

CRW 1101: Fiction Writing: Section 1650, Fall 2016

Turlington Room 2336; Wednesdays, Periods 10-E1 (5:10pm–8:10pm)

Instructor: Janna Moretti

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 10:30-12:30 and by appointment

Required Texts:

Textbooks:

Jerome Stern, *Making Shapely Fiction*: ISBN-13: 978-0393321241

Texts:

Coursepack

Course Overview and Objectives:

Fiction is a way to explore, wrangle, assess, intuit, strengthen, infer, suggest, enliven, communicate, test, create, change, transform, grow. Often overlooked, its power underestimated, writing has exerted its macro-level power onto social structures, altering the political landscape, affecting change: Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. While literature can impact on broader scales, it cannot do so without saying something about humanity on the individual basis. Fiction operates on the micro-level, annunciating bits of universality to the corner-curler seeing a piece of herself in a character of a well-articulated piece of literature.

We will be reading and writing fiction in this course. We will do this while paying close 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.

Goals:

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

This is a General Education course providing student-learning outcomes listed in the Undergraduate Catalog. For more information, see:

<http://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-requirement.aspx#learning>

Please note:

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

Course Format:

Reading: Short stories, chapters from the textbook, and essays addressing aspects of craft.

Writing: In-class exercises/quizzes, 6,000 words of critical response, and two stories (six pages each, plus one revision).

Discussion: Critiquing the texts, essays, stories, and the work of your peers.

Graded Assignments and Other Course Components:

Class Participation: 20% (200 points)

Doing the reading is only half of the assignment. In-class discussion of the material is the other half. **You are required to bring hard copies of the stories and essays to each class.** Students who do not bring hard copies to class will be marked absent. You do not have to print anything from the textbook, unless you wish to do so.

I will give reading quizzes. If you fail the reading quiz, you will be marked absent.

Punctuality counts.

Each person will have one story workshopped. **The class meeting before you are scheduled for workshop, you are responsible for providing hard copies for the class.**

On workshop days it is expected that you have read each piece carefully *at least once*, and that you have spent time formulating a **1-2 page typed response** to it. **You are responsible for making enough copies of your response for everyone in the class.** One of the copies will be stapled to your printed copy of the author's story. A copy will be turned in to me. 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—the participation of those who fail to respect their peers' thoughts/feelings will be graded accordingly.

Critical Responses: 60% (600 points)

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, and (again), must come to class with enough hard copies for everyone.**

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.)

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.

Short Stories: 20% (200 points)

Two short stories, the first worth 50 points, the second 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. Again, 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.

Formatting:

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. There must be a title, something beyond "First Critical Analysis." For critical analyses the title must be interesting and informative; for stories, do your best.

Attendance:

You are allowed one absence without explanation, but do not miss the day you are going to be workshopped. 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. Skipping your workshop will result in a failing grade for that story. Each absence after the first will lower your final grade a full letter grade. Arriving late twice to class will be counted as an absence.

Class Policies:

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.

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).

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.

Notes:

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.

I may change anything on this syllabus at any time.

Additional Information:

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the Student Honor Code. The Honor Code prohibits plagiarism and defines it as follows:

Plagiarism.

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

1. Quoting oral or written materials including but not limited to those found on the internet, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
2. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.
(University of Florida, Student Honor Code, 8 July 2011)

Important Tip: You should never copy and paste something from the Internet without providing the exact location from which it came.

All students are required to 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 of Composition (C) and Humanities (H) 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-education-requirement.aspx>

Statement of Writing requirement (WR):

This course can provide 6000 words toward fulfillment of the UF requirement for writing. For more information, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/gordon.aspx>

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/>

Student Disability Services:

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

Harassment:

UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/sexual/>

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

UF has recently instituted minus grades. As a result, letter grades now have different grade point equivalencies. For more information, see: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

Schedule of Assignments:

Week 1: Review Syllabus; Explain Workshop Procedure; Assign Workshop Dates; Benjamin-“The Storyteller”; **1000 Word Critical Response Due**

Week 2: Tolstoy-“What is Art?”; Tolstoy-“The Death of Ivan Ilych”; **Critical Story Response 1 Due**

Week 3: Making Shapely Fiction (MSF): Intro, Part I, Part II, Part III 79-123; Chekov-“The Lady with the Dog”; Dostoevsky-“Ridiculous Man”; **Critical Story Response 2 Due** (You are only required to respond to one story.)

Week 4: Making Shapely Fiction (MSF): Part III 124-167; Merkner-“Cabins”; Ulmer-“A Swath of Poppies”; Write Shape (freewrite in class); **Critical Story Response 3 Due**

Week 5: MSF: Part III 168-211; O’Brien-“The Things They Carried”; Write Shape (freewrite in class); **Critical Story Response 4 Due; Workshop 1, 2 Handed Out**

Week 6: MSF: Part III 212-255; Write Shape (freewrite in class); Saunders-“Puppy,” “Sticks,” “Escape from Spiderhead”; Workshop 1, 2; **Critical Story Response 5 Due; Workshop 1, 2 Responses Due; Workshop 3, 4 Handed Out**

Week 7: Write Shape (freewrite in class); O’Connor-“Greenleaf,” “A Good Man is Hard to Find”; Workshop 3, 4; **Critical Story Response 6 Due; Workshop 3,4 Responses Due; Workshop 5, 6 Handed Out**

Week 8: Write Shape (freewrite in class); Paley-“An Interest in Life”; Johnson-“Dark Meadow”; Workshop 5, 6; **Critical Story Response 7 Due; Workshop 5, 6 Responses Due; Workshop 7, 8 Handed Out**

Week 9: Spring Break—No Class

Week 10: Write Shape (freewrite in class); Richard-“This is Us, Excellent”; Olsen-“I Stand Here Ironing”; Workshop 7, 8; **Critical Story Response 8 Due; Workshop 7, 8 Responses Due; Workshop 9, 10 Handed Out**

Week 11: Write Shape (freewrite in class); Oates-“Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been”; Minor-“The Truth and All Its Ugly”; Workshop 9, 10; **Critical Story Response 9 Due; Workshop Responses 9, 10 Due; Workshop 11, 12 Handed Out**

Week 12: Write Shape (freewrite in class); Johnson-“Emergency”; Conroy-“Midair”; Workshop 11, 12; **Critical Story Response 10 Due; Workshop Responses 11, 12 Due; Workshop 13, 14 Handed Out**

Week 13: Write Shape (freewrite in class); Wallace-“Brief Interviews with Hideous Men”; Workshop 13, 14; **Critical Story Response 11 Due; Workshop Responses 13, 14 Due; Workshop 15, 16 Handed Out**

Week 14: Write Shape (freewrite in class); Wideman-“newborn thrown in trash and dies”; Simpson-“Lawns”; Workshop 15, 16; **Critical Story Response 12 Due; Workshop Responses 15, 16 Due**

Week 15: In-class reflection writing

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