

## CRW 2100- FICTION WRITING (sec. 12472), Fall 2020

**Instructor Name:** Drew Dickerson

**Course Meeting Time and Location:** Wednesday 5:10 to 8:10 PM, Zoom Conference

**Office Location and Hours:** Wednesday 4:10 to 5:10 PM or by appointment, Zoom Conference

**Class #:** 12759

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

### Course Description:

*“Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.”*

—*Samuel Beckett, Westward Ho*

This course will provide a survey of methods of writing fiction. Through the close-reading and discussion of these texts, we will reach a better understanding of short fiction’s formal elements. Additionally, by trying our hand at some fiction of our own, as well as workshopping that of our classmates, we will better understand how to make fiction work. The goal of this class is to increase students’ familiarity with modern and contemporary short fiction as well as to instill confidence in our own powers as creators. Fiction is not a dead letter but a living craft. By virtue of our reading and analysis in a variety of received traditions, we will learn together how to devise, draft, and revise ideas for prose writing.

### COVID-19 Statement:

In light of the continuing impacts of COVID-19, this course will be offered entirely through online course sessions. We will meet synchronously on Zoom every Friday, during periods 3-5. 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. Please be sure to download Zoom on your personal computer before the start of the class and familiarize yourself with how it works. I will send instructions to the class via email about how to join our Zoom meetings.

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 for 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.

### **Assignments:**

Class participation: 20% (200 points)

In-class discussion of all readings is required. You will read Canvas readings at least once before class, and you will read the workshop stories of your peers at least twice before respective workshops. You will usefully annotate you peers' work and provide a typewritten letter of comments and thoughts on the work's strengths, weaknesses, and possible improvement.

Completion of workshop stories and critical response assignments counts toward class participation. Reading quizzes will also contribute to class participation scores at instructor's discretion.

Critical responses: 60% (600 points)

Critical responses are 600 words each. This is a firm word count. By the end of the semester, your accrued critical responses will account for 6,000 words of critical analyses, as required by UF. Structure and content of these responses will be outlined in class. These responses will serve as a basis for your in-class discussion (for example, you may plan what you'd like to say aloud), will show you've read the material—but will not contain summary or synopsis—and will demonstrate engagement and analytical practice or ability.

The word count of each critical response should be listed at the bottom of each at the time of turning in.

### Workshop stories: 20% (200 points)

For this course you will also write one short story and undertake upon it one revision to be turned in at the end of the semester. When your story is due, it is due, and you must be present for its workshopping. You will know your workshop date far ahead of schedule. As part of this assignment, your workshop submission must be hardcopy, and enough copies must be given to your peers and instructor one week ahead of your actual workshop date, so that the class may take the time to read the story and make comments and write your letters. This is to say: your workshop submission is due one week from the date of your workshop, and not on the date of your workshop itself.

For the revision, you will use the feedback from your peers and your instructor, and you will revise your work taking these comments and thoughts seriously in mind (although incorporation of any one specific comment is not mandatory). A revision in this instance is not just correcting typos or moving paragraphs around, but involves changing the story in some significant way.

### **Course Policies:**

1. You must complete all assignments to receive credit for this course.
2. Attendance: Attendance policy is consistent with UF's attendance policies: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies>. Triple-period, once weekly classes (such as ours) count as two absences. Like all discussion courses, this one needs you! Use your allotted absences wisely (for emergencies, major illness) as you would for any job. You will fail the course if you accrue more than two absences.
3. Latecomers receive partial absences, and must see me after class so I know you attended. Three instances of tardiness will count as one absence. Please let me know if you have reasonable trouble coming to class resulting in chronic lateness, and we can reach an accommodation.

4. 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/>

5. Paper Format & Submission: Copy via Canvas. Emailed critical responses are only acceptable if you are absent from class the day the assignment is due.

7. Late Papers/Assignments: Critical responses can be submitted up to one week late, resulting in a drop of two letter grades. Workshop stories and revisions should be on time if at all humanly possible—late assignments will only be accepted under extenuating circumstances.

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 (<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.

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/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)), 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 [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. 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 or 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://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/Default.aspx>

### **Cell Phones:**

Cell phones are not allowed in class. You may not text in class. You may not have your phone out on your desk during class. Please respect the classroom space and your peers.

**Required Texts:** All course materials can be accessed on Canvas. You will be responsible for having read the material before the class.

### **Course Schedule**

#### **Week 1, September 1:**

Introductions and syllabus

“How Do We Write Now?” Patricia Lockwood (in class)

#### **Week 2, September 8: Perspective**

\*\*\*Assign workshop dates\*\*\*

*Read:* “The Embassy of Cambodia” by Zadie Smith

“How to Become a Writer” by Lorrie Moore

*Due:* Critical Response No. 1 (Mandatory 600 words, as are all Critical Responses to follow)

#### **Week 3, September 15: Premise**

*Read:* “Rot” by Joy Williams

“The School” by Donald Barthelme

“The David Party” by David Leavitt

*Due:* Critical Response No. 2

**Week 4, September 22: Characterization**

*Read:* “In the Cemetery Where Al Jolson is Buried” Amy Hempel

“Lying Presences” Norman Rush

*Due:* Critical Response No. 3

**Week 5, September 29: Setting**

*Read:* “Dr. H.A. Moynihan” Lucia Berlin

“Everything Ravaged, Everything Burned” Wells Tower

*Due:* Critical Response No. 4

**Week 6, October 6: Narrative Time**

*Read:* “Bullet in the Brain” Tobias Wolff

“Pee on Water” Rachel Glaser

“The Secret Miracle” Jorge Louis Borges

*Due:* Critical Response No. 5

**Week 7, October 13: Flash**

\*\*\*Begin Workshop\*\*\*

*Read:* “Girl” Jamaica Kinkaid

“Betrayal” Lydia Davis

“Before the Law” Franz Kafka

“Fin de Collection” Joanna Walsh

*Due:* Critical Response No. 6

**Week 8, October 8: Style and Voice I**

*Read:* “Brums” Norman Rush

“Love” Grace Paley

**Week 9, October 20: Style and Voice II**

*Read:* “Love is a Thing on Sale for More Money Than There Exists” Tao Lin

“Car Crash While Hitchhiking” Dennis Johnson

*Due:* Critical Response No. 7 (Can respond to any of the “Style and Voice” assignments)

**Week 10, October 27: Genre**

*Read:* “Bloodchild” Octavia Butler

“The Tain” China Miéville

*Due:* Critical Response No. 8

**Week 11, November 3: Formal Experimentation, Constraint-Based Writing**

*Read:* Excerpt from *The Interrogative Mood*, Padgett Powell

Excerpt from *Autoportrait*, Édouard Lévê

“Going for a Beer” Robert Coover

*Due:* Critical Response No. 9

**Week 13, November 10: Dialogue**

*Read:* “Lulu” Joy Williams

“The Day We Got Drunk on Cake” William Trever

*Due:* Critical Response No. 10

**Week 14, November 17: Metafiction, Citation**

*Read:* “Puss in Boots” Angela Carter

“Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius” Jorge Louis Borges

**Week 15, December 1: Endings**

Final Workshop

*Read:* “Cathedral” Raymond Carver

“Good Country People” Flannery O’Connor

## **Grading Rubric:**

A: 94-100; A-: 90-9

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 of Evaluation for Critical Responses

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.