

CRW 1101 – Beginning Fiction Writing (Section 4229, Class #10818), Summer B 2021

Instructor Name: Cassie Fancher

Course meeting times & locations: Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Period 3 (11:00-12:15) synchronous sessions via Zoom (Meeting #: 940 5801 9224); Tuesdays & Thursdays asynchronous lessons posted via Canvas announcements

Office Location and Hours: Wednesday, 9:45-10:45am via Zoom, and by appointment (Meeting #: 926 4610 9283)

Course website: Canvas

Instructor Email: cassiefancher@ufl.edu

Course Description: In this course, we will read, discuss, and write short fiction. We will spend the first part of the semester reading and discussing published short stories with a particular focus on what we can learn from reading as writers. These discussions will be accompanied by short lectures on some crucial elements of fiction—plot, character, dialogue, etc. We will also do creative exercises in class, allowing you to take what you have learned in readings and discussion and translate those ideas into short, informal pieces that may or may not inspire complete work. In the second part of the semester, we will begin workshopping each other's stories. This will require insightful, respectful criticism and lively in-class discussion. At the beginning of the semester, we will work together to create classroom norms and discussion expectations so that our workshop will be a safe and constructive space for everyone.

COVID Statement

This course will be taught entirely online. We will meet synchronously on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays during summer period 3 (11:00-12:15), and asynchronously on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Outside of class time, you are responsible for completing readings, responses, and your own creative work. Our classes will rely heavily on discussion which, I hope, will help to bridge some of the gap between our computer screens. If you have not already done so, please be sure to download Zoom on your personal computer before the start of the class and familiarize yourself with how it works. Class Zoom links are available through the course Canvas site.

As many places begin to reopen, I remain mindful that the pandemic is ongoing and impacts everyone differently. If you as an individual have any COVID-related hardships which may obstruct your performance in this class, please communicate with me as well as making use of all UF resources available to you. We can then assemble a plan to help you complete the class and fulfill all requirements in the way most beneficial to you.

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. 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.

Required Texts:

All assigned stories will be uploaded to the course Canvas page. You will need to access one of the short story collections listed below in order to write your literary analysis. Most of these books are available through Smathers Library or can be purchased for \$5-\$20 online.

Assignments:

Major Critical Assignments—these are the assignments that count towards fulfilling 6000 words of the [University Writing Requirement](#):

- **Three Craft Analyses (15%)**
At the beginning of the semester, you will write three 700-word literary analyses of stories read in class. In each essay, you will be expected to evaluate the use of one craft element discussed in class as it relates to one or more of the short stories that we will read as a class. Before turning in these essays, you will engage in online discussions (see below) that should help you prepare some of the material for your craft analyses.
- **Literary Analysis of a Short Story Collection (20%)**
You will pick one of the short stories assigned in this class and read the entire collection that it comes from. Then you will submit a 2500-word essay analyzing elements of craft that you notice the author using in the stories. For this essay, you should cite at least three pieces of relevant literary criticism. You may write about individual stories as well as how all of the stories function as a collection. You can choose from any of the following story collections:
 - *Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri
 - *The World Doesn't Require You* by Rion Amilcar Scott
 - *Reasons to Live* by Amy Hempel
 - *The Refugees* by Viet Thanh Nguyen
 - *The Complete Short Stories* by Muriel Spark (this one is long so you can choose about half of the book to read)
 - *Self Help* by Lorrie Moore
 - *Before You Suffocate Your Own Fool Self* by Danielle Evans
 - *What Happens When a Man Falls From the Sky* by Lesley Nneka Arimah

- *Milk Blood Heat* by Dantiel W. Moniz
- *Sour Heart* by Jenny Zhang
- *Her Body and Other Parties* by Carmen Maria Machado

- **Critical Reflection (15%)**

At the end of the semester, you will write a 1500-word critical reflection of your own creative work in this class. In this essay, you will examine your use of craft in your short story, reflect on the decisions you made in revision, and describe any risks that you took in your writing.

Major Creative Assignments:

- **Short Story (10%)**

Your short story should be approximately 5-12 pages long. The story should incorporate elements of craft learned and discussed in class. Your story can be about anything you want, though we will take time to discuss appropriative writing and overused tropes, both of which should be avoided.

- **Short Story Revision (10%)**

At the end of the semester, you will submit a revision of your short story. This revision must take into account the feedback you received on your first short story. Most importantly, a revision of your first short story requires significant, big-picture changes. Taking risks is encouraged. Simply changing a few words, patching up grammatical errors, or rearranging a few paragraphs will not suffice.

Other Assignments:

- **Workshop Feedback (10%)**

You will be expected to make detailed line edits on your peers' stories, using the commenting tool on Microsoft Word. You will also be expected to make constructive and respectful contributions in class. **Finally, you should provide a written critique or workshop letter for each story, excluding your own. These letters should be 250 words minimum (approximately one page) and should explain your overall reaction to the story.** What is working and why? What questions do you have for the author? What are your big picture suggestions, and why do you think they could strengthen the piece? In your critique, you should avoid making value statements ("I like/don't like this.") as these types of comments will not help your classmates develop their writing. Instead, try to reframe your comments as observations or questions. We'll discuss workshop language and habits in more depth as a class. Instances of disrespectful workshop behavior or inadequate feedback will result in a lower grade. Workshop letters should be uploaded to Canvas. I will forward all workshop feedback to the author.

- **Writing Exercises (10%)**

Every Tuesday, we will do asynchronous writing exercises. These are intended to get you started thinking about how published stories and ideas discussed in class might translate into your own work. These exercises are also meant to be experimental and fun—a chance to try new techniques and to generate ideas for your longer stories. These exercises should be a minimum of 250 words. You will be graded on completion and little else, as these exercises are meant to be a nonthreatening, low-stakes way to take risks with your writing.

- **Story Discussion Posts (10%)**

Every Wednesday, you will upload one open-ended discussion question about our weekly readings to Canvas. We will talk more extensively about appropriate discussion questions in class, but in general these questions should demonstrate your thoughtful engagement with the texts and invite further discussion. On Thursdays, you will respond to at least two of your classmates' discussion questions and/or comments with 1-2 paragraph answers. You may repurpose your own paragraphs in your craft analyses essays.

Grading Rubric:

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

Rubric for Major Critical Assignments:

A: Demonstrates a deep engagement with the text and the development of original, sophisticated ideas. Paragraphs are exceptionally well-crafted and ideas are organized logically. Writing is clear and makes use of appropriate stylistic elements.

B: Demonstrates good reading comprehension. Original, sophisticated ideas are discussed. Paragraphs are well-crafted and ideas are organized logically. Writing is clear and some stylistic elements are used.

C: Demonstrates basic reading comprehension and includes some original ideas. Paragraphs are adequately crafted and ideas are mostly well-organized. Writing is clear and some stylistic elements are used.

D: Engages with the text only on a superficial level. Contains very little original thought and/or fails to adequately support claims with textual evidence. Paragraphs are poorly crafted and ideas are unorganized.

E: Fails to engage with the text in a way that demonstrates reading and/or comprehension.

Course Policies:

1. You must complete all assignments to receive credit for this course.
2. *Attendance:* Like all lecture-discussion courses, this one needs you! Use your allotted absences wisely (for emergencies, major illness). You will fail the course if you accrue **four** 75-minute absences. You will know your workshop date far in advance and you **may not** miss that day. You can review university policy, including information about excused absences here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>
3. Latecomers receive partial absences and must see me after class so I know you attended.
4. *Classroom Behavior and Etiquette:* All in-class discussion is expected to be respectful and constructive. Repeated instances of disrespect will result in a lowered grade. On the first day of class we will determine classroom norms and, once these are finalized, all classroom participants are expected to abide by these norms.
5. *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/about/title-ix-rights/>

6. *Paper Format & Submission*: All papers should be submitted on Canvas via Turnitin. Papers should be double-spaced and written in a 12-point, clearly legible font. Stories for Workshop should be emailed to me in .doc or .docx form and I will forward the stories to the entire class.
7. *Late Papers/Assignments*: Since all assignments correspond directly to in-class discussions, they must be submitted on-time. It is especially important to submit stories for workshop on-time, one week before your scheduled workshop, since your classmates will need that time to carefully read and respond to your work. In general, late submissions will not be awarded credit, although if a situation arises, especially related to the current pandemic and any associated difficulties, please let me know as soon as possible and I will do my best to work out a solution.
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.

The UF Student Honor Code defines plagiarism as such:

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, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/), which will provide appropriate documentation to give me early in the semester. I also encourage all students to make use of campus resources like the Writing Studio (<https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>). Finally, if there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or participating, please let me know as soon as possible. Your success in this class is important to me and I would like to work together to make sure that all students have their learning needs met in this course.
 11. *Students who are in distress* or who are in need of counseling or urgent help: please contact 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. 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, Program Assistant, in the Department office (4008 TUR). Please contact Ms. Blount at cblount@ufl.edu 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://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>

SYLLABUS (subject to change—I will let you know of any changes in advance)

Day	Date	Read/View for Class	DUE
M	6.28	Syllabus & Introductions	
T	6.29	Asynchronous: Writing Exercise #1	Writing exercise #1
W	6.30	Craft Lecture: Narrative Structure <input type="checkbox"/> “The Third and Final Continent” by Jhumpa Lahiri <input type="checkbox"/> “David Sherman, the Last Son of God” by Rion Amilcar Scott	Discussion Question
TH	7.1	Asynchronous: Reading Discussion	Two Discussion Responses
F	7.2	Craft Lecture: Character & Dialogue <input type="checkbox"/> “In the Cemetery Where Al Jolson is Buried” by Amy Hempel <input type="checkbox"/> “Fatherland” by Viet Thanh Nguyen	Craft Analysis #1
M	7.5	No Class—Holiday	
T	7.6	Asynchronous: Writing Exercise #2	Writing Exercise #2
W	7.7	Craft Lecture: Narrative POV <input type="checkbox"/> “The First Year of My Life” by Muriel Spark <input type="checkbox"/> “How to Talk to Your Mother (Notes)” by Lorrie Moore <input type="checkbox"/> “Jellyfish” by Danielle Evans	Discussion Question
TH	7.8	Asynchronous: Reading Discussion	Two Discussion Responses
F	7.9	Craft Lecture: Setting & Description <input type="checkbox"/> “Who Will Greet You at Home” by Lesley Nneka Arimah <input type="checkbox"/> “Outside the Raft” by Dantiel W. Moniz	Craft Analysis #2
M	7.12	Craft Lecture: Style <input type="checkbox"/> “We Love You Crispina” by Jenny Zhang <input type="checkbox"/> “Real Women Have Bodies” by Carmen Maria Machado	

T	7.13	Asynchronous: Writing Exercise #3	Writing exercise #3
W	7.14	Workshop	Discussion Question Workshop Feedback
TH	7.15	Asynchronous: Reading Discussion	Two Discussion Responses
F	7.16	Workshop	Craft Analysis #3 Workshop Feedback
M	7.19	Workshop	Workshop Feedback
T	7.20	Asynchronous: Writing Exercise #4	Writing exercise #4
W	7.21	Workshop	Workshop Feedback
TH	7.22	Asynchronous: Reading Discussion	Discussion Post
F	7.23	Workshop	Workshop Feedback
M	7.26	Workshop	Workshop Feedback
T	7.27	Asynchronous: Writing Exercise #5	Writing exercise #5
W	7.28	Workshop	Workshop Feedback
TH	7.29	Asynchronous: Reading Discussion	Discussion Post
F	7.30	Workshop	Literary Analysis of a Short Story Collection Workshop Feedback
M	8.2	Workshop (if needed) Craft Lecture: Revision	
T	8.3	Asynchronous: writing exercise #6 (revision)	Writing exercise #6
W	8.4	One-on-one meetings	
TH	8.5	Asynchronous: TBA	

F	8.6	End-of-term reading	Critical Reflection Short Story Revision
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