



Course Title: Sentence by Sentence: Creating Your Style

Course Code: CW 120 W

Instructor Name: Thomas H. McNeely

Class Sessions and Recording

Meeting days and times: Sundays, 3:00pm PT/6:00pm ET, 1-2 hours, depending on how many of your writing exercises and how much published reading we have to discuss.

Meeting location: Zoom

All Zoom sessions will be recorded for later viewing.

Course Features

- Live session
 - Lecture, discussions, and Q&A
- Assignments & Coursework
 - Assignments and course materials posted in Canvas
 - Required discussions in Canvas
 - Students will submit several exercises
 - Instructor will provide feedback on assignments
- Individual conferences available by request

Grade Options and Requirements

- No Grade Requested (NGR)
 - This is the default option. No work will be required; no credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided.
- Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)
 - Students must view at least 7 class sessions (live attendance and/or watching the recording)
- Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)
 - Students must participate in at least 7 weekly discussions and/or Zoom sessions, and complete a piece of written work (to be discussed further in class)

Grades will be determined by successful completion of the following work:

- 30% Weekly Writing Exercises
- 30% Reading Discussion Responses
- 30% Comments on Peers' Work
- 10% Queneau Exercises

Please contact the Stanford Continuing Studies office with any questions
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650-725-2650

**Please Note: If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose either the Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.*

Target Audience and Prerequisites

This is a course for anyone interested in creating their own written voice.

Learning Objectives

Our aim will be to create a voice and style in our writing to reach our readers. We will write, read, and reflect in writing on our own work, the work of our peers, and the work of the master stylists; we will understand how style is created, and how we can use it to communicate more effectively with readers.

This is not a traditional workshop class. We will discuss some of your short writing exercises in our Zoom sessions each week; I will comment on all of these exercises and am always available to discuss expanding these exercises into longer pieces. But the aim of the class is not necessarily to produce finished stories; the aim is to create a safe space to encourage each other to experiment with different styles, genres, and subject matter to find our own voices as writers. If you do not want to have your work discussed by the class, you don't have to; you will still receive written feedback on your writing from me, and if desired, from your classmates.

Textbooks/Required Materials

Required Texts:

You've Got to Read This, Ron Hansen, Editor

Reading Like a Writer, Francine Prose

Exercises in Style, Raymond Queneau

Recommended Text:

The Art of Fiction, John Gardner

Tentative Weekly Outline

Each week, students will write a short exercise from Exercises in Style and a longer exercise to try out a stylistic technique or approach to subject matter (each exercise is 250-500 words). In a typical week, you will be required to read 30 pp. of published prose and briefly respond to 8-12 posts from members of your small groups.

Each week, you will write two short exercises (250-500 words) in response to exercises in *Exercises In Style*, and post them in your small groups for brief comment by your classmates and me. At the beginning of the course, students will select four weeks to present their weekly writing exercises for discussion by the class. If you do not wish to have your work discussed by the whole class, you do not have to do so. You will still get written comments from me, and if desired, from your other rotating small group members. Students who do select writing exercises to be discussed by the class will have their work discussed as the Workshop Exercise for that particular week.

Week Two through Nine, you will submit your 1-3 page Writing Exercises for comment. We will discuss eight to nine scenes per week in each Zoom chat session, depending on our enrollment. Each student will have their short exercises discussed a minimum of THREE times during the course.

I will comment on all of your written work. You are only obligated to comment on the work of the members of your small groups.

Week One: What Is Style?

Week Two: Who Is Speaking?

Week Three: Who Is Listening?

Week Four: Scenes & Other Narrative Modes

Week Five: Tales, Allegories, “Romances”

Week Six: Realism

Week Seven: Postmodernism

Week Eight: Dramatic Irony: Drama as Comedy, Comedy as Drama

Week Nine: Sex and Death

Week Ten: Imitation and Homage