for each piece, even if you do not choose to pursue the story through to a final, polished form. This work will be collected in your portfolio.

2. *Timed Writings*: At least twice a week (preferably on days we don't meet for class), you'll turn off all distractions, and set a timer for 15 minutes and freewrite non-stop. This work can be about anything—what you're thinking at the moment, bits of dialog, free-associative work, revision possibilities—whatever. The point is to keep writing throughout the week so that you get in the habit of writing frequently. Writing frequently also has the benefit of making getting stuck with "writer's block" less likely. It is "unintentional" writing—that is, writing without intent. If it doesn't wind up having a point, that's ok, because the point was to write and exercise your brain. This work is in addition to any other writing work you do on your screenplays.

3. *Peer Critiques (2)*: You'll prepare a 2-3 page insightful critique of another student's screenplay, highlighting the specific strengths of the other student's work, discussing how the

work succeeds and how it doesn't, and offering thoughtful suggestions for revision. These critiques will be shared with the other student as well as turned in for a grade.

4. *Performance Attendance + Written response*: Creative writing is meant to be shared in the world, and it's valuable to experience the work of professional writers as it is performed in front of an audience. You'll attend one reading or performance event and write a thoughtful 2-3 page response. Poetry and fiction readings are relatively cheap (usually free or about \$3-\$5) all around town. Live theatre in Atlanta tends to be very expensive, so if you're interested in drama, I recommend seeing something offered by DramaTech. You can generally find fliers for poetry or fiction readings at your favorite coffee house or bookstores. You can also check the [Access Atlanta website](#) or the [Poetry@Tech website](#). Please be sure to turn in your response within one week after you attend the event.

5. *Response/critique of one contemporary novel, and one contemporary memoir of your choice* (to be approved by me in advance): You'll prepare a 3-4 page critique for each genre of writing, examining such things as style, narrative structure/arc, character development, use of dialogue and memory, etc. I'm not looking for plot summary here, but rather insightful engagement with the text and commentary about how such writing influences your own.

What will help you to be successful in this course?

If you want to be successful in this course, your best strategy would be to:

1. Mark time in your calendar for completing course readings and assignments;
2. Review the assignment guidelines and strive to meet the expectations;
3. Submit the assignments by the dates assigned;
4. Participate actively in our class sessions.

What are my expectations about class attendance and active participation?

This is a highly interactive class. In other words, active participation is an expectation and the norm. This doesn't mean that I will grade your participation based solely on how much you speak in class. Your active participation grade will rather reflect a combination of attending class regularly, being prepared to contribute to in-class discussions and activities, completing assignments, and being an active participant in class activities and discussions.

During each class session you will have multiple opportunities to actively participate, including responding to questions or prompts in writing, demonstrating active listening, taking on supportive roles in small group discussions, asking interesting questions, showing curiosity about your own and others' perspectives on an issue, demonstrating respect for others opinions and ideas through acknowledging their view and asking for clarification when you aren't sure.

Attendance and active participation are 10% of your grade. You will receive full credit if you attend every class and actively engage. Absences due to your own illness, family illness or death, religious observances, or other extenuating circumstances will need documentation.

Three absences for any reason are permitted. Every absence over three will impact your grade by -2%. Coming to class late is distracting for the other students and to the lesson, so please avoid being tardy. Excessive tardiness (more than 15 minutes late) will count as half-an-absence.

Just so you know, we do a lot of freewriting, brainstorming, listing, and revising in class to help you when it comes down to writing your stories, particularly in the beginning of the semester. All of this work is generative, and sometimes it's spur-of-the-moment, so if you're not in class, you won't be able to generate this material. Therefore, it behooves you to be in class so that you can get the benefit of these activities.

Please be sure to sign the attendance sheet which I will pass around every day. This is how I keep track of who's come to class and who hasn't. If you don't sign the sheet, I will assume you did not come to class.

You can read about Georgia Tech's [Student-Faculty Expectations here](#).

Disability Accommodation Statement

GT is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course (such as necessary adjustments in assignments, timelines, or due dates). If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements.

Students with disabilities should contact Disability Services to discuss reasonable accommodations. [You can apply for services here](#) or visit Suite 221 in the Smithgall Student Services (Flag) Building. For more information, please [visit the Disability Services website](#).

Inclusive Learning Statement

Your success in this class is important to me. We all learn differently and bring different strengths and needs to the class. If there are aspects of the course that prevent you from learning or make you feel excluded, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we'll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.

Our campus has various offices and support programs committed to helping you succeed academically and socially that are open to all students, not just those who are struggling. There is no shame in availing yourself to these resources.

- [CommLab](#): provides help at any point of the writing process
- [Academic Success & Advising](#): provides tutoring and resources for success as well as academic advising services
- [Center for Mental Health Care and Resources](#): offers a community of care to GT students to help cope with stress or anxiety, find strategies to overcome challenges, promote mental wellbeing, and succeed in college life and beyond.
- [STAR Services \(Students' Temporary Assistance & Resources\)](#): provides clothing for job interviews, food between paydays, temporary housing, or interest-free emergency loans.

Meet with me!

Meeting with me is a critical part of your success in this course. Whether you have specific questions, needs, or concerns, or simply want to chat about your progress, I encourage you to schedule at least one meeting with me during the semester. Here are a few options to connect with me:

1. Schedule a quick meeting with me by emailing me at jc.reilly@lmc.gatech.edu or set up something in Teams. You can choose to meet in person or virtually.
2. Schedule a longer meeting if you need help with specific course content, coursework, or if you want to discuss other school and life matters, including future plans.
3. Remember, meeting with me is an essential part of your success in this course. Don't hesitate to reach out, as I am here to support you throughout the semester.

Your wellness matters

As a student, you may experience a range of challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating, and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may diminish your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. GT services are available, and treatment does work. You can learn more about confidential mental health services available on campus, including counseling, at [Center for Mental Health Care & Resources](#) or you can call them at 404-894-2000.

Information about Course Structure and Technology Use

Our Canvas site is the central hub for this course. On Canvas, you will find items such as the syllabus, announcements, course materials, assignments, grades, and other relevant course information. There is also an announcement function which I will use to send updates and reminders during the semester. Please make sure to check Canvas on a regular basis.

Academic Honesty Statement

Since the integrity of the academic enterprise of any institution of higher education requires honesty in scholarship and research, academic honesty is required of all students at GT which means academic dishonesty is prohibited in all programs. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating dishonesty. Appropriate sanctions may be imposed on any student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty. Instructors should take reasonable steps to address academic misconduct. Any person who has reason to believe that a student has committed academic dishonesty should bring such information to the attention of the appropriate course instructor as soon as possible.

All work you turn in for this class must be your own work, completed for this class in this semester (i.e., not work you did or are doing in another class) with all outside reference sources properly cited and acknowledged, if necessary. Please refer to the [Academic Honor Code](#), which outlines what is considered ethical behavior and academic honesty.

What you need to know about Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

What is plagiarism? It is any attempt to take credit for work done by another person or entity. Yet, all scholars rely on the work of others to shape their own knowledge and interpretations.

This means: In your writing and other work, you must acknowledge the importance of other works through footnotes and/or direct textual references to influential books, articles, media texts (yes, including Internet resources!), and ideas. When you use other people's sentences, words, or concepts; or summarize or paraphrase ideas or opinions; you need to use quotation marks and/or cite your source. Using someone else's words and ideas without attribution or misappropriating them in some way is stealing.

This is a creative writing class—where you have free reign to make things up. You have an imagination, or you wouldn't be here. You don't need to use someone else's work at all. But if you do use outside sources for your work for any reason (such as quoting from a novel or memoir), please use that intellectual property responsibly.

If you'd like more information about plagiarism, the Purdue OWL (Online Writing Lab) provides a [comprehensive Plagiarism Overview](#).

My policy on ChatGPT and other generative AI

This course is meant in part to improve and evaluate your writing ability, and assumes that all work submitted by students will be generated by the students themselves, working individually (or possibly in small groups). For this reason, for the purposes of this class, any student found to have used AI technologies or programs (e.g. Chat GPT, Bing Chat, etc.) to compose part or all of any submitted work will face the same penalties as a student who submits plagiarized work (i.e. a failing grade in the course). Again, you don't need to use an AI product to write your stories—you are WAAAY more creative than Chat GPT could ever be. Remember, with few exceptions, only humans make true art.

Use of Electronic Devices in Class

While using computers and other electronic devices in class opens new learning possibilities for students, it can also be distracting. Please use your electronic devices only for class related purposes.

Please set your phone on silent (not on vibrate) in class. If there are significant circumstances, such as a family emergency for which you may need to answer a phone call, please let me know before the start of class and put your phone on vibrate so you can quietly exit class and answer the call.

In addition, no portion of the class can be audio or video recorded without my and your fellow students' consent. Doing so violates other students' privacy and could inhibit other students' participation and interfere with their learning. These expectations will help you maintain focus in class as well as allow privacy in the space for open dialogue.

Last But Not Least

Thank you for reading this far. If you would like another two free bonus points, send me an email that tells me who your favorite author is, before 9:30 a.m. the day the second class meets. By remaining in this class, you agree to take responsibility for your own learning. Should you have any questions, or if you are unclear on any aspect of the syllabus, assignments, the class itself, or any information discussed in the class, it is your responsibility to get answers by raising the issue in a timely manner during class, during office hours, or via email. And, by “timely,” I mean as soon as possible. If something is going on that I’m unaware of, something that affects your performance and success in class (either class related, or some kind of catastrophic disruption in your life), I need to know sooner rather than later. Let me help you if you need help.

If you miss class, be sure that you find out what you’ve missed from another student first (before contacting me); if handouts were given, be sure that you ask for copies. I won’t hound you about turning in work that you’re missing. You’ll know what is due, and when it’s due, and it’s your job to make sure you turn your work in on time.

Further, remaining in the class means you agree to abide by all of the policies/ procedures laid out in this syllabus. If there are any problems that arise regarding class policies or governance, I will refer you to this syllabus. Finally, I will not discuss grades via email. If you are concerned about your performance, please make an appointment during my office hours. I am happy to discuss this with you.

Now, let’s have a great semester!