Spring 2012  Dr. Venise Berry  335-3361/335-2765
Journalism 19:120  J-School Office –E340 Adler Bldg
Books: Fiction & Non-Fiction  Off Hrs: Mon 1-2pm or by appt.
Class – Monday 2-5:30pm  AAS Office – 514 Jefferson Bldg
venise-berry@uiowa.edu  Off Hrs: Wed 2-3pm or by appt.

J-School Director:  Dr. David Perlmutter  Office: W305 Adler Bldg  335-3486

COURSE OBJECTIVE:
The course will cover the basic elements involved in writing a fiction or a non-fiction book. The class will explore fiction and non-fiction structures such as memoir, historical, essay, autobiography, anthology, resource, self-help, how to, humor and the novel. Each student will be expected to complete all readings and assignments, along with participating fully in class activities. Student work will be constructively synthesized and discussed through individual workshop sessions. Students will complete two major projects either a non-fiction book proposal and chapter or a novel premise proposal and chapter. The non-fiction book proposal will include specific areas like title, hook, market, promotion, platform and an outline. The novel premise proposal will include the catalyst, first and second transformations, climax, resolution, close, characterizations and an outline.

TEXTS:
The following books will be available in paperback at the University Bookstore in the IMU. Every student is required to read all assigned readings. This material will be synthesized, evaluated and debated in discussion sections, lectures and as part of other opportunities. Additional readings may be assigned on ICON during the semester.

- Jeff Herman & Deborah Herman, *Write the Perfect Book Proposal* (Wiley & Sons 2001)

THE IOWA DOZEN is a pledge from the School of Journalism to help you:

Learn:  
- to write correctly and clearly  
- to conduct research and gather information responsibly  
- to edit and evaluate carefully  
- to use media technologies thoughtfully  
- to apply statistical concepts appropriately  

Value:  
- First Amendment principles for all individuals and groups  
- a diverse global community  
- creativity and independence  
- truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity  

Explore:  
- mass communication theories and concepts  
- media institutions and practices  
- the role of media in shaping cultures  

NOTES:

DISABILITY - I would like to hear from anyone who has a disability which may need some modification of seating, testing or other class requirements so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Please see me after class or during my office hours.

EMAIL - Make sure your email account is active and connected to the University system so that you can get J-MC School, UI and class messages. You should check your email regularly.

DEADLINES - Deadlines in this class are firm. Late assignments must be pre-approved. NO assignment will be extended more than one week past the deadline – NO exceptions. It is your responsibility to turn in your assignments directly to the teaching assistant when they are due. If you turn in an assignment in some other way (under office door or in box), at some other time (before or after due date), we are not responsible if it is lost or misplaced. It is always a good idea to keep a copy in case there is a problem.
ATTENDANCE - Attendance is mandatory. Every class is important so please don’t ask my permission to miss a class. If you must miss a class you will need to provide a written explanation and adequate documentation for me to consider suspending the penalty.

CHANGES - It may be necessary to make changes in the syllabus according to how readings, videos, speakers, and assignments flow throughout the semester. A number of new videos have been ordered. A currently listed video in the syllabus may be replaced by a new one depending on arrival date.

UNIVERSITY EXAM POLICY - Final Examinations. An undergraduate student who has two final examinations scheduled for the same period or more than three examinations scheduled for the same day may file a request for a change of schedule before the published deadline at the Registrar’s Service Center, 17 Calvin Hall, 8-4:30 M-F, (384-4300). Missed exam policy. University policy requires that students be permitted to make up examinations missed because of illness, mandatory religious obligations, certain University activities, or unavoidable circumstances. Excused absence forms are required and are available at the Registrar web site: http://www.registrar.uiowa.edu/forms/absence.pdf

WARNING - If any of the videos shown in class are offensive to you talk to your TA. You are not required to stay and view them. However, each video has been selected because of its appropriateness to the particular section studied. And all are available on television or from video stores. Keep in mind that some of the videos will have response essays connected to them that cannot be made up.

SUGGESTIONS OR COMPLAINTS - Student complaints concerning faculty/TA actions - first attempt to resolve the matter with the TA, if not possible, contact the professor, if you are still not able to settle it go to department executive officer, Dr. David Perlmutter, E305 Adler and if matter is not resolved, then, you may submit a written complaint to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs, Office of Academic Programs, 116 Schaeffer Hall. The full text of this policy can be found in the College's Student Academic Handbook.

SEVERE WEATHER – The University Operations Manual section 16.14 outlines appropriate responses <http://www.uiowa.edu/%7Efour/opmanual/v/16.htm#1614d> to a tornado or similar crisis. If there is a crisis as indicated by the UI Outdoor Warning System members of the class should seek shelter in the innermost part of the building at the lowest level and stay until the crisis is over. In the case of really bad weather, please check your email before coming to class. If the class is cancelled I will send an email notice as far ahead as possible.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT - Student Academic Misconduct includes plagiarism and cheating. Plagiarism is presenting someone else's words or ideas as your own, whether in writing or speaking. Cheating includes copying someone else's work or purposefully allowing someone else to copy your work. Disciplinary actions - the professor will inform you immediately of the allegation. If found guilty you will receive an F on the assignment, you may also receive an F in the entire course, probation, suspension or even expulsion. The full text of this policy can be found in the College's Student Academic Handbook.

ADMINISTRATIVE HOME - The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall or see the CLAS Student Academic Handbook.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT - The University has a policy on sexual harassment and consensual relationships in the instructional environment. You may obtain the full text of this policy in the Office of Affirmative Action, 202 Jessup Hall.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES - Student Rights and Responsibilities include your right to expect a classroom environment that enables all to learn comfortably, plus you have a responsibility to this class and your own education to help create a classroom environment where the same is possible. At the most basic level, this means that you will respect the other members of the class, the professor/TA, and treat everyone with the same courtesy you want to receive in return.
INAPPROPRIATE USE OF COMPUTER- Once class starts you may not use the computer to check your email, go on Facebook or any other computer activity outside of class work. You will lose 5 points each time I notice it. It is rude and unacceptable to work on the computer while the professor or fellow students are presenting important information to the class. Please be respectful at all times.

GRADING:

You must earn 60% of the available points in order to pass this class. This means that I have rigorous expectations and grade accordingly. *Assignments will be graded with these guidelines in mind: A = Exceptional work, B = Very good work, C = Average work, D = Poor work, F = Unacceptable work. Grades for each assignment will be determined within the range of that particular assignment. Grades are not based on percentages, but on points. The final grade will be based on the total points earned for all class assignments and activities (see grade scale below). You should plan to put sufficient time and attention into this class. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences suggests that students work at least two hours outside class per week for each semester hour of course credit.

Attendance (2pts per session)  28pts.          Final Grade Scale:
Participation                   30pts.       200- 185 = A
Model Book Analysis            20pts.       184-165 = B
Novel Premise or Book Proposal  60pts.       164-135 = C
Book Chapter                   50pts.       134-120 = D
Synopsis                        12pts._     Below 120 = F
Total                           200pts.

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS:

Writing Assignments – In many of the classes you will complete a number of short writing assignments dealing with specific topics like narrative, voice, transitions, word choice, style, framing, connections and others. Some days I may have you turn in those assignments at the end of the class period. You should always be prepared to read your writing in front of the class when called or asked to volunteer.

Proposal/Chapter Workshops - The two primary writing assignments: a Non-Fiction Book Proposal and chapter or a Novel Premise Proposal and chapter must be completed and copies distributed to classmates one week before your scheduled workshop session. Everyone must read all classmates assignments before their scheduled workshop in order to facilitate a constructive discussion/critique session. Your participation is crucial in these sessions as you are each potential readers for your fellow classmates and your comments can help them to develop the best book possible.

Non-Fiction Book Proposal (60 pts.) Choose a topic for your non-fiction book. Research that topic and develop a book proposal including specific elements such as: title, hook, market, platform, chapter outline, etc. Total 5 pages double-spaced with one-inch margins.

Novel Premise Proposal (60 pts.) Decide on a storyline for your novel and develop novel premise structural elements including: title, catalyst, first and second transformation, climax, resolution, close, major characterizations and chapter outline. Total 5 pages doubled-spaced with one-inch margins.

Book Chapter (50 pts.) You will write one chapter from your novel or non-fiction book. The chapter will be a minimum of ten pages, double-spaced with one inch margins. Evaluation will cover Focus/Clarity/Logic, Structure/Organization, Narration/Style, Substance/Content, Grammar/Language/Mechanics.
**Model Book Analysis** (20 pts.) You will complete a book analysis based on a model book chosen in your genre. For the fictional novel, explain the six major structural elements of the novel in that book, also look at key issues like characterization, conflict and motivation. For the non-fiction book summarize the effectiveness of major concepts like: title, hook, genre, structure, style intended audience, along with substance and conclusions. (3 pages) Make sure that you document your analysis by including examples of issues discussed. Evaluation will cover Depth of Analysis, Documentation/Examples, Grammar/Language/Mechanics.

**Synopsis** (12 pts.) You will write an overview of your fiction or non-fiction book. This summary should explain the story/contents of the book clearly and passionately. Explain the storyline/topic, specific themes/characters and purpose of the book (1 page, double spaced)

**Participation** (30 pts.) participation in class discussion is a very important component. Points will be distributed based on your contribution to workshops and other class discussions. Minimum contribution/rarely speak 10pts. – average contribution/sometimes speak 20pts. – exceptional contribution/always speak 30pts. All members of the class must be respectful to each other when speaking or commenting. No exceptions!!!!!

**Extra-Credit** – Write a query letter to an agent or editor about your fiction or non-fiction book project. One page maximum length (see chapter 12 in Herman and Herman book).

**COURSE OUTLINE:**

**January 23** - Introduction/Novel Premise Overview  
**Video Interview** – Tom Wolfe, Essay/Novel *The Right Stuff*  
**Discussion/Exercises**

**January 30** – *The Plot Thickens*/Characterization  
**Video Interview** – MFK Fischer, Memoir/Essay/Short Stories *The Art of Eating*  
**READING**: *The Plot Thickens*/pages 1-47  
**Discussion/Exercises**

**February 6** – *The Plot Thickens*/The Journey  
**Video Interview** – Louise Erdrich, Memoir/Novel/Children’s Books *Shadow Tag*  
**READING**: *The Plot Thickens* pages 48-118  
**Discussion/Exercises**  

**February 13** – *The Plot Thickens*/Suspense/Conflict  
**Video Interview** – Isaac Asimov, Science Fiction/Novel *I Robot*  
**READING**: *The Plot Thickens* pages 119-167  
**Discussion/Exercises**

**February 20** – *The Plot Thickens*/Context/Trancendency  
**Video Interview** – Chinua Achebe, Fiction *Things Fall Apart*  
**READING**: *The Plot Thickens* pages 168-209  
**Discussion/Exercises**

**February 27** – *Perfect Book Proposal*/Concept, Title, Hook, Market  
**Video Interview** – Toni Morrison, Novel *The Bluest Eye*  
**READING**: Write the Perfect Book Proposal/pages 7-17  
**Discussion/Exercises**
COURSE OUTLINE CONTINUED

March 5 – *Perfect Book Proposal*/Chapter Outline
**Video Interview** – Carlos Fuentes, Essay/Memoir/Plays  *Myself with Others: Selected Essays*  
**READING:** Write the Perfect Book Proposal/pages 18-34  
**Discussion/Exercises**  
**Model Book Analysis Due!**

March 12 - **SPRING BREAK**

March 19 – *Perfect Book Proposal*/Query Letter, Agents, Promotion  
**Video Interview** – Derek Walcott, Poetry/Plays/Essays  *White Egrets: Poems*  
**READING:** Write the Perfect Book Proposal/pages 35-54  
**Discussion/Exercises**

March 26 –  Final Research and Writing Day

April 2 - Proposal Workshops  
**Discussion** – Ten students will receive 10-15 minute individual constructive sessions

April 9 - Proposal Workshops  
**Discussion** – Ten students will receive 10-15 minute individual constructive sessions

April 16 - Chapter Workshops  
**Discussion** – Ten students will receive 10-15 minute individual constructive sessions

April 23 - Chapter Workshops  
**Discussion** - Ten students will receive 10-15 minute individual constructive sessions

April 30 - Proposal/Chapter Workshops Wrap-up

May 8 – **FINALS WEEK**