CRWR 210 Workshop Critique Sheet

Writer _____ **Story** _____ **Reader** _____

Bring two copies of these comments to workshop, one to turn in and one for the writer.

The writing workshop offers more than just a discussion forum. This is *our* writing community, made up of peers, sharing honest, respectful, useful criticism with the goal of helping each other improve our work (and all work can be improved). Avoid unhelpful "lovefest" gushing as well as harsh or personally aimed "shredding." Strive to be: Thoughtful, Helpful, and Kind. (Thank you, Prof. Phil Condon.)

Read each story twice. The second time, critique it with pen in hand. Try to address all of the topics on this sheet, but focus on what is most important. Put yourself in the writer's shoes. Praise what is working well but help the writer understand your reading experience by pointing out what might be improved. Mark specific examples in the draft: place checkmarks over what the writer did well; mark where you got lost; note issues. Offer suggestions without expectations, don't rewrite the story as you would do it yourself.

Please do not correct spelling and mechanical errors (but let the writer know if they need to be addressed).

1. What worked well for you in the story? What did you admire or like best, and why?

2. How easily and quickly are you drawn into the story? What engages you in the first section? What doesn't? Was there anything you wanted to see in scene that was summarized, or vice versa?

3. Whose story is this? How close and strong is your sympathy with this character? Is s/he believable and complex? Does s/he behave as you'd expect her/him to? Suggestions?

4. What is the story's main conflict or "moment?" How is it made clear why the story is being told at this moment instead of some other time? If the conflict isn't clear, compelling, or believable, how might the writer improve this?

5. Do actions and dialogue serve more than one purpose? Are they important enough to get the page space they do, or do they seem unnecessary, or permitted more space than needed?

6. What is the point of view used in the story? Who speaks? To whom? At what distance? Keeping in mind whose story this is, is the choice of point of view the best one? Why or why not? Is the point of view consistent through the story or is it violated?

7. Consider the level of significant detail and the balance of showing and telling. Do sections where the writer is slowing down and giving great detail require this treatment, or could they be summarized?

8. What was your biggest problem with the story? How does it relate to detail, characterization, summary/scene, handling of time and place, conflict/crisis/plot, etc.? How might the writer address this?