

Weekly Agenda for *Writers as Readers* FDIS

Suzanne Nielsen, EdD; Office Hours: Upon Request; Phone: 651-999-5950; Email: Suzanne.nielsen@metrostate.edu

What a story is about is partly a question of how it is told. You cannot separate the tale from the telling. ---James Moffett

Color Code: **Red**: Papers due/description

Blue: Bernays and Painter Readings

Green: The Story Behind the Story Readings

Purple: Maps of the Imagination

Week One: Element we are working with: Genesis of Stories

[paper 1] What does it mean to be a writer paper (1-3 pages)

Paper description: In 250 to 750 words tell me what it means to you to be a writer; instead of giving me a chronology give me a scenario as to when you first believed you were a writer/reader and what awareness did you have with this. Think about a possible story you read or something you heard a writer say. Use description throughout.

Readings: Bernays and Painter and **2 exercises of choice** from Beginnings (pp.5-30)

Two story readings of choice from the Story Behind the Story; weekly freewrite #1 (1 page)

Week Two: Element we are Working With: Characterization and Dialogue

[paper 2] Character driven Dialogue (2-3 pgs)

Paper description: in 500-750 words on page 46 (Painter/Bernays) pick two of the following character types and start writing a dialogue driven piece of fiction. Do not concentrate on place as the book suggests in the exercise; concentrate on revealing a story through dialogue. Only use dialogue for this piece.

Readings: Bernays and Painter, pp. 31-54

Two Story Readings of choice from the Story Behind the Story; weekly freewrite #2 [focus on characterization and what Bernays and Painter have to say about this (1 page)]

Turchi: pp. 11-97

Week Three: Element we are Working With: Point of View

[paper 3] Focus on different POV

Paper description: Two Different Points of View (first and third) refer to pgs. 273-286 in "What If"

Choose a story and write it in another point of view. If it is written in first person, write it in third person or choose another character from the story and write it from that character's perspective in first person. You can do this with one of your own stories instead of picking one from the book. This paper ought to be 1-3 pages long, typed, double-spaced, 12-point font.

Make sure to give your story a title. Make sure to also indicate what assignment this is: Paper #3, Point of View. (1-3 pgs.)

Readings: Bernays and Painter, pp.55-72

Two Story Readings of choice from the Story Behind the Story; freewrite #3 [focus on POV]

Turchi: pp. 99-157

Week Four: Element we are Working With: Child Narration

[paper 4] Focus on the voice of this story being around 9 years of age

Paper description: **For this paper (#4), I want you to follow the instructions under “the exercise” on pg. 63.**

Choose something that happened to you before you were ten. Write from a child’s POV. Limit of 550 words (2 pgs).

Readings: Bernays and Painter, pp. 73-110

Two Story Readings of choice from the Story Behind the Story; Freewrite #4 [focus on child narration]

Turchi: pp.159-236

Week Five: Element we are Working With: Revision of Child Narration

[paper 5] Focus on Revision

Paper description: think about all the elements that make up good writing for this paper. How strong is the dialogue? What is the best POV for this revision? What arc to plot can I detect? How are the characters advancing the story? Etc... (2-4 pgs)

2 exercises of choice from Bernays and Painter

Readings: Bernays and Painter, pp. 197-221

Two Story Readings of choice from the Story Behind the Story; freewrite #5 [focus on revision]

Week Six: Element we are Working With: Flash Fiction

[paper 6] Focus on developing a story in 500 words

Paper description: I want you to follow the instructions from Bernays & Painter on Page 229 with these adaptions: 26 sentences, a through z chronologically, 500 words exactly, not to include the title of the story. Take a look at the sample student paper. Notice that one technique for breaking up sentences is to use the semi-colon carefully. See what happens with this piece. This is either people’s favorite or least favorite paper of the semester it seems. ☺ (2 pgs)

2 exercises of choice from Bernays and Painter

Readings: Bernays and Painter, pp. 223-245

Two Story Readings of choice from the Story Behind the Story; freewrite #6 [focus on flash fiction]

Week Seven: Element we are Working With: Plot

[paper 7] Focus on the plot of a story

Paper description: Where is the arc in your story? What is advancing your story toward plot?

Remember what Bernays & Painter say about plot: “The plot of many short stories is triggered by ‘trouble’ before the story actually begins”(p. 111). Having quoted this I go back to what Bernays & Painter say early on in *What If* and that is begin a story in media res. Think about what advances your plot other than character(s). Be able to identify the arcs of your plot in a paragraph to me after you have written the story. (2-3 pgs)

Readings: Bernays and Painter, pp. 111-131

Two Story Readings of choice from the Story Behind the Story; freewrite #7 [focus on interior landscape]

Week Eight: Element we are Working With: Catch up

Pull together elements of portfolio: no paper due

4 exercises of choice from Bernays and Painter

Two Story Readings of choice from the Story Behind the Story; freewrite #8 [your choice]

Week Nine: Element we are Working With: author analysis: Turchi & *Maps of the Imagination*

[paper 8] What can you take away from Turchi to apply to your own writing?

Paper description: Turchi's book is broken down into several elements to include the use of metaphor, landscape, conventions and images. He takes us on a guided exploration into the world of maps and their meanings with text. Sometimes he gets a little long winded; I get that. However he does have some important things to say throughout to include we can get lost in a book as long as we never lose sight of the guide. How well did Turchi guide you? What do you leave imprinted with from the book's information? (2-3 pgs).

Two Story Readings of choice from the Story Behind the Story; freewrite #9 [your choice]

Week Ten: Element we are Working With: portfolio

[paper due] self eval

Paper description: [Self Eval Guideline Sheet](#)

This is to be your introduction for your portfolio assignment. It should be one to two pages in length, typed, double spaced and thoughtful. What I am looking for in this assignment is your overall evaluation of your work you have completed during this semester. Some things to keep in mind are:

- ~ What writing assignments were most challenging for you to complete and why?
- ~ What writing assignment did you feel most successful about and why?
- ~ Of all the readings of published work, which readings did you find most helpful to stimulate your own writing?
- ~ How were the peer workshops of help to you and your writing process?
- ~ Did your journal entries/freewrites spark many writing ideas for you throughout the fifteen weeks?
- ~ What grade would you give yourself for the course and why?
- ~ Any other comments deemed applicable regarding craft, process and future writing strategies.

Two Story Readings of choice from the Story Behind the Story; freewrite #10 [your choice]

Week Ten (end of course) Portfolio:

Self eval

Papers 1-8

List of 20 story selections from The Story Behind the Story

10 freewrites regarding story selections/focusing on the element we are working with that week.

10 exercises of choice from Bernays and Painter