

## CRW2100, Fiction Writing, Class #12500, Section 8058, Fall 2020

**Meets:** Wednesday on Zoom @ 4:05 p.m. to 7:05 p.m. (Period 9-11)  
**Instructor:** Savannah Horton  
**Office:** Turlington 4413  
**Office Hour:** By appointment  
**E-Mail:** shorton@ufl.edu

### Description:

This course will concern itself with short fiction. In the first half of the course, we will discuss readings in order to understand how short stories are made and how they function. In the second half of the course, we will continue to develop our understanding of how and why stories work, and we will conduct workshops of student writing. We will apply the same thought, critical skills, and respect to student work that we apply to published stories.

Students will write one short story and one revision over the course of the semester. Additionally, every week students will submit a critical response to our readings.

### COVID Note:

Fiction workshops most often occur in person, where small groups can comfortably share and critique material in a relaxed and familiar atmosphere. To ensure the health and safety of our communities—both in and outside of UF—this course will now take place remotely. Though the format of our class will differ from what you would typically experience in a workshop, I hope my changes to the layout and syllabus will make the shift a bit more seamless and ensure we maintain the same level of care and engagement throughout our sessions.

**We will be meeting together via Zoom (Eastern Daylight Time).** Please be sure to download and familiarize yourself with Zoom before the semester begins. University policy states that **students are not permitted to enroll in multiple courses during the same period**, meaning you may not enroll in a course conflicting with our meeting time.

If you are experiencing COVID-related complications (unexpected work or family obligations, financial struggles, mental or physical health issues, lack of technological access, etc.) please reach out so I can best accommodate you and help construct a realistic plan moving forward!

**Objectives:** Students will learn to: read as writers, generate better fiction, and develop language for discussing literature.

### 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. Written assignments must meet minimum word requirements totaling 6,000 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.

### **Course Policies:**

1. **Credit:** You must complete **all assignments** to receive credit for this course.
2. **Attendance:** You are allowed **two absences** without explanation, but do not miss the class in which your story will be workshopped. If you miss more than two classes, you cannot pass the course. Only those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics, band, and religious holidays are exempted from this policy. **If you not turn in work due on an asynchronous day, it will count as an absence.** Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with the instructor prior to the date that will be missed. **Three tardies equal once class absence.** <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

**Skipping your workshop class will result in a failing grade for that story.**

You will fail the course if you miss a fourth class without an excuse.

### **3. Assignment Format and Submission:**

*Format:* Double-spaced, 12-point, Times New Roman font. Pages must be numbered. One staple goes in the upper left-hand corner. Title everything. Your name goes on Page One.

*Submission:* Hard copy. Bring enough copies of your workshop story for all in the class. Late assignments will not be accepted.

**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. **Cell phones are not allowed in class.**

**5. Paper Maintenance Responsibilities:** Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester ends.

**6. 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.>

**Plagiarism, according to UF Student Honor Code:** 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.

**7. Students with disabilities** who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)), which will provide appropriate documentation to give your instructor early in the semester.

**8. UF Grading policies:** see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

**9. Grade Appeals.** In 1000- and 2000-level courses, students may appeal a final grade by contacting Carla Blount at [cblount@ufl.edu](mailto:cblount@ufl.edu).

**10. 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>

**11. Counseling Center:** Students who are in distress or who are in need of counseling or urgent help: please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto: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. 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/>

**Grading scale:**

- A: 93-100
- A-: 90-92

- C: 73-76
- B+: 87-89
- B: 83-86
- B-: 80-82
- C+: 77-79
- C-: 70-72
- D+: 67-69
- D: 63-66
- D-: 60-62
- E: 0-59

**Texts:**

Short stories – on Canvas

Optional craft books to check out if desired: *Bird by Bird* by Anne Lamott, *On Writing* by Stephen King, *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk Jr., *The Modern Library Writer's Workshop* by Stephen Koch, *Making Shapely Fiction* by Jerome Stern

**\*You will be reading a lot for this course. Reading is one of the best ways to improve your own writing. Therefore, it is crucial to examine all assigned texts carefully, paying attention not only to plot but style, voice, and craft.**

**Format:**

**Reading:** Short stories, chapters from text, classmates' workshop manuscripts

**Writing:** 6,000 words of critical response, one story and one revision

**Discussion:** Critiquing texts, essays, stories, and the work of your classmates

**Graded Assignments:**

**Class Participation: 20%**

Competing readings comprises half of the assignment, participating in class discussion and writing activities the other half. **You must have read the student stories in order to participate in the day's workshop. If you fail to do so, it not only effects your classmates but will result in you not receiving participation credit for that class.**

**Six Critical Responses: 60%**

**CR 1,2:** Choose one literary term listed at the end of this syllabus and analyze the reading for the week using that concept. If more than one reading is assigned that week, read all of the assignments but write a response to one of them. **Each response should be 1000 words.**

Ideal CR 1,2 will do several things:

- \*Make a claim about our reading based on ideas discussed in class. The claim should attempt to get at the effect of the story through a discussion of the choices the writer made in telling the story.
- \*Provide support for the claim from within the story.
- \*Cite specific words in the text that made you think what you thought and that support your point.
- \*Analyze the claim and the text. What does this mean within the context of the work as a whole? How does this section contribute to the writer's overall intent?

**CR 3,4,5:** Choose one of the published stories we've read and write a literary review in the style of the chosen text. You may respond however you would like to the story, as long as

you are imitating its style. Unlike CR1 and 2, this assignment is not a quotation analysis. **Each response should be 1000 words.**

**CR 6:** You will explain the revisions you made to your final story submission by evaluating the comments you received as well as the changes you have implemented and the reasoning behind them. **Response should be 1000 words.**

By the end of the summer, these will account for 6,000 words of critical analysis. See p. 2, formatting requirements, “Course Policies/Assignment Format & Submission”.

### **Short Stories: 20%**

Students will write one short story and one revision, each worth 10%. Stories should show clarity, attention to language, and a developing understanding of the building blocks of fiction writing as discussed in class.

Manuscripts must be posted to Canvas for the class at least 24 hours in advance of when they are to be workshopped. If you are unable to turn in the story on time, a full letter grade will be deducted from your final grade. **We will not workshop stories turned in after 12:15 p.m. the day before your workshop takes place.**

On workshop days, you will have read the submitted pieces carefully and spent time formulating responses to it. Type your responses on the bottom of the document to return to that week’s submitter(s). You may also add margin comments. You will be sending the copies to me, so be sure you are putting in the work to best help your classmates.

This class, and especially the workshop, will be a safe place where everyone should feel encouraged and welcome to share their thoughts. Participation of those who fail to respect their classmates’ thoughts/feelings will be graded accordingly.

This is creative work in development. Please do not rate stories with remarks based on taste. Please do not discuss classmates’ stories outside of class.

### **Workshop Procedure:**

Each person will have two stories (~7-15 pages per story) workshopped. On workshop days it is expected that you have read each piece carefully at least once, and that you have spent time formulating responses to it. Write your responses on the hard copy of the story to return to your peer.

The workshop will be facilitated in the following format:

1. Writer will read a short section of the story. Then, the writer will not speak for the duration of the workshop.
2. The class will discuss what is working in the text.
3. We will discuss how it can become a better story.
4. We will welcome back the writer into the discussion.

DAY	<i>Topics / Reading Due</i>	Writing Due
<b>1</b> WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 2	Lorrie Moore: “How to Become a Writer”  Zoom 4:05-6:05 Independent Work: Discussion	
<b>2</b> WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 9	<i>Workshop dates sign-up.</i>  Donald Barthelme: “The School” George Saunders: “The Semplica Girl Diaries”  Zoom 4:05-6:05 Independent Work: Writing Activity	
<b>3</b> WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 16	John Cheever “The Swimmer” Amy Hempel: “The Harvest”  Zoom 4:05-6:05 Independent Work: Writing Activity	CR1
<b>4</b> WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 23	Victor LaValle “Recognition” Denis Johnson: “Strangler Bob”  Zoom 4:05-6:05 Independent Work: Writing Activity	
<b>5</b> WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 30	Edouard Leve: “Autoportrait” Excerpt Joy Williams: “Congress”  Zoom 4:05-6:05 Independent Work: Writing Activity	Workshop 1 Submission Due

<p><b>6</b> WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 7</p>	<p><b>Workshop 1</b> Vladimir Nabokov: “Symbols and Signs” (read first) Lorrie Moore: “Referential”</p>	<p>CR2 Workshop 2 Submission Due</p>
<p><b>7</b> WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 14</p>	<p><b>Workshop 2</b> James Baldwin: “Sonny’s Blues” Carmen Maria Machado “The Husband Stich” <a href="https://granta.com/The-Husband-Stitch/">https://granta.com/The-Husband-Stitch/</a></p>	<p>Workshop 3 Submission Due</p>
<p><b>8</b> WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 21</p>	<p><b>Workshop 3</b> Grace Paley: “Wants” Ben Lerner: “Ross Perot and China”</p>	<p>CR3 Workshop 4 Submission Due</p>
<p><b>9</b> WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 28</p>	<p><b>Workshop 4</b> Karen Russell “The Bog Girl” <a href="https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/06/20/bog-girl-by-karen-russell">https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/06/20/bog-girl-by-karen-russell</a> Ocean Vuong: “On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous” Excerpt</p>	<p>Workshop 5 Submission Due</p>
<p><b>10</b> WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 4</p>	<p><b>Workshop 5</b> Franz Kafka: “A Hunger Artist” Jorge Louis Borges: “The Secret Miracle”</p>	<p>CR4 Workshop 6 Submission Due</p>

<b>NO CLASS NOVEMBER 11</b>		
<b>11</b> WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 18	<b>Workshop 6</b> Zadie Smith: “Crazy They Call Me” Joanna Walsh: “Fin de Collection”	CR5 Workshop 7 Submission Due
<b>NO CLASS NOVEMBER 25</b>		
<b>12</b> WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 2	<b>Workshop 7</b> Camille Bordas: “Most Die Young” Uwem Akpan: “An Ex-mas Feast”	CR6
<b>13</b> WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 9	Rebecca Curtis: “The Toast” <b>Story Revisions Due December 12<sup>th</sup> 11:59 p.m.</b>	

Terms for Critical Response

Accuracy	Imagination	Premise
Ambiguity	Immediacy	Psychic Distance
Anti-Hero	Interior Monologue	Realism
Atmosphere	Irony	Resolution
Beginnings	Metaphor	Revision
Character	Mise-En-Scene	Scene

Cliche	Motif	Sentimentality
Convention	Names	Showing and Telling
Crisis	Narrative	Simile
Description	Narrator	Stereotype
Dialogue	Negative Positive Knowledge	Subtlety
Diction	Objective Correlative	Suspense
Endings	Plot	Suspension of Disbelief
Epiphany	Point of View	Symbolism
Exposition		Tension
Flashback		Texture
Frame Story		Transitions
Hero		Voice
Imagery		

### Critical Response Evaluation Rubric

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.