

CRW 1101: Fiction Writing: Section 0218, Fall 2017

Instructor Name: Janna Moretti

Course Time & Location: Mondays, Periods 3-5 (9:35 am -12:35 pm); WEIM 3028

Office Location and Hours: Location TBD, Mondays 12:35-2:35

Course Website: <https://ufl.instructure.com>

Instructor Email: jannaamoretti@ufl.edu

Course Description:

Fiction is a way to explore, wrangle, assess, intuit, strengthen, infer, suggest, enliven, communicate, test, create, change, transform, grow. Literature has affected social structures; it has altered political landscapes. Literature can affect change: Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. While fiction may influence on the macro level, it cannot do so without saying something about humanity at the individual level. Something universal can be written into characters that we, as readers, latch onto for a deeper understanding of other in relation to self. Literature reminds us that we are not alone, that we ought to consider others. Literature teaches us compassion.

We will be reading and writing literature in this course—specifically literary fiction. We will do this while paying close attention to how stories work—structurally, stylistically, and thematically.

Goals:

1. Write better.
2. Be a more thoughtful reader.
3. Develop your language for discussing literature. All of these are interrelated.

Please note:

Some of the texts that we will read will have content that some students may find offensive or unsettling. If you do not wish to encounter such content, do not take this course.

General Education Objectives:

- This course confers General Education credit for either Composition (C) or Humanities (H). This course also fulfills 6,000 of the university's 24,000-word writing requirement (WR).
- This course confers General Education credit for Composition (C), and also fulfills 6,000 of the university's 24,000-word writing requirement (WR).
- Course content should include multiple forms of effective writing, different writing styles, approaches and formats, and methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes and contexts. Students should learn to organize complex arguments in writing using thesis statements, claims and evidence, and to analyze writing for errors in logic.
- The University *Writing Requirement (WR)* ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. To receive Writing Requirement

credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. This means that written assignments must meet minimum word requirements totaling 6000 words.

General Education Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication and critical thinking:

- **Content:** Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the academic discipline.
- **Communication:** Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline. Students will participate in class discussions throughout the semester to reflect on assigned readings.
- **Critical Thinking:** Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

Required Texts:

Textbooks:

Jerome Stern, *Making Shapely Fiction* (Available on Canvas)

Other Texts:

Strunk and White, *Elements of Style*

Coursepack (Available on Canvas)

Assignments:

Class Participation: 20% (200 points)

Doing the reading is only half of the assignment. In-class discussion of the material is the other half.

Critical Responses: 60% (600 points)

Choose one literary term listed at the end of this syllabus and apply an analysis of that concept to the reading for the week. You are only required to write a response for one of them. By the end of the semester, this will account for 6,000 words of critical analyses: The structure and content of the critical analyses will be taught in class, both explicitly and organically as a result of our classroom discussions about the stories we read. The analyses will be evaluated based on the following criteria: demonstrated reading of the stories/chapters; critical thinking; depth of analysis; engagement with the discussion of craft. Your analytical and critical skills are expected to improve over the course of the semester, both through practice and in response to my feedback. **You will read part or all of your critical response every class.**

My goal is that your critical responses achieve the following:

1. Make a claim about our reading based on Stern's ideas or those we discussed in class. This claim should attempt to get at the source of the author's achievement through a discussion of craft (choices the author has made in the telling of the story).

2. Provide textual support for your claim from the story being discussed. Cite the specific words in the text of the stories that made you think what you thought and that support and prove your point.
3. Provide analysis of your claim and the text. Answer the question "so what?" What does this mean within the context of the work as a whole? How does this section contribute to the author's overall intent?

(Please avoid "rating" the stories with remarks of taste, such as "I hated this" or "I liked this." Your ability to have a pointed discussion about fiction will develop over the semester.)

Short Stories: 20% (200 points)

Two short stories: the first is worth 50 points, the revision is worth 150 points. Your stories will be evaluated based on the same criteria as your writing exercises. I am looking for clarity, attention to language, and a developing understanding of the building blocks of fiction writing as discussed in Stern's text and during class. **Manuscripts must be delivered to the class *the week before they are to be workshopped*.** There is no late delivery. There is no switching. No last-minute writing. If you are unable to turn in the story on time, an entire letter grade will be deducted from your final grade. Please bring enough copies for everyone.

Workshop Procedure:

Each person will have one story (6-10 pages) workshopped.

On workshop days it is expected that you have read each piece carefully *at least once*, and that you have spent time formulating responses to it. Write your responses on the hard copy of the story to return to your peer.

The workshop will be facilitated in the following format:

1. Writer will read a short section of the story. Then, the writer will not speak for the duration of the workshop.
2. The class will discuss what is working in the text.
3. We will discuss how it can become a better story.
4. The writer will be brought into the discussion.

This writing workshop will be a safe place where everyone should feel encouraged and welcome to share their thoughts—the participation of those who fail to respect their peers' thoughts/feelings will be graded accordingly. Do not discuss your peers' work outside of class unless it is with the concerning party.

Course Policies:

1. You must complete all *assignments* to receive credit for this course.
2. *Attendance:* You are allowed one absence without explanation, but do not miss the day you are going to be workshopped. This will result in a failing grade for the story. If you have two absences, your final grade will be reduced one letter grade. If you have three or

more absences, you will fail this course. Only those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays, are exempted from this policy. Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with the instructor prior to the date that will be missed.

- a. If you have missed class, it is your responsibility to catch up by getting notes from a classmate. Please do not email me to ask if you missed anything important.
3. *Paper Format & Submission*: Double-spaced, 12-point, Times New Roman (Or Calibri or Courier New) font. Pages must be numbered. One staple goes in the upper-left-hand corner. Title everything.
4. *Late Papers/Assignments*: No late work accepted.
5. *Paper Maintenance Responsibilities*. Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.
6. *Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism*. Plagiarism violates the Student Honor Code and requires reporting to the Dean of Students. All students must abide by the Student Honor Code: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>.
7. Students with *disabilities* who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/), which will provide appropriate documentation to give the instructor.
8. For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>
9. *Grade Appeals*. In 1000- and 2000-level courses, students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant, in the Department office (4008 TUR). Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.
10. *Course Evaluations*. Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages asking you to go online and evaluate this course: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/Default.aspx>
11. Students who face difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help may call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352) 392-1575, or contact them online: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>
12. *Classroom Behavior*: Please keep in mind that students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions. Diversified student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own. Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal—and accordingly absence—from the class.
 - a. *Cell Phones*: Cell phones are not allowed in class. You may not text in class. You may not have your phone out on your desk during class. Please put your phone away. If you are asked to put your phone away during class, you will be marked absent that day (see absence policy above).
 - b. *Laptops, Etc.*: Laptops, iPads etc. are not allowed in class (see cell phone policy above). If you have a special reason you must use a laptop or an iPad, please let me know before the course begins.
13. *UF's policy on Harassment*: UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty:

<http://hr.ufl.edu/manager-resources/recruitment-staffing/institutional-equity-diversity/resources/harassment/>

14. I may change this syllabus at any time.

Schedule of Assignments:

Week 1 Aug 21: Review Syllabus; Explain Workshop Procedure; Assign Workshop Dates; Benjamin-“The Storyteller”

Week 2 Aug 28: *Elements of Style*, Tolstoy-First section, “What is Art?”; Tolstoy-“The Death of Ivan Ilych”; **Critical Story Response 1 Due**

Week 3 Sep 4: No Class

Week 4 Sep 11: Making Shapely Fiction (MSF): Intro, Part I, Part II, Part III 79-123; Chekov-“The Lady with the Dog”; Alice Munro “Privilege”; **Critical Story Response 2 Due** (You are only required to respond to one story.)

Week 5 Sep 18: Making Shapely Fiction (MSF): Part III 124-167; Creative Nonfiction Comparison: Ugresic-“The Age of Skin”; Ulmer-“A Swath of Poppies”; Freewrite; **Critical Story Response 3 Due**

Week 6 Sep 25: MSF: Part III 168-211; O’Brien-“The Things They Carried”; McPherson-“Telref”; Freewrite; **Critical Story Response 4 Due; Workshop 1, 2 Handed Out**

Week 7 Oct 2: MSF: Part III 212-255; Paley-“An Interest in Life”; Olsen-“I Stand Here Ironing”; Workshop 1, 2; Freewrite; **Critical Story Response 5 Due; Workshop 1, 2 Responses Due; Workshop 3, 4 Handed Out**

Week 8 Oct 9: O’Connor-“Greenleaf”; Powell-“The Imperative Mood”; Workshop 3, 4; Freewrite; **Critical Story Response 6 Due; Workshop 3,4 Responses Due; Workshop 5, 6 Handed Out**

Week 9 Oct 16: TBD

Week 10 Oct 23: Bender-“End of the Line”; Johnson-“Dark Meadow”; Workshop 5, 6; Freewrite; **Critical Story Response 7 Due; Workshop 5, 6 Responses Due; Workshop 7, 8 Handed Out**

Week 11 Oct 30: Saunders-“Puppy,” “Sticks,” “Escape from Spiderhead”; Workshop 7, 8; Freewrite; **Critical Story Response 8 Due; Workshop 7, 8 Responses Due; Workshop 9, 10 Handed Out**

Week 12 Nov 6: Trevor-“Mrs. Silly,” Hemingway-“The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber”; Workshop 9, 10; Freewrite; **Critical Story Response 9 Due; Workshop Responses 9, 10 Due; Workshop 11, 12 Handed Out**

Week 13 Nov 13: Johnson-“Emergency”; Conroy-“Midair”; Workshop 11, 12; Freewrite; **Critical Story Response 10 Due; Workshop Responses 11, 12 Due; Workshop 13, 14 Handed Out**

Week 14 Nov 20: Hempel-“In the Cemetery Where Al Jolson is Buried”; Wideman-“newborn thrown in trash and dies” Workshop 13, 14; Freewrite; **Critical Story Response 11 Due; Workshop Responses 13, 14 Due**

Week 15 Nov 27: Ferreras-“The Letician Age”; Workshop 15, 16; Freewrite; **Critical Story Response 12 Due; Final Revision Due**

Week 16 Dec 4: TBD

Rubric of Evaluation for Critical Responses

A: Contains extended analysis of the texts and develops original, sophisticated ideas. Has exceptionally well-crafted paragraphs, a thesis, a persuasive organizational structure (e.g., brief introduction, body, brief conclusion), well-supported claims, and appropriate and effective stylistic elements.

B: Contains extended analysis of the texts and develops original, sophisticated ideas. Has well-crafted paragraphs, a thesis, a persuasive organizational structure (e.g., brief introduction, body, brief conclusion), well-supported claims, and appropriate and effective stylistic elements.

C: Contains some analysis of the texts and develops some original ideas about them. Has adequately well-crafted paragraphs, a thesis, a persuasive organizational structure (e.g., brief introduction, body, brief conclusion), adequately-supported claims, and some appropriate stylistic elements.

D: Contains minimal analysis of the texts. May lack well-crafted paragraphs, a thesis, and/or a persuasive organizational structure. Fails to adequately support its claims and/or use appropriate stylistic elements.

E: Lacks analysis of the text, and therefore fails to demonstrate reading and/or comprehension.

List of Some Terms for Critical Responses

Accuracy
Ambiguity
Anti-Hero
Atmosphere
Beginnings
Character
Cliche
Convention
Crisis
Description
Dialogue

Diction
Endings
Epiphany
Exposition
Flashback
Frame Story
Freytag's Pyramid
Hero
Imagery
Imagination
Immediacy
Interior Monologue
Intrigant
Irony
Metaphor and Simile
Mise-En-Scene
Motif
Names
Narrative
Narrator
Negative Positive Knowledge
Objective Correlative
Plot
Point of View
Position
Premise
Psychic Distance
Realism
Resolution
Revision
Scene
Sentimentality
Short Story
Showing and Telling
Stereotype
Style
Subtlety
Suspense
Suspension of Disbelief
Symbolism
Tension
Texture
Transitions
Trust Your Material
Voice
Zigzag