IDH 3931 (UW02) UnCommon Writes: Cracking Jokes

University Writing Program

Instructor: Melissa L. Mellon, Ph.D.; mmellon@ufl.edu; 392-5421 (emergencies only)

Office hours: T 9:00 a.m.—10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.—2:30 p.m. in TUR, room 2323 & by appointment

Meets: T 4th period (10:40 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.) in LIT, room 0117, Fall 2024, UF

E-mail Response Policy

I respond to e-mails in business standard time—24 hours of their receipt (not including weekends). Plan your writing thoughtfully so that you send questions early enough for me to answer them!

> **This syllabus details all policies for our section. No additional warrants/promises are implied. You are responsible for reading and following all policies herein.**

COURSE INTRODUCTION

Course Description

Welcome to **(Un)common Writes for Honors: Cracking Jokes!** This class is a writing workshop designed to ignite your imagination, hone your writing skills, and foster a community of wordsmiths. Whether you're an aspiring stand-up comedian, want to give your anecdotes more impact, or are simply curious about how humor "works," this course is for you. Throughout the semester, we will explore the art of humor writing and experiment with different genres (yes, there's more to humor than *just* stand-up comedy!). In the process, you will see how crucial editing is to making material funny, and you will work to craft your own unique voice.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will:

1. Create original pieces of humor writing.
2. Demonstrate familiarity with standard comedy rules.
3. Identify and develop their individual authorial voice.
4. Understand how to provide and receive constructive feedback.
5. Participate in a supportive writing community.

Required Readings

There is no textbook to buy for this course. Course readings and videos are available online.

ASSIGNMENTS, GRADING, AND COURSE CREDIT POLICIES

Writing Assignment Prompts and Assessment Rubrics

Each writing assignment is described in its own prompt on Canvas. These prompts provide details of the expectations and guidelines for successful writing given the assignments' different readers and

purposes. Rubrics explaining assignment expectations and grading logic will be attached to assignment entries on our Canvas site, and students should consult them as they write.

Grading Expectations

Successful assignments demonstrate the understanding and practice of comedy writing. Each paper must reach the minimum assigned word count.

Grade Distribution

Participation	Active engagement in discussions and workshops.	**200**
Weekly Writing Assignments	Respond to prompts and share work with classmates.	**400**
Peer Critiques	Provide constructive feedback to classmates.	**200**
Final Showcases & Portfolio	Compile your revised work into a portfolio.	**200**
Total		**1000**

Grading Scale

A	4.0	94-100	940-1000		C	2.0	73-76	730-769
A-	3.67	90-93	900-939		C-	1.67	70-72	700-729
B+	3.33	87-89	870-899		D+	1.33	67-69	670-699
B	3.0	83-86	830-869		D	1.0	63-66	630-669
B-	2.67	80-82	800-829		D-	0.67	60-62	600-629
C+	2.33	77-79	770-799		E	0.00	0-59	0-599

COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Attendance and Participation

1. Attendance is required. Students are allowed two unexcused absences without penalty. On the third and subsequent absences, 25 points per absence will be deducted from the final grade in the class.

a. Lateness. Entering 15 or more minutes after class has begun equals **ONE (1) unexcused absence.**

b. With a valid excuse, students can arrange to complete missing work. Without a valid excuse, assignments will receive a 10% per day deduction on the final grade of the assignment.

c. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:
https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx

2. Recording of Class by Students. The State of Florida has passed a law regarding the recording of classes by students. If a student chooses to record lectures, they should be careful! Doing so requires a very clear set of legal allowances and prohibitions, which are as follows:

Allowances:
- A student may record a class lecture for three specified purposes (§1004. 097 FL Statues):
  - For the student's own personal educational use;
  - In connection with a complaint to the university where the recording is made; or
  - As evidence in, or preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding.
- Students enrolled in a class do not need permission or to provide notice to record its lectures.
- A class lecture **does not include** lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the instructor during a class session. **Students may not legally record any of your fellow students without their consent.**

Prohibitions and Repercussions:
- **A recording of a class lecture may not be published without the consent of the instructor.**
- "Publish" is defined as sharing, transmitting, circulating, distributing, or providing access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section.

Classroom Conduct

Students are expected to be active class participants in their individual work and to work successfully in support of the group. Classroom conduct should comply with UF's Student Code of Conduct (see http://regulations.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/4041.pdf) so that all students show respectfulness toward me and each other. More particularly, they should do the following:

1. **set phones to vibrate at the start of class and put them away (in purse, backpack, etc.),**
2. **use laptops, notebooks, etc. only when given express permission,**
3. remove all backpacks and purses from desktops,
4. limit talking to classroom discussions, and
5. do not read newspapers, text-message, do homework for other classes, pass notes, or sleep.

For a first infraction, I will give a warning. For a second violation, the student will be dismissed from class/charged with an absence. For continued violations, a student risks being dropped from the class.

Academic Honesty

University of Florida students' performance is governed by the UF Student Honor Code, https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx. The Honor Code requires Florida students to neither give nor receive unauthorized aid in completing all assignments. Violations include cheating, plagiarism, bribery, and misrepresentation, all detailed at the above site.

Plagiarism

UF students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire Student Honor Code. The UWP takes plagiarism seriously. We treat instances of plagiarism as dishonesty and a failure to comply with the class's scholarly requirements. Each student's work may be tested for its originality by anti-plagiarism sites. Negative reports from such sites may constitute proof of plagiarism.

1. Definition. Plagiarism is a violation of the Student Honor Code, which defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism. A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

1. Quoting oral or written materials including but not limited to those found on the internet, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.

2. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.

(University of Florida, Student Honor Code, 8, October, 2013)

CAUTION!
• Incorrect citation of electronic material can count as plagiarism. Never copy and paste material from the Internet without providing the source's exact location and citation information.
• **Do not use ChatGPT or any other Artificial Intelligence (AI) language-processing tool to compile your papers.** Students are responsible for writing all their own papers.

2. Penalty for Plagiarism.
If a student plagiarizes all or any part of any assignment, they will be assigned a failing grade on the assignment. Additionally, instructors may impose a course grade penalty and report any incident of academic dishonesty to the Dean of Students Office. Other forms of academic dishonesty (i.e., cheating on a quiz, citing phony sources or quotations) will also result in a failing grade on the assignment.

If a student is struggling with deadlines and needs to talk, they should e-mail me at mmellon@ufl.edu. Do not resort to plagiarism to submit an assignment on time (see "Late submissions" policy below).

Due Dates, Make-up Policy, and In-Class Work

Assignments are due online at the appropriate Canvas assignment at the assigned deadline. Late work will be accepted under the following provisions, though:

a. Completion. If an assignment does not meet the minimum word count, it will receive a zero ("0").

b. Late submissions. Any first major paper that is submitted late will be accepted without explanation. The student then has a week to complete it and turn it in without loss of points.

If a student is in a position where they might submit a second major paper late, they should schedule a time to meet with me so we can complete a coursework completion contract.

Requirements for class attendance, make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalog at https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx.

Readings and Associated Homework
Readings and assignment prep. are listed on the schedule in the modules in Canvas as homework (HW) to be completed before the next class meeting. Complete this work before coming to class that day.

Office Hours--Policy Questions and Paper Conferences
Students are encouraged to use my office hours if there are questions about progress in the course, writing underway, or any other course-related concerns. If there is a conflict with the posted office hours, please contact me to schedule a better time.

Having conferences on assignments can often improve the quality of final drafts. Be advised, though: my purpose in reviewing students' papers is neither a) to proofread their work for them nor b) to ensure that they have or will earn an A on their paper. Instead, it is to *help* them develop their writing and begin to assess its success themselves. **I do not accept e-mailed papers to review. Students must make an appointment to come speak with me to get a paper reviewed.**

Writing Studio Paper Conferences
In addition, the Writing Studio (http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/) offers one-on-one assistance on writing projects and is available to students of all levels. In a consultation, a Writing Tutor will give feedback on student writing and suggestions for improvement. They do not proofread papers, though, and visiting the Writing Studio does not guarantee earning a particular grade.

Personal Student Concerns
During the semester, students may face problems that I am not trained to address. If anyone needs help managing stress, depression, family illness, or physical or mental abuse, they should visit http://oss.ufl.edu/stg/ or call the Counseling Center at 392-1575. You are not alone: counselors can help with these concerns.

Suicide and Crisis Hotline: The new phone number for immediate mental health issues is 988.

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website.

University Police Department: Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 911 for emergencies).

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

GatorEvals

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

Harassment

UF provides an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentconductcode.php#s4041.

Given this and other legal policies UF is bound to uphold, I and most other instructors are "required reporters." This designation means that we are required to report any activity that we witness or are told about that violates the law or UF policies. Our disclosure would then make this activity "actionable," meaning that it would be investigated by the proper law enforcement or UF administration officers.

Students with Disabilities

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides students and faculty with information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first gather appropriate documentation and then register with the DRC at 352-392-8565. Once registered, students will receive a letter which they must present to their instructor. If a student has a disability that needs accommodation, they should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester. For more information, see: http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Consult the Canvas modules for the course schedule of day-by-day work.

1. **Week 1-4**: **Exploring the Genres**
2. **Week 5-8**: **Crafting the Genres**
3. **Week 9-12**: **Writing Techniques**
4. **Week 13-14**: **Revising Practices**
5. **Week 15: Showcase and Portfolio**