San Bernardino Valley College
Curriculum Approved: April 15, 2002
Last Updated: March 18, 2002

I.   **CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**
        A.   Department Information:
                Division: Humanities and Social Science
                Department: English
                Course ID: ENGL 232
                Course Title: Creative Writing
                Units: 3
                Lecture: 3 Hours
                Prerequisite: ENGL 101

        B.   Catalog and Schedule Description:
                Introductory course in creative writing focusing on poetry and fiction. Includes strategies
                for writing both poetry and fiction, and the development of critical standards for judging
                literature.

II.   **NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT:** One

III.   **EXPECTED OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS:**
        A.   Upon completion of this course a student will be able to:
        B.   Distinguish between sophisticated and simple poetry and fiction;
        C.   Identify and use various forms of figurative language;
        D.   Identify and use the major types of meter in poetry;
        E.   Identify and use various sound devices in poetry;
        F.   Identify and use various traditional verse forms in poetry;
        G.   Identify and use various points of view in fiction;
        H.   Write poems that demonstrate a sophisticated level of language, music, tone and content;
        I.   Write short fiction that demonstrates a sophisticated use of plot, character, setting and tone;
        J.   Critically analyze and explicate poetry and short fiction.

IV.   **COURSE CONTENT:**
        A.   The sources of poetry
             1.   Using experience and observation
             2.   The role of imagination
        B.   Elements of poetry
             1.   Language
             2.   The importance of imagery
             3.   The uses of figurative language
             4.   The problems with language that is too general, abstract or hackneyed.
        C.   Musical devices
        D.   Sound devices
             1.   Meter
             2.   Rhyme
        E.   Poetic forms and the poetic line
             1.   Traditional forms
             2.   Syllabics
             3.   Free verse
             4.   Prose poetry
        F.   The sources of fiction
             1.   Blending experience and invention
             2.   Avoiding formula writing

G. Elements of fiction
1. Plot
a) The role of conflict
b) Plot structure
c) Development of the individual scene
d) Moving from the scene to the whole
e) Managing chronology
2. Point of view
a) Selecting the point of view
i) First person
ii) Third person - omniscient
iii) Third person - dramatic (effaced)
iv) Third person - limited omniscient
3. Character
a) Flat versus three-dimensional characters
b) Ways of revealing character
c) Writing effective dialogue
4. Setting
a) Elements of setting
b) Uses of setting
5. Theme/ Central Concern
a) Knowing your intention
b) Theme versus the moral of the story

V. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:
A. Lecture/discussion: Readings in the text will be supplemented through lecture and the concepts will be applied to specific poems and short stories. Students will be asked to discuss readings and apply the concepts to specific works of literature.
B. Workshop: Students submit their own poems and short stories for peer review and class discussion. The teacher needs to model the approach and techniques of work, shopping early in the semester to give the students the tools they will need. As students grow more confident and skilled, the teacher can play a smaller role.

VI. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:
A. Poetry assignments will reflect a particular concept being taught. For example, early in the course while students are tempted to use too much abstraction in their writing, the assignment might be to describe a concrete object by involving three of the five senses. After discussing traditional poetic forms, the instructor might assign a sonnet or sestina.
B. Short stories can be introduced by assigning individual scenes. Each scene assignment can reflect a concept being taught. One could stress the use of dialogue, another the first person point of view, while a third could focus on using setting to establish tone. These assignments allow the students to focus on particular elements of fiction before they have to put all the elements together in a short story.

VII. EVALUATION(S):
A. Portfolio of creative work: Each student will submit a portfolio of poetry at the end of the poetry section, containing all the assigned poems, the rewrites and any extra credit poems. This will be evaluated on the quantity of work, the quality of work (how well the student employed the concepts taught), and the range of concepts attempted by the student. A similar portfolio will be required at the end of the fiction portion of the course. An example of a poetry assignment is: Write a poem in which you describe a town or city. Try to identify a dominant characteristic of the place and focus your poem on that characteristic. Rely heavily on concrete imagery, both literal and figurative. The purpose of the assignment is to develop the student's ability to use imagery.

B. Essay exams: At the conclusion of each of the two major segments of the course, students will be tested on their knowledge of the concepts and on their ability to apply them. For instance, in poetry they might be asked to compare two poems of different literary merit to determine which is more skillfully done and to build an argument for their choice. In fiction they might be given all but two pages of a short story and be asked to complete the story after they have first analyzed plot, character, tone, etc. and developed an argument for how it should be completed. In each case students will have to make critical judgments and offer supporting arguments for their judgments. Sample test question: Compare the use of rhyme and meter in the attached two poems. Which is more effective?

C. Quizzes: These are given frequently to test the student's understanding of reading assignments.

VIII.   TYPICAL TEXT(S):
<u>Three Genres, 5th edition</u>, Stephen Minot, Prentice Hall, 1993.
<u>Writing Poems, 4th edition</u>, Wallace and Boisseau, Harper Collins, 1996.
<u>Writing Fiction, 4th edition</u>, Wallace and Boisseau, Harper Collins, 1996.

IX.   OTHER SUPPLIES REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: None