Hello, and welcome to Linn-Benton Community College.

I’m pleased to introduce myself and encourage you to do the same in a letter of introduction to me. As your English and Writing instructor, I’d like to tell you a little bit about myself, about my history at Linn-Benton Community College, about my writing and reading processes, and about my goals for this term.

I received an MFA in Creative Writing from Oregon State University and have been teaching at Linn-Benton Community College for the past five years. I’m a working writer as well as a teacher, and do both writing and instructing here at LBCC. That means I'm involved in a range of classes, from WR 115 and 121 through WR 247, a publications class that puts together LBCC's literary and arts journal, The Eloquent Umbrella, and onto literature courses about poetry and short fiction.

I've been writing for a long time, since high school really, but became serious about it in college and since then have written essays, poetry, and short fiction. Some of the writing has been published, some right here in Oregon, and I'm happy about that. It means the things I think and write about have an audience, a community of like-minded souls. Writing is about community, after all, and I think the process of writing is as interesting as anything could be and believe, though it can be tough at first, that writing is about thinking and can unlock what we think and believe more than almost anything else can.

Our community will be our class, our friends and family, and perhaps the college population.

I believe in writing, and as your writing instructor, I should explain that my writing process has changed considerably over the years. I used to believe that writing was serious business and to excel one had to work hard. And this is true, of course, because there is real work involved, just as there is in developing any skill, but writing is fun, too, and can be liberating, can show us what we really think and who we really are. That's why I teach it: because it's a social process as well as an intensely personal one, and has to do with all of us, and how we live with one another.

As I’ve worked on a writing process over the years, I’ve also worked on a reading process, one that ensures I get the most meaning from the text, whatever I’m reading. In addition to reading for my writing and literature classes, I enjoy reading contemporary fiction. I have a few favorite authors, Raymond Carver and Ernest Hemingway, Flannery O'Connor and Alice Monroe among them. They happen to be "literary" writers, but I admit to having been a science-fiction and fantasy addict since high school. I love a variety of subject matter when it's written with style and imagination. Good writers in any genre tell good stories, and in the process of reading these stories, we learn about the world and about ourselves.

Throughout the term, I’ll get excited right along with you about writing projects, and perhaps I’ll have the time to join you as a writer. I'd like that, and If I do, I’ll draw from the subjects I find most interesting, ones that I’m either an authority on already (my work
in the past as a carpenter, a builder, a teacher overseas) or a subject that I’m especially interested in and hope to explore. I’d like to encourage you to develop your own “exploration list” early in the term. Simply brainstorm a list of subjects that you can draw from for essay topics. This list might make the difference between the right and the wrong topic.

My goal is to help you develop your best reading and writing strategies, and I’m looking forward to working with you.

Cheers,

T. Lane Millet