

CRW 1101- FICTION WRITING (sec. 0218), Fall 2019

Instructor Name: Angela Bell

Course Meeting Time and Location: Thursdays 4:05 pm- (approx.) 5:35 pm, Zoom AND asynchronously via Canvas

Office Location and Hours: Wednesdays 4:05-5:05 pm via Zoom, or by appointment

Course Website: Canvas

Class #:

Instructor Email: angelabell@ufl.edu (please contact using Canvas)

Course Description:

This course will provide a survey of methods of writing fiction. Through the close-reading of contemporary short fictions, we will reach a better understanding of its formal elements.

Additionally, by trying our hand at some fiction of our own, as well as workshopping that of our classmates, we will better understand how to make fiction work. The goal of this class is to increase students' familiarity with modern and contemporary short fiction as well as to instill confidence in our own powers as creators. Fiction is not a dead letter but a living craft. Through reading and analysis in a variety of received traditions, we will learn together how to devise, draft, and revise ideas for prose writing.

COVID-19 Statement: In light of the continuing impacts of COVID-19, this course will be offered entirely through online course sessions. We will meet synchronously on Zoom every Thursday at 4:05 for approximately 90 minutes. Outside of class time, you are responsible for completing readings, responses, and your own creative work. Our classes will rely heavily on discussion which, I hope, will help to bridge some of the gap between our computer screens. Please be sure to download Zoom on your personal computer before the start of the class and familiarize yourself with how it works. I will send instructions to the class via email about how to join our Zoom meetings.

If you as an individual have any COVID-related hardships which may obstruct your performance in this class, please communicate with me as well as making use of all UF resources available to you. We can then assemble a plan to help you complete the class and fulfill all requirements in the way most beneficial for you.

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.

Class Format:

This class will use a combination of synchronous and asynchronous components. Workshop will take place weekly during the first 90 minutes of the allotted class time. Meetings will occur on an online platform (i.e. Zoom) in order to minimize in-person exposure.

The other 90 minutes of class time will take the form of asynchronous discussion posts on Canvas, which are referred to in the syllabus as “critical responses.” Over the course of the semester, students will complete 6 critical response posts, each with a minimum of 600 words, based on assigned reading, and 4 additional critical responses of 600 words (not public) based on the work of their peers.

For the first half of the course, the members of the class will be divided into two groups, group A and group B, which will rotate workshopping the formal exercises from week to week. See the

attached schedules for due dates. Students will have the opportunity to schedule their workshops for the second half of the course at the beginning of the semester, and the final six weeks of synchronous meetings will be devoted to workshopping story submissions.

Assignments:

Class participation: 20% (150 points)

In-class discussion is an essential and required aspect of this course. 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 brief typewritten note of comments and thoughts on the work's strengths, weaknesses, and possible improvement.

Completion of workshop stories and critical response assignments counts toward class participation.

Formal Exercises: 20% (200 points)

There will be three formal exercises in fiction writing assigned over the duration of the course, each ranging from 250-500 words. Prompts will be provided. The purpose of these exercises is to allow students to experiment with formal constraints and gain confidence and familiarity with the writing workshop setting. Completed exercises are to be submitted one week prior to the assigned workshop.

Critical responses: 40% (400 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.

There will be two types of critical response assignments. The first six will comment on the assigned readings in response to a given theme, and will be posted publicly on the Canvas discussion board for your classmate's engagement. The word count may be broken down in the following way: 400 words or more in the original post, and two thoughtful replies to your peer's posts, consisting of at least 100 words each.

The following four responses will comment on a classmate's story submission. These will not be posted publicly, and therefore all 600 words must be contained in the initial comment. These are to be submitted to the author and instructor prior to the workshop of the assigned piece.

Structure and content of these responses will be outlined in class. These responses 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 write two short stories 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 its workshopping. You will know your workshop date far ahead of schedule. Your workshop submission is due one week from the date of your workshop, and not on the date of your workshop itself.

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. 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. 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/>
5. Paper Format & Submission: Formal exercises and short stories are to be sent to your classmates and instructors via Canvas. Critical responses are to be posted using the discussion group function on Canvas.
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 (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. In the interest of privacy, the department requires that all **class-related communications are conducted via the messaging function in Canvas rather than through email**. For your convenience, it is possible to arrange your Canvas settings so that any Canvas messages are automatically forwarded to your UF email.

Required Texts: All course materials can be accessed on Canvas. You will be responsible for having read the material before the class.

Course Schedule

Week 1, September 3:

Introductions and syllabus

Assign workshop dates

“How Do We Write Now?” Patricia Lockwood (in class)

Week 2, September 10: Beginnings

Read: “The Presentation on Egypt,” Camille Bordas

“Which is More Than I Can Say About Some People,” Lorrie Moore

Excerpt from *Jakob Von Gunten*, Robert Walser

In Class: **No meeting this week**

Due: Group A: FE No. 1. Group B: Critical Response No. 1

Week 3, September 17: Micro Fiction

Read: “Girl,” Jamaica Kinkaid

“Sticks,” George Saunders

“Taylor Swift,” Hugh Behm-Steinberg

“Aubade,” Joy Williams

“Curriculum,” Sejal Shah

“How Many,” Bryan Washington

“I Don’t Need Anything From Here,” Laszlo Karsznahorkai

“The Job Application,” Robert Walser

In Class: Workshop Formal Exercise No. 1, Group A

Due: Group A: Critical Response No. 1. Group B: Formal Exercise No. 1.

Week 4, September 24: Perspective

Read: “The Embassy of Cambodia,” Zadie Smith

“The State,” Tommy Orange

In Class: Workshop Formal Exercise No. 1, Group B

Due: Group A: Formal Exercise No. 2. Group B: Critical Response No. 2.

Week 5, October 1: Characters and Characterization, Part 1

Read: “Nashville Gone to Ashes” Amy Hempel

“Hateship, Friendship, Loveship, Courtship, Marriage” Alice Munro

In Class: Workshop Formal Exercise No. 2, Group A

Due: Group A: Critical Response No. 2. Group B: Formal Exercise No. 2.

Week 6, October 8: Characters and Characterization, Part 2

Read: “Drinking Coffee Elsewhere,” ZZ Packer

“Black Box,” David Levitt

In Class: Workshop Formal Exercise No. 2, Group B

Due: Short Story 1 (slots 1-5)

Week 7, October 15: Narrative Time

Read: “Without Inspection,” Edwidge Danticat

“All Will Be Well,” Yiyun Li

In Class: Workshop Short Story 1 (slots 1-5)

Due: Short Story 1 (slots 6-12); Critical Response No. 3 (all); Classmate critical responses (as assigned)

Week 8, October 22: Style and Voice, Part 1

Read: “Kid Positive,” Adam Levin

“Wants,” Grace Paley

“In the Cemetery where Al Jolson is Buried,” Amy Hempel

In Class: Short Story 1 (6-12)

Due: Short Story No. 2 (Slots 1-5); Classmate critical responses (as assigned)

Week 9, October 29: Style and Voice 2

Read: “Doppelgänger Poltergeist,” Denis Johnson

“Under the Ackee Tree,” Jonathan Escoffery

In Class: Workshop Short Story 2 (slots 1-5)

Due: Short Story 2 (Slots 6-11); Classmate critical responses (as assigned)

Week 10, November 5: Setting

Read: “Battles in the Desert,” Jose Emilio Pacheco

“The Resident,” Carmen Maria Machado

Workshop: Short Story 2 (slots 6-11)

Due: Short Story 2 (Slots 12-16); Classmate critical responses (as assigned)

Week 11, November 12: Dialogue

Read: “What Language is That?” Uwem Akpan

“God,” Benjamin Nugent

In Class: Workshop Short Story 2 (Slots 12-16)

Due: Short Story No. 2 (Slots 1-5); Classmate critical responses (as assigned)

Week 12, November 19: Revision

Read: Two versions of Raymond Carver (TBD)

In Class: Workshop Short Story No. 1 (Slots 6-11)

Due: Short Story No. 1 (Slots 6-11); Classmate critical responses (as assigned); Critical Response No. 4

No class on November 26 due to Thanksgiving Holiday. Formal Exercise No. 3 due on Tuesday, December 1st at 8:00 am.

Week 12, December 3: Endings

Read: “Signs and Symbols,” Vladimir Nabokov

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

In Class: Formal Exercise No. 3 readings

Due: Short Story No. 2 (Slots 12-16); Classmate critical responses (as assigned)

Due on December 9:

Critical Responses 5 & 6

Portfolio containing (at least) one revised short story of your choice and one revised formal exercise of your choice

Grading Rubric:

A: 94-100; A-: 90-9

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.