

# CRW 1101: Beginning Fiction Writing

## Section 1633

Instructor: Youmi Park  
Class Time: Wednesday / 10-E1  
Location: TUR B310  
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Office hours: Rolfs 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Monday 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

### Required Texts

Janet Burroway, *Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft*

### Course Objective

Over the course of fifteen weeks together, we will read, discuss, and craft short fiction. Our main focus is to perform close readings with critical eyes and to write with similar care and precision. We will study the structure and fundamental tools of writing, and attempt to penetrate the meaning or significance of the story by examining *how* and *why* it works the way it works. This does not require you to like a story. But this course discourages you from passing judgment on a story—whether written by an established author or one of your own peers—just on your initial sentiments, particular styles, likes, and dislikes. Please do the assigned readings beforehand and be prepared to engage in a lively discussion

CRW 1101 has multiple, complimentary parts. The first half we'll discuss setting, tone, point of view, character, narrative arc, etc.—the crucial elements of fiction. Our exploration of these stories will in turn serve as a model as we attempt our own fictions. We will then workshop each other's stories. This means giving specific, insightful, and constructive criticism that will benefit the writer and the rest of the class.

### Writing Requirement

This course meets the Writing Requirement of 6,000 words of written work that will receive feedback and a grade. All work must be completed to satisfy the Writing Requirement. For more, see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/writing--and---math--requirement.aspx>

### Assignment Requirements

The major written assignments in this class are two short stories (5-12 pages) and reading responses for every week. **A copy of all major assignments and in-class exercises, including instructor comments, should be retained and handed in at the end of the semester.**

### Coursework (Grade Distribution)

#### *Workshop Critiques (15 %)*

You will be expected to make careful line edits to the hardcopy of your peers' stories as well as commenting constructively in class discussions. In addition, you must provide two typed copies (250 words min.) of critiques for each story submitted to workshop (except your own). One copy is for me, the other for the story's author which should be attached to the story. Providing responses to your fellow writers is a fundamental element of the workshop; accordingly, you are expected to offer your peers the same high level of useful criticism you hope to receive.

#### *Critical Responses: (20 %)*

For those class meetings that have published stories assigned as reading, you will write and print responses (600 words each). If we are reading multiple stories, choose to write on any one or all of them. The response

should address one or more of the aspects of fiction we will study during our course time (i.e., plot, structure, character, point of view, style, setting, theme, etc.). These responses are not “ratings”—simply loving or hating a story is not enough. Our weekly readings and discussions should give you the critical vocabulary and understanding to engage with these published works as something you can always learn from.

### *Writing Exercises (10%)*

Sometimes, we will do short writing exercises. These exercises are meant to stir your creativity and encourage you to experiment with language and techniques in a non-threatening environment—there is little wrong you can do here! Each exercise should be one hand-written page, minimum. Please bring a notebook to class, as I may periodically collect journals and grade them solely on whether you completed the exercise or not.

### *First Short Story (20%)*

Your first story must be approximately 5-10 pages. You will produce your first short story while engaged in the study of craft. I will not limit the subject matter in which you choose to write about. However, I do caution against writing about overburdened topics such as vampires and post-apocalypses, as well as enormously highbrow attempts—all writing will be critiqued based on quality and a story worth reading about. Do not go over 12 pages; excerpts from longer works are acceptable.

### *Second Short Story OR Revision of First Short Story (20%)*

For your final assignment, choose ONE of the following options:

- (1) Write a new story, following the same guidelines as above. Having already written and given feedback on one story, you should have a better sense of your craft and voice; therefore this story may weigh more heavily on your final grade.
- (2) Write a revision of your first story (submit with a copy of the original draft). This must be a significant revision, taking into account the feedback you have received from your peers and me during your workshop. Your grade will suffer if you only make grammatical or technical fixes—your story must develop and grow.

### *Participation (15%)*

You are expected to attend class regularly, participate actively in class discussions and critique the work of your peers on hardcopy and with diligence and respect. Failure to do any of these things will lower this portion of your grade. I also reserve the right, in cases of disrespectful workshop behavior or lack of adequate peer critique, to lower your individual story or paper grades accordingly.

## **Grading Scale**

The grading scale will follow UF's current policy:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx#grades>

## **Course Policies**

### *Attendance*

Your participation and attention in our class sessions is invaluable not only to meeting course requirements, but for the shaping of your craft; attendance is mandatory. If you must miss one class, it is not necessary to tell me why—I will assume you had a good reason. However, missing class will prevent you from earning participation and in-class exercise credit for the day, and these points cannot be made up. If you miss more than one class for any reason, your grade will suffer. Please come speak to me if you have a reason that will necessitate you to miss more than one class.

Three tardies will count as one absence (this also includes leaving class early). **Three absences will result in an automatic fail in the class.** If you miss a class, please do not expect me to contact you; you have the responsibility to contact me to see if you missed any important information or assignment changes.

### *Academic Honesty*

All work in this course should be original and individual. Evidence of collusion (someone helped you write the assignment), plagiarism (using someone else's published or unpublished words without acknowledgement) or multiple submissions (handing in the same paper to different classes) will lead to the university's procedures for dealing with academic dishonesty. All students are expected to honor their commitment to the academic honor code. UF students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire Student Honor Code: "<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honorcode.php>"

### *Grade Complaints*

A low grade on a single assignment will not prohibit you from earning a reasonable course grade if your work improves. If you are uncertain or about a grade, feel free to contact me and I will be happy to discuss it with you, so that you can improve your work for the next paper or have an opportunity to convince me otherwise. Final grade appeals can be made by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant.

### *Participating/ Civility*

Actively participating in class will enhance your learning experience, as well as that of others. I expect you to be interested, engaged and prepared. In addition, I expect you to be courteous to and respectful of others—your fellow students and instructor—at all times, even when you encounter diverse opinions, which you may find will be often. You will be asked to leave the class if your behavior is disruptive or offensive in any way, including anything that denigrates others on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or religion. Your dismissal will be considered an absence. This is not to say that our discussions should be censored. Say what you believe, but be prepared to back your statements up. Furthermore, when it comes to reviewing a peer's work or a published piece, your like or dislike is not a legitimate reason for critique. Always provide justifiable and constructive criticism.

### *Turning in Assignments*

All papers must be submitted at the beginning of class on the specified date. They must be typed, using MLA manuscript format and 11 or 12 point-Times New Roman, printed in black ink on 8-1/2" X 11" paper, **and stapled upper left-hand corner**. Submissions that fail to meet the above conditions will not be accepted. Each assignment is due in class on the date specified.

When submitting your story for workshop, **you must print enough hardcopies for every class member and myself, and bring them to class the week PREVIOUS to your workshop**. Late papers will not be accepted and I will not accept papers over email. If you miss this class, and do not contact me in advance, you will not be workshopped and you will fail that assignment. **This aspect is taken very seriously.**

## **Conferences**

You are required to have one conference with me outside of class to discuss your story and revisions (thus, I recommend sometime within the week following your workshop). **Making an appointment with me is your responsibility and you will not receive reminders.**

## **Statement of Composition & Writing Requirement: (C) Credit & (WR)**

Composition courses provide instruction in the methods and conventions of standard written English (i.e., grammar, punctuation, usage) and the techniques that produce effective texts. Composition courses are writing intensive, require multiple drafts submitted to your instructor for feedback before final submission and fulfill 6,000 of the university's 24,000-word writing requirement. 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. For more, see:

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

## **Statement on 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, see:

<http://www.hr.ufl.edu/eo/sexharassment.htm>

## **Accommodations**

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

## **Semester Course Schedule**

Reading and writing assignments must be completed prior to the day they appear on the schedule. Come to class prepared to discuss the items listed for that day. Bring your textbook, course packet, and writing journal/notebook to each class for reference.

**Please keep in mind that that this schedule is always subject to change: I often make adjustments via e-mail and it is your responsibility to read through each with attention. I will not necessarily remind you about any assignments or changes.**

### **Week One – Welcome & Overview of Class 1/12**

Introduction to the course and syllabus. Meet your fellow writers.

Jackson – “The Lottery”

### **Two – No class**

### **Three—Plot 1/26**

Choices & details in fiction

Burroway – Chapter 2 (pg 21-50)

O’Brien – “The Things They Carried”

### **Four – Setting, Tone, Style 2/2**

Choices & details in fiction

Burroway – Chapter 2 (pg 21-50)

O’Brien – “The Things They Carried”

### **Four – Revealing in Speech 2/9**

Using dialogue for characterization

Burroway – Chapter 3 (pg 73-90)

Cheever – “Reunions”

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

### **Five – Characters Made Real 2/16**

Burroway – Chapter 4 (pg 116-137)

Saunders – “Adams”

Wolff – “Bullet in the Brain”

### **Six – Fictional Place & Time 2/23**

*Workshop #1*

Burroway – Chapter 5 (pg 164-179) & Chapter 6 (pg 208-222)

Cheever – “The Swimmer”

**3/2 — No Class: Spring Break**

**Seven – Form, Plot, & Structure 3/9**

*Workshop #2*

Burroway – Chapter 7 (pg 247-264)

O'Connor – “Everything Rises Must Converge” (Burroway)

**Eight – Point of View 3/16**

*Workshop #3*

Burroway – Chapter 8 (pg 300 –316)

Adrian – “A Child’s Book of Sickness & Death”

**3/23**

*Workshop #4*

Hempel – “In the Cemetery Where Al Johnson Is Buried”

**3/30**

*Workshop #5*

Nabokov – “Signs and Symbols”

**4/6**

*Workshop #6*

Burroway – Chapter 9

Carver – “Small, Good Thing”

“The Bath”

**4/13**

*Workshop #7. Stories TBA.*

**4/20**

Student fiction readings.

**Revision of your first short story or new second story due + portfolio**