

CRW 1101 – Fiction Writing, (Section 0218), Fall, 2023

Instructor Name: Cosmo Hinsman

Meeting Times: Thursday; Periods 6-9 (4:05 PM - 7:05 PM)

Building/Room: MAT 0010

Office Location and Hours: TUR 4321: Wednesdays 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM or by appointment

Course Instructor Email: cosmohinsman@ufl.edu

This course provides instruction in the writing of literary fiction and, since careful and reflective reading is the best way to learn how to write, an introduction to the art of close reading. We will devote the first half of the semester to the strategies, styles, challenges, and joys of the short story.

The second half will be a traditional fiction workshop: two or more students will turn in stories each week, and the rest of the class will provide feedback the next time we meet. Remember! We can't be good writers if we aren't good readers. It is essential that all of the reading is not only done but done well. I expect students to come in with passages—lines, sentences, moments, phrases—they want to discuss, as well as questions they would like to explore.

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 will include multiple forms of effective writing, different writing styles, approaches and formats, and methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes, and contexts. Students will 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 the 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.

Required Texts: All texts will be provided digitally through Canvas. Students are responsible for either printing them or bringing a device on which they can read them to class.

Assignments:

Assignment	Word Count	Points Available
Reading Responses	400 (x3)	50(x3)
Critical Analysis	1,600	150
Fiction Draft	2,000	200
Workshop Critiques	-	125
Final Portfolio	1,200	225
Participation	-	150
Total	6,000	1000

Writing:

- **3 Reading Responses (400 words each):** These assignments are due on all class days when there are readings but no workshops. They will require you to examine the language and construction of a text carefully and deliberately. This will involve choosing 2-3 specific sentences to analyze: why do they work? How? What devices do they use and what is their effect? **The aim is not mere summary;** instead, you should advance an argument about the mechanism of the prose.
- **1 Critical Analysis (1,600-word essay):** The Critical Analysis will give you space to explore the short stories we read. While you'll still employ your close-reading abilities, Critical Analyses should attend to and critique the ways in which a story uses language to create meaning. This should include analysis not just of the choices a writer makes, such as diction, syntax, symbols, motifs, etc, but also of the effect those choices make on the reader. In short, you'll use close analysis of the prose to say something broader about the story at hand (your analysis should amount to something much more rigorous than "I really like this story," or "This story flows nicely"). In these analyses, you must use

evidence from the text to support your arguments, but quotations should not exceed 10% of a paper's total word count.

- **1 Fiction Draft (Recommended 2,000-5,000 words):** Once in the semester your fiction will be critiqued by the class. This can be a short story or a section of longer work. There are no requirements regarding style, genre, or subject but it is your responsibility to hand in high-quality writing. Meaning, it should be a revised, thoughtful document that represents your best efforts in writing fiction. Workshop submissions should be handed in five days prior to the day of their workshop. **This is the most important deadline of the semester.** Nothing short of grievous illness should delay your submission.
- **Final Portfolio (including 600-word Artist's Statement and 600-word Revision Reflection):** With the aid of the feedback your peers and I will have offered on your fiction, you'll revise it **or** write a new piece of fiction that builds on my and your peers' feedback. With the revised draft, you must include the original draft with my comments. The frontmatter of the portfolio will include a 600-word Artist's Statement, in which you'll call upon what you've learned from our readings and in class to describe the scope and purpose of your fiction, and the context in which it can be understood. It will also include a 600-word Revision Reflection, which will examine the ways in which your fiction and prose have evolved through revision, incorporating evidence from your work and from the annotations thereon.

Course Policies:

1. *Assignments:* You must complete all assignments to receive credit for this course.

2. *Attendance:* Given that we meet only once a week, you are allowed **one** absence without explanation or excuse (though prior notice would be greatly appreciated given the nature of the course). Subsequent unexplained or unexcused absences will affect your grade. **If you have more than 2 absences, you cannot pass the course.**

- a. Excused absences, such as athletic events, theater commitments, illnesses, family emergencies, etc. **require appropriate documentation AND advance notice given to me.** You will be responsible for meeting with me outside of class to make a plan for completing work missed due to absences. You will also be responsible for turning in any assignments regardless of whether you are in class or not. For UF's official attendance policy, you can visit:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

3. *Tardiness:* Be on time to show respect to your colleagues and me. Should lateness be unavoidable, understand that **3 late arrivals without advance notice = 1 absence.**

4. *Classroom Behavior:* Please be respectful and attentive to your colleagues and to me when we are talking, whether during discussion of published writers or during workshop of our own work.

In particular, be respectful of your colleagues' diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and beliefs. Critique others as you would like to be critiqued—for me, that means substantive, actionable feedback that respects the intention and inherent validity of the submitted work.

- a. You are also responsible for keeping up with your UF email, as this is how I will contact you outside of class. Feel free to reach out to me via Canvas messaging anytime—I'll try to respond within 24 hours on business days.
- b. **No use of phones or laptops** during class, unless I specifically instruct you to use your laptops for in-class work.

5. *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/about/title-ix-rights/>

6. *Paper Format & Submission*: All assignments should be typed in a readable, 12 pt. font with standard 1 in. margins. All assignments fiction should be double-spaced. Submit all other assignments (Critical Analyses, Close Readings, etc.) on Canvas as specified in each assignment's instructions.

7. *Late Papers/Assignments*: Acceptance of late papers/assignments will be at my discretion and dependent on circumstances. **Here, as with absences, advance notice is key.**

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 (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions.

As specified by the current 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.

10. Students with *disabilities* who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu/>), 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 <https://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 at (352) 392-1575. You can also contact them online at <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>

If you are experiencing unmanageable stress or other emotional or physical distress during the semester, please **ask me for help finding resources**. In addition to teaching you to read and write fiction, I am committed to helping you succeed in a rigorous academic environment and to introducing you to the myriad resources for mental, physical, and emotional help and for time- and stress-management available on campus.

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 (cblount@ufl.edu), Program Assistant, in the Department office (4008 TUR). 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>

Grading Scale and General Rubric:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
93-100	90-92	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	67-69	63-66	60-62	0-59
4.0	3.67	3.33	3.0	2.67	2.33	2.0	1.67	1.33	1.0	0.67	0.00

"A"- A paper at this level is truly high quality. It demonstrates a clear understanding of critical concepts, creatively addresses the subject matter, and exceeds the expectations of critical analysis. A paper with this grade will be free of grammatical errors.

"B"- A paper with this grade has met the standards of the assignment at a high level. This assignment may need revision but is organized in a logical way and avoids fallacies or mistakes in critical analysis. A paper with this grade may contain grammatical errors but will be readable.

"C"- A paper that earns a "C" has done everything that was required, but no more. This assignment may require significant revision to more thoroughly examine critical elements or may need reorganization. A paper with this grade will generally contain a few grammatical errors but will still be readable.

"D"- This paper does not adequately fulfill the assignment to a satisfactory degree. One portion of an assignment may be missing or there may be a misused critical element. Papers with this grade tend to be disorganized and contain many grammatical errors.

"E"- This paper does not address the assignment prompt or is unreadable/incomplete.

Course Schedule:

Our syllabus and course schedule, including planned readings and assignment due dates, follows. Syllabus and schedule are subject to change and adjustment at my discretion and/or due to severe weather, health/safety concerns, and other mitigating circumstances. I will always advise you of any changes both in class meetings and through email with advance notice.

All assignments (besides workshop submissions) are due the **night before** class. For example, an assignment for class on 8/31 should be turned in before midnight on 8/30.

Week 1 - 8/24

- Tobias Wolff, "Bullet in the Brain" (In class)

Week 2 - 8/31

- David Foster Wallace, "Good Old Neon"

Due: Reading Response:

Week 3 - 9/7

- George Saunders, "Victory Lap"

- Stanley Elkin, "A Poetics For Bullies"

Due: Reading Response

Week 4 - 9/14

- Margery Williams, "The Velveteen Rabbit"
- A.M. Homes, "A Real Doll"

Due: Reading Response

Week 5 - 9/21

- J.D. Salinger, "A Perfect Day for Bananafish"
- Two Student Workshops

Due: Two Workshop Critiques

Week 6 - 9/28

- Two Student Workshops

Due: Critical Analysis, Two Workshop Critiques

Week 7 - 10/5

- Flannery O'Connor, "A Good Man is Hard to Find"
- Two Student Workshops

Due: Two Workshop Critiques

Week 8 - 10/12

- Three Student Workshops

Due: Three Workshop Critiques

Week 9 - 10/19

- Three Student Workshops

Due: Three Workshop Critiques

Week 10 - 10/26

- Three Student Workshops

Due: Three Workshop Critiques

Week 11 - 11/2

- Three Student Workshops

Due: Three Workshop Critiques

Week 12 - 11/9

- Lorrie Moore, "People Like That Are the Only People Here"

- Two Student Workshops

Due: Two Workshop Critiques

Week 13 - 11/16

- Jorge Luis Borges, “The Secret Miracle,” “The Aleph,” and “The Circular Ruins”

Week 14 - 11/23

Thanksgiving holiday. No class.

Week 15 - 11/30

- James Joyce, “The Dead”

Due: Final Revision, Final Revision Reflection