

# CRW1101 – Beginning Fiction Writing

Sections 1633 (13090)

**Instructor:** Dan Shurley

**Meeting Time and Location:** Friday 12:50p.m. – 3:50p.m., Weimer Hall 1092

**Office Hours:** Mondays 2:30p.m. – 3:30 p.m. and Fridays 11:30a.m. – 12:30p.m. by appointment only (24 hours in advance).

**Course Website:** Canvas

**Instructor Email:** [dshurley@ufl.edu](mailto:dshurley@ufl.edu)

## Required Texts

Online course packet (Available on Canvas)

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

## Course Overview and Objectives

This course provides introductory instruction in literary 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, thematically – and why they move us (or not).

In the first half of the semester we will survey ways of writing fiction and build up our analytical skills. In the second half we will conduct workshops in which we apply the same critical skills to our own work that we've learned to apply to the assigned readings.

You will leave this course a more attentive and critical reader, a better academic writer, and, if you put in the work, with the foundations of a creative writing practice.

## 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).
- 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.

## **Assignments**

### **Class Participation: 30%**

Class participation encompasses preparation and engagement in discussions, workshop comments, and the diary project (guidance will be provided).

### **Twelve 500-Word Critical Responses: 30%**

Critical responses should be 500 words and consider the function of particular formal elements of one of the pieces we're reading that week. (See the list of literary terms at the end of the syllabus.) These will be graded according to clarity, concision, and the use of evidence to support your ideas and arguments. Responses should be printed out and brought in the day of class. By the end of the semester, these will account for 6,000 words of critical analysis.

### **Short Fiction: 20%**

Students will hand in one piece of fiction to be workshopped. The piece should be between 3 and 10 pages, and must be submitted the week before workshop. Please bring enough copies for everyone.

## **Revision: 20%**

The workshopped piece will be revised and submitted on the last day of class. The revision will be graded according to depth of edits and evidence of development.

## **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. 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 to class three times will be counted as an absence.
3. **Electronic Devices:** Cell phones and laptops are not allowed in class. You may not text in class. You may not have your phone out on your desk during class. If you are asked to put your phone away during class, you will be marked absent that day (see absence policy above).
4. **Paper Format & Submission:** Double-spaced, 12-point, Times New Roman typeface. Pages must be numbered. Title everything.
5. **Late Papers/Assignments:** Late assignments will not be accepted.
6. **Paper Maintenance Responsibilities:** Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.
7. **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/>.
8. Students with **disabilities** who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>) which will provide appropriate documentation to give the instructor.
9. For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>
10. **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.
11. **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/>

12. 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: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>
13. **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.
14. **Harassment:** UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty: <https://hr.ufl.edu/forms-policies/policies-managers/sexual-harassment/>
15. I may change the syllabus at any time.

## Schedule

### Week 1 - Jan 11

- Discuss syllabus
- Assign workshop dates
- Joe Brainard – excerpt from *I Remember*

### Week 2 – Jan 18

- Introduce diary project
- David Sedaris – selections from *Theft By Finding*
- Lucia Berlin – “Emergency Room Notebook, 1977”
- **Due:** Critical Response #1

### Week 3 – Jan 25

- Lucia Berlin - “A Manual for Cleaning Women”
- Katherine Mansfield – “The Garden Party”
- **Due:** Critical Response #2

### Week 4 – Feb 1

- Osama Alomar – [selections from \*Teeth of the Comb\*](#)
- Franz Kafka – “A Message From the Emperor”; “Before the Law”; “A Little Fable”; “The Spinning Top”; “The Street-Side Window”

- Lydia Davis – “The Fellowship”; “Head, Heart”; “How Shall I Mourn Them?”; “Young and Poor”
- Daniil Kharms – “Blue Notebook No. 10”
- **Due:** Critical Response #3

Week 5 - Feb 8

- Sait Faik Abasiyanik - “The Silk Handkerchief”; “I Just Don’t Know Why I Keep Doing These Things”
- Anton Chekhov – “The Lady With the Little Dog”
- **Due:** Critical Response #4; Hard copies for next week’s workshop (Workshop #1)

Week 6 – Feb 15

- Denis Johnson – “Emergency”
- Flannery O’Connor – “A Good Man Is Hard to Find”
- Workshop #1
- **Due:** Critical Response #5; Workshop #2

Week 7 – Feb 22

- Roberto Bolaño – “Police Rat”
- Franz Kafka – “Josephine the Singer”
- Workshop #2
- **Due:** Critical Response #6; Workshop #3

Week 8 – March 1

- Robert Walser – “The Job Application”
- Herman Melville – “Bartleby, the Scrivener”
- Workshop #3
- **Due:** Critical Response #7; Workshop #4

*No Class March 8 - Spring Break*

Week 10 - March 15

- Clarice Lispector - “The Imitation of the Rose”; “Five Days in Brasília”
- Workshop #4
- **Due:** Critical Response #8; Workshop #5

Week 11 - March 22

- Joy Williams – selections from *Ninety-Nine Stories of God*
- Workshop #5
- **Due:** Critical Response #9; Workshop #6

Week 12 – March 29

- Eileen Myles – “Chelsea Girls”
- David Shields – selections from *Reality Hunger*
- Workshop #6
- **Due** Critical Response #10; Workshop #7

Week 13 – April 5

- James Baldwin – excerpt from *No Name in the Street*
- Workshop #7
- **Due:** Critical Response #11; Workshop #8

Week 14 - Apr 12

- Joan Didion – selections from *South and West: From a Notebook; Slouching Towards Bethlehem*
- Workshop #8
- **Due:** Critical Response #12; Workshop #9

Week 15 – Apr 19

- F. Scott Fitzgerald – “My Lost City”; “Early Success”; “The Crack-Up”
- Workshop #9

Revision of workshopped story due: Apr 22

### **List of Some Terms for Critical Responses**

Accuracy  
 Ambiguity  
 Anti-Hero  
 Atmosphere  
 Beginnings  
 Character  
 Cliché  
 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-scène  
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