

CRW 1101: Beginning Fiction Writing

Section 1649

Instructor: Youmi Park
Class Time: Monday / Periods 9-11
Location: TUR 2333
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Office hours: Rolfs 503 Tuesday Periods 4-6

Required Texts

Strunk and White, *Elements of Style*
Course Packet: available at Target CopyOBT

Course Objective

Over the course of fifteen weeks together, we will read, discuss, and craft short fiction. Close readings with critical eyes and careful observation, as well as precise writing will be our main focus. We will study the structure and fundamental tools of writing, and attempt to penetrate the meaning or significance of the story by examining *how* and *why* it works the way it works. This does not require you to like a story. But this course discourages you from passing judgment on a story—whether written by an established author or one of your own peers—just on your initial sentiments, particular styles, likes, and dislikes. Please do the assigned readings beforehand and be prepared to engage in a lively discussion

CRW 1101 has multiple, complimentary parts. The first half we'll discuss setting, tone, point of view, character, narrative arc, etc.—the crucial elements of fiction. Our exploration of these stories will in turn serve as a model as we attempt our own fictions. We will then workshop each other's stories. This means giving specific, insightful, and constructive criticism that will benefit the writer and the rest of the class.

Writing Requirement

This course meets the Writing Requirement of 6,000 words of written work that will receive feedback and a grade. All work must be completed to satisfy the Writing Requirement.

Assignment Requirements

The major written assignments in this class are two short stories (5-12 pages) and one critical essay (4-7 pages). **A copy of all major assignments and in-class exercises, including instructor comments, should be retained and handed in at the end of the semester.**

Coursework (Grade Distribution)

Workshop Critiques (10 %)

You will be expected to make careful line edits to the hardcopy of your peers' stories as well as commenting constructively in class discussions. In addition, you must provide two typed copies (250 words min.) of critiques for each story submitted to workshop (except your own). One copy is for me, the other for the story's author. Providing responses to your fellow writers is a fundamental element of the workshop; accordingly, you are expected to offer your peers the same high level of useful criticism you hope to receive.

Reading Responses (10 %)

For those class meetings that have published stories assigned as reading, you will write and print responses (300-400 words each). If we are reading multiple stories, choose to write on any one or all of them. The response should address one or more of the aspects of fiction we will study during our course time (i.e., plot, structure, character, point of view, style, setting, theme, etc.).

Critical Essay on Craft (15%)

During the first half of the course you will write a formal four— to five-page essay. Choose one of the published stories we discussed in class and then analyze aspects of its craft. Our weekly readings and discussions should give you the critical vocabulary and understanding to write the essay.

[**Note:** you may substitute a minimum of four one-page responses to public literary events/readings, such as the Thursday night MFA reading series for this assignment.]

Writing Exercises (10%)

Sometimes, we will do short writing exercises. These exercises are meant to stir your creativity and encourage you to experiment with language and techniques in a non-threatening environment—there is little wrong you can do here! Each exercise should be one hand-written page, minimum. Please bring a notebook to class, as I may periodically collect journals and grade them solely on whether you completed the exercise or not.

First Short Story (20%)

Your first story must be approximately 5-10 pages. You will produce your first short story while engaged in the study of craft. I will not limit the subject matter in which you choose to write about. However, I do caution against writing about overburdened topics such as vampires and post-apocalypses, as well as enormously highbrow attempts—all writing will be critiqued based on quality and a story worth reading about. Do not go over 12 pages; excerpts from longer works are acceptable.

Second Short Story OR Revision of First Short Story (20%)

For your final assignment, choose ONE of the following options:

- (1) Write a new story, following the same guidelines as above. Having already written and given feedback on one story, you should have a better sense of your craft and voice; therefore this story may weigh more heavily on your final grade.
- (2) Write a revision of your first story (submit with a copy of the original draft). This must be a significant revision, taking into account the feedback you have received from your peers and me during your workshop. Your grade will suffer if you only make grammatical or technical fixes—your story must develop and grow.

Participation (15%)

You are expected to attend class regularly, participate actively in class discussions and critique the work of your peers on hardcopy and with diligence and respect. Failure to do any of these things will lower this portion of your grade. I also reserve the right, in cases of disrespectful workshop behavior or lack of adequate peer critique, to lower your individual story or paper grades accordingly.

Grading Scale

The grading scale will follow UF's current policy:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx#grades>

Course Policies

Attendance

Your participation and attention in our class sessions is invaluable not only to meeting course requirements, but for the shaping of your craft; attendance is mandatory. If you must miss one class, it is not necessary to tell me why—I will assume you had a good reason. However, missing class will prevent you from earning participation and in-class exercise credit for the day, and these points cannot be made up. If you miss more than one class for any reason, your grade will suffer. Please come speak to me if you have a reason that will necessitate you to miss more than one class.

Three incidents of tardiness will count as one absence (this also includes leaving class early). **Three absences will result in an automatic fail in the class.** If you miss a class, please do not expect me to contact you;

you have the responsibility to contact me to see if you missed any important information or assignment changes.

Academic Honesty

All work in this course should be original and individual. Evidence of collusion (someone helped you write the assignment), plagiarism (using someone else's published or unpublished words without acknowledgement) or multiple submissions (handing in the same paper to different classes) will lead to the university's procedures for dealing with academic dishonesty. All students are expected to honor their commitment to the academic honor code. University of Florida students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire Student Honor Code:
"<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honorcode.php>"

Grade Complaints

A low grade on a single assignment will not prohibit you from earning a reasonable course grade if your work improves. If you are uncertain or confused about a grade, feel free to contact me and I will be happy to discuss it with you, so that you can improve your work for the next paper or have an opportunity to convince me otherwise.

Participating/ Civility

Actively participating in class will enhance your learning experience, as well as that of others. I expect you to be interested, engaged and prepared. In addition, I expect you to be courteous to and respectful of others—your fellow students and instructor—at all times, even when you encounter diverse opinions, which you may find will be often. You will be asked to leave the class if your behavior is disruptive or offensive in any way, including anything that denigrates others on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or religion. Your dismissal will be considered an absence. This is not to say that our discussions should be censored. Say what you believe, but be prepared to back your statements up. Furthermore, when it comes to reviewing a peer's work or a published piece, simply your like or dislike is not a legitimate reason for critique. Always provide justifiable and constructive criticism.

Turning in Assignments

All papers must be submitted at the beginning of class on the specified date. They must be typed, using MLA manuscript format and 11 or 12 point-Times New Roman, printed in black ink on 8-1/2" X 11" paper, **and stapled upper left-hand corner.** Submissions that fail to meet the above conditions will not be accepted. Each assignment is due in class on the date specified.

When submitting your story for workshop, **you must print enough hardcopies for every class member and myself, and bring them to class the week PREVIOUS to your workshop.** Late papers will not be accepted and I will not accept papers over email. If you miss this class, and do not contact me in advance, you will not be workshopped and you will fail that assignment. **This aspect is taken very seriously.**

Accommodations

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information, please see:
<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

Semester Course Schedule

Reading and writing assignments must be completed prior to the day they appear on the schedule. Come to class prepared to discuss the items listed for that day. Bring your textbook, course packet, and writing journal/notebook to each class for reference.

Please keep in mind that that this schedule is always subject to change: I often make adjustments

via e-mail and it is your responsibility to read through each with attention. I will not necessarily remind you about any assignments or changes.

Week One – Welcome & Overview of Class 8/26

Introduction to the course and syllabus. Discussion of writing journal/exercises. Discussion of the workshop method. Meet your fellow writers.

Two – Plot 9/2

Discussion of the workshop method. Generating story ideas. Reading as a writer. Discussion of first story assignment. Structuring the plot of a story.

Chapter 1 “Reading a Story”

Carver – “Cathedral”

Nabokov – “Signs and Symbols”

Tucci – “The Evolution of Knowledge”

Three – Setting, Tone, Style 9/9

Using detail in fiction.

Carver – “Small Good Thing”

Barthelme – “Concerning the Body Guard”

Just – “About Boston”

Four – Characters Made Real 9/16

Ch.3 Character

Cheever – “Reunions”

O’Connor – “A Good Man is Hard to Find”

Gaitskill – “The Other Place”

Five – Point of View 9/23

Ch.2 Point of View

Saunders – “Adams”

Wolff – “Bullet in the Brain”

Perkins Gilman – “The Yellow Wallpaper”

Six – Choices & Details 9/30

Ch. 4 Setting & Ch. 5 Tone and Style

Cheever – “The Swimmer”

Barthelme – “I Bought a Little City”

Hempel – “The Harvest”

Seven – Metaphor & Theme 10/7

Ch. 6 Theme & Ch. 7 Symbol. Go over Critical Essay

Jackson – “The Lottery”

Carol Oates – “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?”

O’Connor – “Everything That Rises Must Converge”

Eight — Grounded in the Strange 10/14

Critical Essay Due

Millhauser– “In the Reign of Harad IV”

Adrian – “The Changeling”

Melville – “Bartleby, the Scrivenger”

10/14

Workshop. Stories TBA

10/21

Workshop. Stories TBA.

11/4

Workshop. Stories TBA.

11/11

No Class: Veteran's Day

11/18

Workshop. Stories TBA

Discussion of revision strategies.

Sign up for one-on-one conferences

11/25

Conferences

12/2 — Student fiction readings.

Revision of your first short story is due + portfolio