

# BOSTON COLLEGE



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Ted Murphy                      Craft of Writing – Saturdays 9-12      Fall 2011

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Philosophy:

1. Be prepared to read your writing to the class. If you do not wish to read then you should withdraw.
2. The class and I will make constructive comments. No negativity, no sarcasm!
3. You are allowed **1** absence so use it wisely.
4. We will be doing many in class writing (trigger) assignments that may carry over to your weekly assignment so attendance is a key for you to succeed in this class.
5. If you have trouble with your computer keeping you from passing in your weekly assignments, then type or handwrite the assignment. I want all of the class on the same writing schedule.
6. Class participation and attendance are vital to succeeding in this class! We are here to help one another become better writers.
7. If English is a second language and you don't feel comfortable reading your assignments to the class you can email them to me.
8. Communication is very important. I have four ways of contacting me below. I am here to help you succeed! You can do this, but you also have to *want* to do this!

SYLLABUS: CRAFT OF WRITING

\*This is subject to change, but not much.

SATURDAY, 9-12

September 10 Introduction. In class - write a brief biography but include two lies. Yes, two lies. The class will try to figure out what you're lying about.

THE POWER OF MUSIC IN A STORY

Hearing a certain song can have the power of a time machine transporting a person directly back to a moment in his/her life. We all have meaningful songs that remind us of an event or our past. I will talk about a few of those kinds of songs from my life. I will then discuss and play a song that inspired me to write a scene in my book The Secrets Of Cain's Castle. I will then play several different songs for you to write about.

September 17 THE POWER OF CHARACTERS IN A STORY

I will talk about creating memorable characters in a story using characters from some of my books as an example. Each student will then pick a unique name from a hat and then create a character based on that name.

September 24 THE POWER OF SUSPENSE IN A STORY

I will talk about what I have learned that has helped me write great suspense (wow, that sounds cocky! Haha). I will read an example from my book The Secrets of Code Z. Each student will then receive the beginning of a suspenseful scene, and it will be their mission to finish it.

October 1 NO CLASS SCHEDULED FOR THE WOODS' SCHOOL

October 8<sup>th</sup> NO CLASS DUE TO MR. MURPHY GETTING MARRIED. THERE WILL BE A TAKE HOME WRITING ASSIGNMENT ASSIGNED AT THE END OF THE SEPTEMBER 24<sup>th</sup> CLASS.

October 15 GUEST SPEAKER!

October 22 THE POWER OF GHOST STORIES

We will talk about those stories that made us shiver by the crackling campfire. What makes those stories work? You will then write one of your own.

October 29<sup>th</sup> – NO CLASS SCHEDULED FOR THE WOODS' SCHOOL

November 5th THE POWER OF ANIMAL STORIES

When I was asked by my seven-year-old nephew, “You write for big kids. Why don’t you write a book for little kids like me?”

I took up the challenge and wrote Saving Santa’s Seals. I will be using that book as example as I discuss that behind every great animal story a greater lesson or symbolic story is being told.

You will then pick from a hat two, random animals and then create a story using them.

For example – What would you write if you picked a firefly and a shark?

November 12 THE POWER OF OBJECTS IN A STORY

I will talk about how a simple object can inspire great stories. I will then put out random objects and you will pick one and write a short story about it.

November 19 THE POWER OF FAMILY STORIES

We don’t have to always have to write about Mars or faraway lands where unicorns roam. Some of the best stories are told around the kitchen table or on that long ride to that annoying cousins’ house. I will share a mixture of poignant and funny family stories that I am outlining for a book about growing up. You will then write one of your favorite family or friend stories.

(No Class Nov. 26 – Thanksgiving)

Dec. 3, 10, -- During these class meetings you will share stories, poetry, essay, editorial, the novel, the play, the screenplay, rap, limerick – in short – the written word. We still may do some writing triggers during this time as well.

DEC. 17<sup>th</sup> – There will be a take home assignment given on Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> to be read in the last class on Dec. 17<sup>th</sup>.