

University of Florida
Department of English CRW 3110: 20514
Advanced Seminar Workshop
in Fiction Writing

Instructor: K. Blasco Solér
Email: kblascosoler@ufl.edu
Office Hours: Mondays 9:00-11:00 AM
Zoom Link: <https://ufl.zoom.us/my/kblascosoler>

Class Location: Turlington Hall B310
Mondays Period 9-11 (4:05-7:05 PM)
Office Location: via Zoom / by appt

Course Description

This small creative writing intensive is geared toward those who have been developing their craft in previous workshops and who want to deepen their experience of fiction writing. A significant part of the course is devoted to building writerly community, which includes fostering open discussion and the negotiation of mutual trust, cultivating tactful and constructive feedback, and encouraging creative risks. We will engage with each other's work in an attentive and comprehensive way that addresses elements of storytelling, style, and inspiration. There will be opportunities for writing experiments, publication support, and reflections on writing life/habitus (how we perceive ourselves as writers in the world). *To hear each other (the sound of different voices), to listen to one another, is an exercise in recognition.* – bell hooks

Workshops

Each class will feature three writers for workshop. Every writer will have two rounds of focused workshops during the semester. Writers will submit one original work of fiction per round (two manuscript submissions total). Manuscripts can be a short story, a short novel excerpt, a collection of nanofiction, excerpt of a novel in verse, or graphic novel. Pieces that have been workshoped previously are permissible if they have been revised substantially. Round one will be scheduled during the first half of the semester and round two during the final half in the same order to ensure time for imaginative crafting. Longform novelists may choose to workshop a larger excerpt, in which case we would dedicate one double-block workshop to that writing. Please be respectful of others and remain present by not engaging in outside work or unrelated use of devices during workshops.

Collaboration and Discussion

We will devote most of our three-hour class time to workshoping stories with a break in between. Workshop etiquette, the schedule, min/max pages, mode of sharing, and a plan for additional readings/writing exercises will be developed by consensus during the first few class meetings. Participants are encouraged to ask questions and nominate beloved short stories, passages that elude understanding, and essays on craft/writing life. The instructor will facilitate. See the example schedule and Recommended Reading on page 5. Selected essays and short stories will be made available via PDF in Course Reserves.

Style and Formatting

Stories must be distributed one week before scheduled workshop day (Monday before midnight). This allows enough time for thorough reading and reflection. Specific questions or areas of focus for a particular workshop should be announced at that time. *Manuscripts must be presented in MLA Style* (with a heading or title page that features the writer's name, submission date, title for the piece, page numbers, etc.—all typed, double-spaced, and in a legible 12-point font). This requirement is primarily for accessibility purposes but also supports our writerly commitment and discourse community.

Close Reading and Listening

Read every piece of writing in full once for immersion and to get beyond first impressions and biases. Read once more for annotation. Make it a sacred trust. To acknowledge how writing is an embodied experience, writers will be given the opportunity to read 1-2 pages of their piece aloud. This offers further insight (for both readers and writers) and helps ground us in the writer's voice before the workshop begins.

Comprehensive Critique

For the first round of workshops, the writer will receive annotated manuscripts (line-editing only at the writer's request) and a page of thoughtful feedback from all readers. Feedback should pertain to multiple elements of storytelling and style, which may include (but is not limited to) overall clarity, structure and organization, story arc, subplots, temporality, transitions, character development and relationships, backstory and historical context, psychological subtext, power dynamics, ending and resolution, use of specific diction and figurative language, passages that evoke emotion or memory or sensations in the body, meaning and purpose, and intended audience). Once everyone is familiar with each other's work, critique for the second round of workshops consists of manuscript annotation and global comment. The writer is always welcome to elaborate/ask questions.

Final Revision

All writers, including longform novelists, will revise an agreed upon range of pages and bring them to the final day of class for small group discussion. Final Revision will be submitted via email to the instructor on the last day of class along with a one-page revision statement/self-evaluation that reflects on your contributions as a reader and discusses important writerly choices, influences, and key shifts in thinking that occurred during workshop or elsewhere, as well as projected next steps for your writing.

Attendance and Grading

In this course, we will dedicate ourselves not only to our own work but that of others. Attendance is therefore mandatory and missing more than two workshops is a serious offense that must be justified to avoid failure of the course. As Professor Uwem Akpan says, once you commit yourself to a workshop, *little short of death should deter you from fulfilling that commitment*. In the spirit of creative freedom, first drafts will not be graded. Half of your grade will be based on the quality of your Final Revision. The other half depends on your oral and written contributions to our workshops and discussions.

Workshop Schedule

This schedule is a preliminary guide and subject to change. An updated schedule will be available via Canvas, including the additional readings by consensus. Some examples are listed below.

Week 1 (Monday 1/13)

- Introductions, review of syllabus, collaboration regarding workshop etiquette, schedule, manuscript page range, additional readings, mode of sharing (hard copy or via Canvas)
- Writing experiment: one thing to plant / one thing to bury (writers note openly one thing about their writing/life to become a focus of growth, and privately something to let go)

Week 2 (Monday 1/20)

- *****IMPORTANT***** No class due to UF Holiday—Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Week 3 (Monday 1/27) Start of round-one workshops

- Workshop 1: featured writer TBD
- Workshop 2: featured writer TBD
- Workshop 3: featured writer TBD
- Additional readings: excerpts of *Walking on Alligators: A Book of Meditations for Writers* by Susan Shaughnessy (nonfiction book)

Week 4 (Monday 2/3)

- Workshop 4: featured writer TBD
- Workshop 5: featured writer TBD
- Workshop 6: featured writer TBD
- Additional reading: “The Metamorphosis” by Franz Kafka (first 25 pages)

Week 5 (Monday 2/10)

- Workshop 7: featured writer TBD
- Workshop 8: featured writer TBD
- Workshop 9: featured writer TBD
- Additional reading: “The Metamorphosis” by Franz Kafka (final 25 pages)

Week 6 (Monday 2/17)

- Workshop 10: featured writer TBD
- Workshop 11: featured writer TBD

- Workshop 12: featured writer TBD
- Additional reading: “The Danger of a Single Story” essay by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Week 7 (Monday 2/24)

- Workshop 13: featured writer TBD
- Workshop 14: featured writer TBD
- Workshop 15: featured writer TBD
- Additional reading: “We’re All Someone’s Freak” essay by Gwendolyn Ann Smith

Week 8 (Monday 3/3) Start of round-two workshops

- Workshop 1: featured writer TBD
- Workshop 2: featured writer TBD
- Workshop 3: featured writer TBD
- Additional reading: “Broken from the Colony” by Ada Patterson (short cli-fi story)

Week 9 (Monday 3/10)

- Workshop 4: featured writer TBD
- Workshop 5: featured writer TBD
- Workshop 6: featured writer TBD
- Additional reading:
 - “On Keeping a Notebook” essay by Joan Didion and “Toni Morrison: Write, Erase, Do It Over.” (writing life/craft interview with the NEA)

Week 10 (Monday 3/17)

- *****IMPORTANT***** No class due to UF Holiday—Spring Break

Week 10 (Monday 3/24)

- Workshop 7: featured writer TBD
- Workshop 8: featured writer TBD
- Workshop 9: featured writer TBD
- Additional reading: novel excerpt, *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy

Week 11 (Monday 3/31)

- Workshop 10: featured writer TBD
- Workshop 11: featured writer TBD
- Workshop 12: featured writer TBD
- Additional reading: excerpt, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez

Week 12 (Monday 4/7)

- Workshop 13: featured writer TBD
- Workshop 14: featured writer TBD
- Workshop 15: featured writer TBD
- Additional reading: "A Good Man is Hard to Find" by Flannery O'Connor (short story)

Week 13 (Monday 4/14)

- Longform novelist workshop (as needed): featured writer TBD
- Publication and literary CV support
- Generative writing experiment

Week 14 (Monday 4/21)

- Final day of class—small group workshops / celebration!
- Final Revision and Self-Evaluation due *via email before midnight*

Recommended Reading

(Further enrichment beyond the confines of this semester)

- *Writing Down the Bones* by Natalie Goldberg (nonfiction book)
- "Prose Architectures" Renee Gladman (writing life/experimental craft essay)
- "How to be a Writer" by Rebecca Solnit (writing life/craft essay)
- "The Laugh of the Medusa" by Hélène Cixous (writing life/craft essay)
- "My Mother's House & Sido" by Colette (short stories)
- "I Am Both. I Am Neither." by Michelle Naka Pierce (writing life/craft essay)
- *Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga (longform novel)
- *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* by Milan Kundera (longform novel)
- *House of Leaves* by Mark Danielewski (experimental/ergodic text)
- *Garments Against Women* by Anne Boyer (lyric prose)
- "Bartleby, the Scrivener" by Herman Melville (short satire)
- "Rules of the Game" by Amy Tan (short story)
- *Trans(re)lating House One* by Poupeh Missaghi (experimental/historical fiction)
- *Remembrance of Things Past* by Marcel Proust (very-longform novel)
- *Infinite Jest* by David Foster Wallace (very-longform novel)
- *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* by Alison Bechdel (graphic novel)
- *Teaching and Writing Fiction* by Wallace Stegner (nonfiction book)

Additional Information

Academic honesty and definition of plagiarism

Plagiarism violates the Student Honor Code and requires reporting to the Dean of Students. All students must abide by the Student Honor Code: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

For information on UF Grading policies:

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

Accommodations

Students who experience learning, reading, and writing barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Office of Students with Disabilities and thereafter provide the instructor with a letter of accommodation as early in the semester as possible. Phone: 352-392-8565 Website: <https://disability.ufl.edu/>

Course evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>.

UF Writing Studio

The University of Florida Writing Studio is an excellent resource for improving writing skills. It is available to all UF students and located in Turlington 2215. Free appointments can be made up to twice a week either in person or online: <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>.

Recording policy

Class lectures may only be recorded for purposes defined by House Bill 233/Section 1004.097. A class lecture does not include academic exercises involving student participation, including writing workshops and reading discussions. Recording and publishing under these circumstances are not permissible for any reason. Publishing is defined as sharing, transmitting, circulating, distributing, or providing access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. A recording, or transcript of the recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media platforms, a book, magazine, newspaper, or leaflet. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Students in distress

For guidance during distressing situations, please contact U Matter We Care or the Dean of Students Office, which can help students navigate resources and procedures for personal, medical, and academic issues. Resources and contact information:

U Matter We Care: <http://umatter.ufl.edu>, umatter@ufl.edu, 352-294-2273 (CARE)

Dean of Students: <https://dso.ufl.edu/>, 202 Peabody Hall, (352) 392-1261

Counseling & Wellness Center: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>, 3190 Radio Rd (352) 392-1575

Field and Fork Pantry: <https://fieldandfork.ufl.edu/>, located near McCarty B, 352-294-2208

Student Health Care Center: <http://shcc.ufl.edu/>, multiple locations, (352) 392-1161