Fiction Writing Workshop
We all exist in some form of conflict with another force. We practice large and small acts of resistance daily. Those acts lead to complex situations we sometimes never intended and things get complicated, sometimes ugly. In this class we will expand our writing beyond the simple paradigm of good vs. bad to a more complex understanding of what makes “good” people do “bad” things, and vice versa. I will encourage you to look at real-life events and consider how they can be used in fiction. We will consider some of the most pertinent aspects of fiction: plot, place, voice, and character development. We will ask each other what it is about this story that demanded writing, what it is about these characters that make them unforgettable. What idiosyncratic tendencies does the writer reveal that makes this their story?

Grades:
Participation 50%: Much of this class is conducted as a workshop. The quality of your participation and the seriousness of your comments are very important. You will be expected to respect the rights and views of others. You are expected to share your work with the class and to speak in the class when I call upon you and in a voluntary fashion.

Attendance and timely arrival is imperative. I can’t stress this enough. Your grade goes down after 1 unexcused absences. Consistent tardiness will be marked as an absence.

Portfolio 50%: At the end of our semester, you submit a portfolio that consists of your workshopped story and a revision.

Texts: We will be reading outside texts in this class. Reading is as important as the work of writing and revising. I will send you handouts and short stories/articles and you will be expected to read them and come to class with your copy, ready to discuss.

Submissions: You will be submitting original writing between 1200-2500 words (approx. 5-10 pages) each. If you have a longer story, just let me know. The stories will be 12-pt font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins. When it is your turn to be workshopped, you will be responsible for distributing copies to everyone in class during the class period prior to your workshop. There will be no late submissions accepted.

Readers will be given guidelines on how to critique submitted stories. You will read the stories carefully and comment thoughtfully in the margins. Remember: you are critiquing the work, NOT the author. At the end of class, you will submit the hard copy of the story, with your margin notes to the writer. You will also submit a typed critique to both the writer and to me.

Office Hours: I strongly encourage each of you to come talk to me during our time together this summer.