

## **CRW 1101 – Beginning Fiction Writing, (Section 6730, Class 12143), Spring 2023**

**Instructor Name:** Liam Johnson

**Course meeting times:** Thursday; Periods 9-11 (4:05 PM - 7:05 PM)

**Building/Room:** TUR 1101

**Office Location and Hours:** (In-person TUR 4315, or via Zoom), Thursdays 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM

**Course website:** <https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/476080>

**Instructor Email:** [liam.johnson@ufl.edu](mailto:liam.johnson@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 spend the first half of the semester examining superb works of fiction. During the second half, we will share our work in an eclectic and stimulating fiction workshop: three or more students will turn in stories each week, and the rest of the class will provide feedback the next time we meet. Throughout the semester, we will cultivate our skills as writers through a variety of in-class exercises, discussions, and critical responses to the material with which we are engaged.

According to class interest, we may also discuss some of the intricacies of what it takes to become a published writer or pursue literary residencies & fellowships. Just because you're undergraduates doesn't mean you can't submit your gorgeous work to literary magazines and institutions!

The most important thing we can do to become skillful writers is to first work at being skillful readers. I expect you all to come to class with enthusiastic questions, comments, and your unique perspectives on the stories we read each week.

### **Recommended Texts:**

All required readings will be provided digitally. You may, however, wish to purchase the collections from which many of our readings will be drawn. These are listed below for your edification and amusement!

*I Hate To See That Evening Sun Go Down* by William Gay

*Her Body and Other Parties* by Carmen Maria Machado

*A Manual for Cleaning Women* by Lucia Berlin

*The Doll's Alphabet* by Camilla Grudova

*The Stories of Breece D'J Pancake* by Breece D'J Pancake

*The Collected Stories* by Amy Hempel

*Winesburg, Ohio* by Sherwood Anderson

*Fancies and Goodnights* by John Collier

*The Dangers of Smoking in Bed* by Mariana Enriquez

### **General Education Objectives:**

This course confers General Education credit for Composition (C). This course also fulfills 6,000 of the university's 24,000-word writing requirement (WR).

- 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.

As your instructor, I will evaluate your writing assignments and provide feedback on all written assignments. Please look over my comments on your work carefully, as these will help you recognize where you can improve.

10 Critical Response Papers	200 words each	2,000 words
10 Writing Exercises	400 words each	4,000 words
Total for General Education Requirements		6,000 words

**COVID Statement:**

In response to COVID-19, the following recommendations are in place to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, and our loved ones.

- If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit one.uf for screening / testing and vaccination opportunities.
- If you are sick, stay home. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 to be evaluated.
- Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work.

**Course Policies:**

- You must complete all assignments to receive credit for this course. This is a part of the university's 6,000-word Writing Requirement.

- *Attendance:* You are required to come to class. Excused absences must be properly excused, via the proper means. If you know your excused absences ahead of time—such as university events—you must tell me when you know, not after the fact. Three instances of tardiness = one unexcused absence. You cannot miss your workshop day.
  - Because we only meet once a week, two unexcused absences will result in automatic failure. Please refer to UF’s attendance policies for further distinctions between (un)excused absences: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>
  - In general, acceptable reasons for absence from or failure to participate in class include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays, and participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate. Absences from class for court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena) must be excused.
  - If you are experiencing symptoms or have potentially been exposed to an illness, please stay home and attend class via Zoom. If there are three or more students on Zoom, I will move the whole class to Zoom for pedagogical reasons.
- Please keep in mind that students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions. Diverse student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own. Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal—and accordingly absence—from the class.
- *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/>
- *Paper Format & Submission:* Submissions on canvas for the critical responses; emailed drafts for workshop; MLA format—that is: double spaced; 12 point font (Times New Roman, Calibri, Cambria); pages numbered in the bottom-right corner; an MLA header and a title for your submission. Critical responses may be titled “Critical Response 1” and so forth, but workshop stories may not be titled “Workshop Story.”
- *Late Papers/Assignments:* Email me in advance if you need an excused extension. Otherwise, you will lose 10% per day it is late. Excused extensions are usually for medical/personal/technical emergencies.
- *Paper Maintenance Responsibilities.* Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over. Keep copies on your hard drive of all work submitted in this course.
- *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. 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:
  1. Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing.
  2. 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.
  3. Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.

4. 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.
- 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.
  - *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/>
  - For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>
  - *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). Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.
  - *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/>
  - *Course Recordings*: Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A class lecture does not include academic exercises involving student participation. Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide 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 such as uploading or posting, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. 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.

## **Grading**

*Critical Responses / Discussion Notes / Workshop Letters (150 points, 15 points per week, 15%)*

For most of the first part of the semester, we will discuss short fiction. These stories will be posted online on Canvas under the assignment heading. It is your responsibility to read, mark them up, write discussion notes, and come to class ready to discuss. Be prepared to talk about the stories in question.

As part of our engagement with the readings, you will also submit a weekly critical response to each short story. Specific criteria will vary depending on the reading, but each assignment will require you to write a minimum of 200 words. These will give you valuable practice in examining the craft of fiction and prepare you to workshop effectively with your peers.

In the latter part of the semester, we will workshop. On workshop days, it is expected that you will come to class having read your fellow students' pieces carefully at least twice. You will prepare a response to it in the form of a response to the discussion post where they share a copy of their story.

*Writing Exercises (100 points, 10 points per week, 10%)*

Most weeks, we will also have a prompted writing exercise (400 words). The purpose of these writing prompts will be meaningful experiments that develop the literary techniques we discuss based on our readings for the week. Speaking from experience, exercises like these can often lead to a longer project and may even serve as a starting place for your workshop submission.

*Class Participation (200 points, 20%)*

A successful workshop requires the full participation of every student. By being in a workshop, you are dedicating yourself to learn the craft of writing fiction, and then using your skills, knowledge, and insights to both craft your own story in progress and help your classmates with theirs. Workshop should be a supportive, collaborative process where we learn from one another. Though writing is often perceived as a solitary act, no writer succeeds without the help of fellow writer-readers. Having writer-readers not only gives you the encouragement needed to pursue the highest potential in your story, but practical insights into how to get there and what is holding the story back. Therefore, your enthusiasm, your commitment to the work, and your commitment to your fellow students are more important than any preexisting knowledge that you bring about “literature.”

In preparation for workshop, I expect every student to practice discussing craft and writing of the published stories in an intelligent and productive way. It will not only solidify your own understanding of how stories work, but also create new insights by listening and responding to your peers. If you are uncomfortable talking in class, please come speak to me after class or during office hours. Unexcused absences and tardiness will affect your participation points for that week.

*Workshop Submission (250 points, 25%)*

You will write one story that your classmates will workshop, thoughtfully using craft elements to accomplish your goals for the story. The story must be delivered to the class the week before the scheduled workshop. You will post your story to the canvas Discussion Board as an attachment (ideally you should use Microsoft Word). There is no late delivery. There is no switching. If you are unable to turn in the story on time, an entire letter grade will be deducted from your final grade.

The saying goes: “You can’t schedule inspiration.” However, I strongly encourage you to give yourself plenty of time to craft your workshop submission. Bear in mind also that the earlier you choose to workshop, the more time you will have to revise in anticipation of your final portfolio.

*Final Portfolio (300 points, 30%)*

At the end of the semester, you will create a final portfolio consisting of your workshop submission, a revision of this submission, two of our in-class writing assignments in which you feel confident, and a critical reflection describing your development as a writer this semester, why you chose your in-class writing assignments, and your choices for how you went about your revision. Final Portfolios will be due on the last day of class.

**Schedule (subject to change):**

**Week 1: January 12th**  
CLASS CANCELED :(

**Week 2: January 19th**

Introductions

Syllabus Overview

In-class reading and discussion of Lucia Berlin's "Dr. H.A. Moynihan"

Workshop Sign-ups

**Week 3: January 26th**

William Gay, "The Paperhanger"

*Due: Discussion Notes before class, Writing Exercise #1, critical response to "Dr. H.A. Moynihan"*

**Week 4: February 2<sup>nd</sup>**

George Saunders, "Ghoul"

*Due: Discussion Notes before class, Writing Exercise #2, critical response to "The Paperhanger"*

**Week 5: February 9<sup>th</sup>**

Mariana Enriquez, "Our Lady of the Quarry"

*Due: Discussion Notes before class, Writing Exercise #3, critical response to "Ghoul"*

**Week 6: February 16<sup>th</sup>**

Amy Hempel, "Harvest"

*Due: Discussion Notes before class, Writing Exercise #4, critical response to "Our Lady of the Quarry", workshop submissions 1 2 3 4*

**Week 7: February 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Camilla Grudova Shorts

Workshop 1 2 3 4

*Due: Discussion Notes before class, Writing Exercise #5, critical response to "Harvest", workshop submissions 5 6 7 8*

**Week 8: March 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Breece D'J Pancake, "Hollow"

Workshop 5 6 7 8

*Due: Discussion Notes before class, Writing Exercise #6, critical response to Camilla Grudova stories, workshop submissions 9 10 11 12*

**Week 9: March 9<sup>th</sup>**

Carmen Maria Machado, "Real Women Have Bodies"

Workshop 9 10 11 12

*Due: Discussion Notes before class, Writing Exercise #7, critical response to "Hollow", workshop submissions 13 14 15 16*

**Week 10: March 16<sup>th</sup>**

SPRING BREAK!

NO CLASS!

*Due: Make good choices!*

**Week 11: March 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Sherwood Anderson, "The Strength of God"

Workshop 13 14 15 16

*Due: Discussion Notes before class, Writing Exercise #8, critical response to “Real Women Have Bodies”, workshop submissions 17 18 19 20*

**Week 12: March 30<sup>th</sup>**

John Collier, “Evening Primrose”

Workshop 17 18 19 20

*Due: Discussion notes before class, Writing Exercise #9, workshop submissions 21 22 23 24 25*

**Week 13: April 6<sup>th</sup>**

Workshop 21 22 23 24 25

*Due: Critical response to “Evening Primrose”, Writing Exercise #10*

**Week 14: April 13<sup>th</sup>**

Revision practice activity

In-class writing session

Individual meetings

**Week 15: April 20<sup>th</sup>**

Portfolio Party!

Reflection

Movie Screening

*Due: Final Portfolio*

**Grading Rubric:**

Note that because this course will involve a breadth of assignment types, an exhaustive rubric isn’t possible. This rubric describes a few general features common to assignments that earn a particular score.

A: Contains extended analysis of the texts and develops sophisticated ideas through close reading. 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 sophisticated ideas through close reading. 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. Minimal close reading. 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 or close reading. Fails to adequately support its claims and/or use appropriate stylistic elements.

E: Lacks analysis of the text, and therefore fails to demonstrate comprehension.

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Percentage Grade</b>	<b>Grade Point Average (GPA)</b>
A	93-100%	4.0
A-	90-92%	3.7
B+	86-89%	3.3

B	83-85%	3.0
B-	80-82%	2.7
C+	76-79%	2.3
C	73-75%	2.0
C-	70-72%	1.7
D+*	66-69%	1.3
D	63-65%	1.0
D-	60-62%	0.7
F	59%	0.0