Creative Writing: Fiction

Objectives:
- To create an experience for the reader, with or without an embedded message
- A reader who has a good imagination can “run a movie” in their mind while reading
- To help the reader experience one of the roles (antagonist, protagonist, foil)
- Arouse emotions and thoughtful reflection
- To bridge the story to the reader’s beliefs, values, attitudes and experiences
- Help the reader understand motives and intentions

Tools used:
- Dialogue
- Description
- Word choice
- Tone
- Juxtaposition
- Timing/Delay
- Surprise and Suspense
- Relationships
- Plot
- Flashbacks/ back story
- Character development
- Historical significance
- Allusions
- Hidden motive
- Extended metaphor
- Soliloquy
- Narration
  - 1st person
  - 3rd person

Michael Hauge’s
Six Stage Plot Structure

Stage I: SETUP
Fully in identity

Stage II: NEW SITUATION
Glimpses essence

Stage III: PROGRESS
Vacillates between identity and essence

Stage IV: COMPLICATIONS & HIGHER STAKES
Moves steadily into essence

Stage V: FINAL PUSH
Returns to identity, then returns fully to essence

Stage VI: AFTER-MATH
Transformed existence

Turning Point #1: Opportunity
Turning Point #2: Change of Plans
Turning Point #3: Point of No Return
Turning Point #4: Major Setback
Turning Point #5: Climax

Act I

Act II

Act III

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Elements of Fiction

Setting
- Establish this early: time period, cultural context, landscape, zeitgeist
  - Do not simply describe the setting—show, rather than tell
    - Ex: “The man touched the aged stone, remembering his school lessons on when it was built during the Middle Ages.”

Character
- Set up character
  - Use flashbacks and exposition
- Does the character drive the plot, or does the plot drive the character?
- Character arch: how the character evolves through the plot
- Effective character development requires believability
  - Have character flaws that are relatable to make the character realistic.
- Common symbols, archetypes and cultural memes can help bring the character across to the reader.

Plot
- Has pattern and movement
  - U-turns, suspense, obstacles, death
- Tension
  - Circumstances
  - Conflict resolution

Narrator
- The figure in the story that is connecting with the reader
- Voice is important (active is going, passive is receiving).
- Point of view shows where the narrator comes from.
- The tone sets an atmosphere about the story.
- The placement of the narrator guides how he or she interprets events.

Relational Dynamics
- Dialogue and monologue are the methods of delivery (not just telling)
  - Best to evoke than “place”
- Reactions
- Thought processes (mostly use *italics* to denote a thought- no quotes)
- Actions
  - Consistency and Surprise

Motif
- A unifying idea that is a recurrent element
- This develops as the story goes on
- The motif is embedded “between the lines”
  - The objective is for the reader to “arrive” at the implied idea
    - Then it belongs to the reader.

Tone
- Positions and choice of words
- The author “feels” what is going on- then moves from that
  - The tone is in the wake that follows the words
- In fiction, the tone reflects the characters as they move through the story
  - A shift in perspective, or point of view, shifts the tone