

CRW1101: Beginning Fiction Writing

Section 1649, Fall 2016

CBD 210, Wednesday periods 9-11 (4:05-7:05)

Instructor: Wynne Hungerford

Email: pwhungerford@ufl.edu

Office Hours: Thursday 12-2

Office Location: Turlington

“What happens to everything we kept in our heads and hoped others would find amusing after we pass away? No trace of them will be left, unless, of course, we write them down. Even that is not a guarantee.” – Charles Simic

Required Texts:

Writing Fiction (9th Edition) by Janet Burroway

Course Objectives

1. To leave this course writing better than you did when you entered.
2. To leave this course reading better than you did when you entered.

This course provides an introduction to fiction writing and, since careful and reflective reading is the best way to learn how to write, an introductory approach to the study of literature. We will write and read with attention to how stories work—structurally, stylistically, and thematically.

The first half of the semester will be devoted to a discussion of the elements of fiction. The second half will be a traditional fiction workshop, the requirements of which will be discussed in detail later on, but which can be described in general as a format in which we apply the same critical skills to our own work that we've learned to apply to the assigned readings. We are here to study and create good writing, which requires serious work.

Course Format

1. Writing: Short writing exercises, 8 x 750-word critical reading responses, one 3-page story, one 5-page story, and one revision.
2. Reading: Short stories from the textbook and handouts, chapters from the textbook, and essays addressing various aspects of craft.
3. Critiquing: Of both the published stories and the work of your peers, knowing that close reading of another's prose should, in fact, help your own.

Graded Assignments and Other Course Components

Class Participation:	300 points
Creative exercises (5):	120 points (24 points each)
Critical reading responses (8):	270 points (34 points each)
Stories (2):	200 points
Final revision:	110 points
	1000 points total

Class Participation 30% (300 points)

We will discuss both the textbook (Janet Burroway's *Writing Fiction*) and published fiction. Doing the reading is only half the assignment. In-class discussion of the material is the other half. Bring the textbook every day and copies of the stories. If I do not feel you are reading, I will give quizzes.

On workshop days it is expected that you will come to class having read each piece carefully *at least once*, and that you have spent time formulating a typed response to it. In addition to your marginal comments in ink or pencil, attach your typed response to the author's piece with a staple. In addition, you will provide me with a copy of all your typed responses at the end of the semester. I recommend you compile a single word doc to organize them. These typed responses will form part of your participation grade. In-class discussion, preparedness (including timely response to all class emails), and (especially) engagement/attitude are all parts of participation. A writing workshop should be a safe place where everyone should feel encouraged and welcome to share their thoughts/feelings—the participation of those who fail to respect their peers' thoughts/feelings will be graded accordingly.

Creative Exercises 12% (120 points)

You will write a short exercise for homework in the first half of the class. Prompts will be given ahead of time. You will upload these to Canvas before the class it is due. You will also have printed out copies for everyone in the class.

Critical Reading Responses: 27% (270 points)

Each week, you will have 2-3 stories to read. You will write 8 x 750-word critical responses to these readings (response #8 will be a critical self-assessment submitted at the end of the semester). You will be asked to think about a specific element of writing that is exemplified by these stories. You will also be asked to consider the common threads you see among these stories—what does this author do that is different to writing by other authors? The responses will be evaluated based on the following criteria: demonstrated reading of the stories; 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.

You will upload your responses to Canvas before the class it is due. As well you will have access to it in class (either electronic or a hard copy for yourself) so that you can read aloud if called upon to do so.

On the schedule, the “Readings” section tells you what you should have read and responded to before that class. My goal is that your reading responses achieve the following:

1. Make a claim about the stories based on Burroway’s ideas or those we discussed in class. If ideas are taken from Burroway, those ideas, whether quoted, paraphrased, or summarized, should be cited using MLA style.
2. Provide textual support for your claim from the story being discussed. Point to 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?
4. Cite all quotations in-text in MLA style.

Please avoid “rating” the stories with remarks of taste, such as “I hated this” or “I liked this.” We will work during the semester to develop your ability to talk about fiction, but please keep in mind that these published, professional writers, whether you enjoyed their writing or not, have something to teach you about the practice and art of the written word. Which is not to say they are gods! Or infallible! Or that you must worship at the altar of their prose or their ideas!

Rubric of Evaluation for Reading 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

Two Stories: 20% (200 points)

You will write two stories: a 3-page story and a 5-page story. Each of these are worth 100 points. They should be literary fiction, which is what we will be reading and studying. They should NOT be “genre” fiction, such as fantasy, sci-fi, zombie, vampire, fan fiction, et cetera. Do not write these stories the night before they are due. I will be able to tell if this is the case, and your grade will be lowered accordingly. 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 stories should also be submitted on Canvas.

Final Revision of Stories: 11% (110 points)

You will rewrite/revise one story, based on my comments and those of your peers. Your revisions will be turned in as your final project on Canvas.

Formatting

Each assignment will be submitted in double-spaced, 12-point, Times New Roman typeface. I don't mess around with typefaces. Pages must be numbered. One staple goes in the upper-left-hand corner if you're submitting a hard copy. There must be a title, something beyond “First Reading Response” (for reading responses the title must be interesting and informative; for stories, well, do your best). You are responsible for photocopying your workshopped stories. Each formatting failure will result in a 5% deduction on the grade of that assignment.

Attendance

You are allowed one absence without explanation, but do not miss the day your story is workshopped. Skipping your workshop will result in a failing grade for that story. An absence after the first will lower your final grade by a full letter (A to B, B to C etc.). A third absence will result in a failing grade for this class. Reserve the day you don't attend class for a day you really need it. Doctor's notes will not be accepted. 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. Two tardies (arriving more than five minutes late, or leaving class early) equals one absence.

Notes

- You are responsible for checking your university emails. I will sometimes give or change assignments via email, as well as make any necessary changes to the schedule. *You are responsible for checking your email and approaching me with any questions.* If I have sent an email to you, I will assume you have read and understood it.
- I will not accept late work. I will not give extra credit.
- I may change anything on this syllabus at any time.

Beware: This course is reading intensive and writing intensive and printing intensive. It is required that you come to class each week fully prepared. We are here to study and create serious fiction, which requires serious work. Do not fall prey to the pandemic impression that creative courses are easy. If you're hoping for an easy A, this class is not for you.

Final grade appeals: Students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant. Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

UF Reading and Writing Center: The Reading and Writing Center at the University of Florida is an excellent resource for improving reading comprehension and writing skills. For more information, see: <http://www.at.ufl.edu/rwcenter/>

Statement of Composition (C) credit: This course can satisfy the UF General Education requirement for Composition or Humanities. For more information, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-educationrequirement.aspx>

Statement of Writing Requirement (WR): This course can provide 6000 words toward fulfillment of the UF requirement for writing. For more information, see: <http://gened.aa.ufl.edu/writing-math.aspx#Writing>

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

Statement on harassment: UF provides an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://regulations.ufl.edu/chapter1/1006.pdf>

Statement on academic honesty: All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

Statement on grades and grading policies: Note: UF has recently instituted minus grades. As a result, letter grades now have different grade point equivalencies. For more information, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Grading:

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

CLASS SCHEDULE

August 24 — Introduction

Read: “Refresh, Refresh” by Benjamin Percy

<http://www.theparisreview.org/fiction/5585/refresh-refresh-benjamin-percy>

“Brownies” by ZZ Packer

http://www.qccounty.com/SCC/Fall10/Eng2_80232/Readings/ZZPacker--Brownies.pdf

In Class: Introductions, syllabus, discussion of reading

Due: Reading Response #1

August 31 — Showing & Telling

Read: “We Didn’t” by Stuart Dybek (WF)

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

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~drbr/goodman.html>

WF Chapter 1 & 2

In Class: Discuss readings and in-class exercise

Due: Reading Response #2

September 7 — Characterization Part I

Read: “Every Tongue Shall Confess” by ZZ Packer (WF)

“Emergency” by Denis Johnson (WF)

“What We Talk About When We Talk About Love” by Raymond Carver

<http://myweb.dal.ca/dhevens/2034/Readings/What%20We%20Talk%20About%20When%20We%20Talk%20About%20Love.pdf>

WF Chapter 3

In Class: Discuss readings and share exercises

Due: Reading Response #3 & Creative Exercise #1

September 14 — Characterization Part II

Read: “Bullet in the Brain” by Tobias Wolff (WF)

“A Worn Path” by Eudora Welty

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1941/02/a-worn-path/376236/>

“The Paperhanger” by William Gay

<https://eng210crwriting.files.wordpress.com/2011/11/gay-11.pdf>

https://creativewritinghibbert.files.wordpress.com/2012/03/gay_2.pdf

WF Chapter 4

In Class: Discuss readings and share exercises

Due: Reading Response #4 & Creative Exercise #2

September 21 — Fictional Place

Read: “Communist” by Richard Ford (canvas)

“Hunters in the Snow” by Tobias Wolff
<http://www.classicshorts.com/stories/huntsnow.html>

WF Chapter 5

In Class: Discuss readings and share exercises

Due: Reading Response #5 & Creative Exercise #3

September 28 — Fictional Time

Read: “You’re Ugly, Too” by Lorrie Moore (WF)

“The Fun House” by Sherman Alexie (WF)

WF Chapter 6

In Class: Discuss readings and share exercises

Due: Reading Response #6 & Creative Exercise #4

October 5 — Form, Plot, Structure

Read: “Escapes” by Joy Williams (WF)

“Everything That Rises Must Converge” by Flannery O’Connor (WF)

“A Rose for Emily” by William Faulkner

http://resources.mhs.vic.edu.au/creating/downloads/A_Rose_for_Emily.pdf

WF Chapter 7

In Class: Discuss readings and share exercises

Due: Reading Response #7 & Creative Exercise #5

October 12 — Point of View

Workshop Begins

Read: “A Heart Must from Its Breaking” by Leon Rooke (Canvas)

“Dog Heaven” by Stephanie Vaughn

<http://www.wnyc.org/story/tobias-wolff-reads-stephanie-vaughn/>

WF Chapter 8

In Class: Discuss readings and Workshop #1

Due: Workshop Responses

October 19 — Revision

Read: “The Bath” by Raymond Carver

<http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/fms/Colleges/College%20of%20Humanities%20and%20Social%20Sciences/EMS/Readings/139.105/Additional/The%20Bath%20-%20Raymond%20Carver.pdf>

“A Small, Good Thing” by Raymond Carver

<http://christchurchlr.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/A-Small-Good-Thing.pdf>

“Rough Crossings” by Simon Armitage

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2007/12/24/rough-crossings>

WF Chapter 9

In Class: Discuss readings and Workshop #2

Due: workshop responses

October 26 — Style & Voice

Read: “I Bought a Little City” by Donald Barthelme

<http://www.wnyc.org/story/donald-antrim-reads-donald-barthelme/>

“Waiting” by E.C. Osondu

<https://www.guernicamag.com/fiction/waiting/>

“The End of Something” by Ernest Hemingway (Canvas)

In Class: Discuss readings and Workshop #3

Due: workshop responses

November 2 — Emotion & Avoiding Sentimentality

Read: “Last Night” by James Salter

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2002/11/18/last-night-2>

“In The Cemetery Where Al Jolson is Buried” by Amy Hempel

<http://fictionaut.com/stories/amy-hempel/in-the-cemetery-where-al-jolson-is-buried.pdf>

In Class: Discuss readings and Workshop #4

Due: workshop responses

November 9 — Humor

In Class: Read “Outlaw Head & Tail” by George Singleton aloud and Workshop #5

Due: workshop responses

November 16 — Write What You Know

Read: “A Father’s Story” by Andre Dubus

<https://www2.bc.edu/john-g-boylan/files/fathersstory.pdf>

In Class: Discuss reading and Workshop #6

Due: workshop responses

November 23 — Thanksgiving Break

November 30 — Writers on Writing

Read: “Why I Write” by Joy Williams

<http://www.tinhouse.com/blog/podcasts>

“Not Knowing” by Donald Barthelme

<https://manoftheword.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/not-knowing-donald-barthelme.pdf>

“On Writing” by Raymond Carver

<https://www.nytimes.com/books/01/01/21/specials/carver-shoptalk.html>

In Class: Workshop #7

Due: workshop responses

December 7 — Final Class

Read: “Killings” by Andre Dubus

<http://north.d127.org/teachers/dzubert/film%20studies/in%20the%20bedroom%20killings%20short%20story.pdf>

In Class: Watch *In the Bedroom*

Due: Revision & Self-Assessment & Workshop Response Letters on Canvas