

CRW 1101 – Beginning Fiction Writing (Section 1648, Class #12436), Fall 2020

Instructor Name: Ryan Bedsaul

Course meeting times & locations: W | Period 10 - E1

- 5:10 PM – 6:10 PM block will be devoted to Asynchronous work
- 6:11 PM – 8:10 PM block will be devoted to Synchronous work (Zoom discussion)

Office Location and Hours: Thursday (2:00 pm – 4:00 pm) Zoom, or by appointment

Course website: Canvas

Instructor Email: ryan.bedsaul@ufl.edu

Course Description:

This course will provide an overview of methods of fiction writing. Through close reading and discussion, we will try to reach a better understanding of the formal elements of the craft, from the terse text message dialogue of Kristen Roupenian's *Cat Person* to the passage of time in *Sonny's Blues* by James Baldwin. Finally, by creating our own fiction, we will aim to make ourselves stronger critics, revisers, and collaborators through the workshop.

COVID Statement

This course will take place remotely under exceptional circumstances. While this class was originally meant to take place in-person, due to the threat COVID-19 poses to our students and communities, this is no longer possible. With that in mind, CRW 1101 is organized to accommodate you as much as possible as we navigate an unprecedented historical moment. We will plan to devote the first hour of each session to asynchronous work and the last two hours to synchronous work. Adjustments may be made to this plan as we work together to make the course as engaging as possible. Please feel free to ask me any questions as they arise. The more we communicate, the easier it will be to accommodate any adverse circumstances we may face throughout the semester.

General Education Objectives:

- This course confers General Education credit for Composition (C), and also fulfills 6,000 of the university's 24,000-word writing requirement (WR).
- *Composition courses* provide instruction in the methods and conventions of standard written English (grammar, punctuation, usage), as well as the techniques that produce effective texts. Composition courses are writing intensive. They require multiple drafts submitted to your instructor for feedback before final submission.
- 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:

All readings available on Canvas

Assignments (see below for Grading Rubric):

Class participation: 20% (200 points)

In-class discussion of all readings is required. You will read Canvas readings at least once before class, and you will read the workshop stories of your peers at least twice before respective workshops. You will usefully annotate your peers' work and provide a typewritten letter of comments and thoughts on the work's strengths, weaknesses, and possible improvements.

Note: Completion of workshop stories and critical response assignments counts toward class participation. Reading quizzes will also contribute to class participation scores at instructor's discretion.

Critical responses: 60% (200 points)

Critical responses are 600 words each. This is a firm word count. By the end of the semester, your accrued critical responses will account for 6,000 words of critical analyses, as required by UF. The structure and content of these responses will be outlined in class. These responses will serve as a basis for your in-class discussion (e.g. you may plan what you'd like to say aloud) and will show you've read the material—but will not contain summary or synopsis—and will demonstrate engagement and analytical practice or ability. The word count of each critical response should be listed at the bottom of each at the time of turning in.

Workshop stories: 20% (200 points)

For this course you will also write one short story and undertake upon it one revision to be turned in at the end of the semester. When your story is due, it is due, and you must be present for the workshop discussion. You will know your workshop date far ahead of schedule. You must email your workshop submission to me one week ahead of your actual workshop date. I will then email it to the class so that everyone can read the story, make comments, and write letters. (This is to say: your workshop submission is due one week from the date of your workshop, and not on the date of your workshop.)

For the revision, you will use the feedback from your peers and your instructor, and you will revise your work taking these comments and thoughts seriously in mind (although incorporation of any one specific comment is not mandatory). A revision in this instance is not just correcting typos or moving paragraphs around, but involves changing the story in some significant way.

Course Policies:

1. You must complete all *assignments* to receive credit for this course.
2. Attendance: Attendance policy is consistent with UF's attendance policies: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies>. Triple-period, once weekly classes (such as ours) count as two absences. Like all discussion courses, this one needs

you! Use your allotted absences wisely (for emergencies, major illness) as you would for any job. You will fail the course if you accrue more than two absences.

3. Latecomers receive partial absences, and must see me after class so I know you attended. Three instances of tardiness will count as one absence. Please let me know if you have reasonable trouble coming to class resulting in chronic lateness, and we can reach an accommodation.
4. Classroom Behavior: Please keep in mind that UF students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some texts that we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions. Diverse backgrounds and 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.
5. UF's policy on Sexual Harassment: The University of Florida is committed to providing a safe educational, working, and residential environment that is free from sexual harassment or misconduct directed towards any and all members of the community: <https://titleix.ufl.edu/policy-statement/>
6. Paper Format & Submission: All assignments will be submitted electronically through canvas with the exception of your stories. Stories should be sent to me via canvas message a week before your workshop date. I will then send them to the entire class. Papers should be formatted as follows: Double-spaced, 12 point, Times New Roman font. Pages should be numbered. Title, Name, Date at the top.
7. Late Papers/Assignments: Critical responses can be submitted up to one week late, resulting in a drop of two letter grades. Workshop stories and revisions should be on time if at all humanly possible—late assignments will only be accepted under extenuating circumstances.
8. Paper Maintenance Responsibilities. Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.
9. Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge: “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: ‘On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.’” The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honorcode/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions.

A Student must not represent as the Student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

- a. Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing.
- b. Self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the Student's own submitted work, or the simultaneous submission of the Student's own work, without the full and clear acknowledgment and permission of the Faculty to whom it is submitted.
- c. Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.
- d. Submitting a document, assignment, or material that, in whole or in part, is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment the Student did not author.

10. 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 your instructor early in the semester.
11. Students who are in distress or who are in need of counseling or urgent help: please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352-392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to you. UF's Counseling and Wellness Center offers additional support: 352-392-1575, or contact them online: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>
12. For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>
13. 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). Please contact Ms. Blount at cblount@ufl.edu Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.
14. Course Evaluations. Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations. Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages requesting that you do this online: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/Default.aspx>
15. Policy on environmental sustainability. Whenever possible, I will use paper-sparing electronic media to distribute our course materials. Consider purchasing electronic editions of assigned texts when they are available, or used copies of print texts. If you do not elect to keep your print books, consider sharing them with others after the semester ends. (For example, you could donate them to the Alachua County [Friends of the Library](#) annual book sale.

Course Schedule*

Week 1, September 2

Introductions and Syllabus

“The Great Silence” by Ted Chiang (in-class)

“The Danger of A Single Story” by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (in-class)

Week 2, September 9

Assign workshop dates

Read: “How to Become a Writer” by Lorrie Moore

“Love and Honor and Pity and Pride and Compassion and Sacrifice” by Nam Le

Due: Critical Response No. 1 (Mandatory 600 words, as are all Critical Responses to follow)

Week 3, September 16

Read: “Baptizing the Gun” by Uwem Akpan

“Bounty” by Diane Cook

“In Defense of the Present Tense” by Alexander Chee (in-class)

Due: Critical Response No. 2

Week 4, September 23

Read: “Not Knowing” by Donald Barthelme

“Graffiti in the Toilet” by Eka Kurniawan

“Pee on Water” by Rachel Glaser (read in-class)

Due: Critical Response No. 3
First week’s workshop stories

Week 5, September 30

Begin Workshop

Read: “Cat Person” by Kristen Roupenian
Workshop Stories (TBA)

Due: Critical Response No. 4
Next week’s workshop stories

Week 6, October 7

Read: “Sonny’s Blues” by James Baldwin
Excerpt from *The Art of Time in Fiction* by Joan Silber
Workshop Stories (TBA)

Due: Critical Response No. 5
Next week’s workshop stories

Week 7, October 14

Read: “Dr. H.A. Moynihan” by Lucia Berlin
Workshop stories (TBA)

Due: Critical Response No. 6
Next week’s workshop stories

Week 8, October 21

Read: “Only Orange” by Camille Bordas
Workshop stories (TBA)

Due: Next week’s workshop stories

Week 9, October 28

Read: “The Trip” by Weike Wang
Workshop stories (TBA)

Due: Critical Response No. 7
Next week’s workshop stories

Week 10, November 4

Read: “Roy Spivey” by Miranda July
Workshop stories (TBA)

Due: Next week’s workshop stories

Week 11, November 11

No Class (Veteran’s day)

Week 12, November 18

Read: “On Ohaeto Street” by Chinelo Okparanta
Workshop stories (TBA)

Due: Critical Response No. 9
Next week’s workshop stories

Week 13, November 25

No Class (Thanksgiving Break)

Week 14, December 2

Read: “Apollo” by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
Workshop Stories (TBA)

Due: Next Week’s Workshop Stories

Week 15, December 9

Read: “A Conversation with my Father” by Grace Paley
Workshop Stories (TBA)

Due: Critical Response No. 10
Story Revision

***Note:** The first hour of each class will be devoted to asynchronous work. Asynchronous work will include video screenings, in-class reading, and writing assignments that can be completed off Zoom. The last two hours of the class will be devoted to synchronous work. We will use this time to review the asynchronous assignments, discuss the weekly reading(s), and workshop each other’s stories over Zoom.

Grading Rubric:

A: 94-100; A-: 90-93

B+: 87-89; B: 84-86; B-: 80-83

C+: 77-79; C: 73-76; C-: 70-72

D+: 67-69; D: 63-66; D-: 60-62

E: 0-59

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.