

CRW 1101 - Beginning Fiction Writing
Class #12321, Section 6730
Spring 2022

Instructor: Sarina Redzinski (she/they)

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Class Meeting: Thursday, Period 9-11 (4:05 PM - 7:05 PM) in CBD 0210

Office Hours: Thursday, 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM or by appointment in Turlington 4335

Course Description:

COVID Statement: This semester, we have returned to face-to-face (F2F) teaching. Thus, if you are registered for a F2F section of this class and suspect you may have been exposed to COVID, you should report for testing immediately and observe an obligatory quarantine period. <https://coronavirus.uflhealth.org/screen-test-protect-2/> We will discuss how to address quarantines and sick days as a class when we meet the first week.

As is the case in all university buildings this semester, masks are expected in our classroom. I also recommend you don't eat during class—we will usually have a mid-class break that is good for stepping out for a snack or some refreshment.

I am aware of the fact that COVID-19 continues to impact our daily lives. Thus, if you are experiencing any hardships because of the virus, please contact me as soon as possible so that we may make any necessary arrangements contingent on your circumstances. I genuinely want this class to be a fulfilling and enriching experience for each of you, not an added stressor during an already stressful time. Do not hesitate to ask for help.

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 TEXT:

- Ben Marcus: *New American Stories*

Assignments:

- Participation (200 points): Since this is a discussion-based class with a focus on collaboration and workshopping, it is essential that you participate weekly in both the discussion of published prose and your peers' work. While I understand there will be days that you just aren't up to being fully participant, I will be grading you off of your general level of engagement and contribution throughout our time together.
- Workshop Letters (200 points): Every week that we workshop, you will bring in handwritten line notes on printed copies of the stories we workshop along with a short, one-page typed workshop letter for your peer. The workshop letters will also be due to me on Canvas the night before class.
- Critical Responses (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 (200 points):** For this course you will also write one short story and one revision of that story 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:

- **Course Completion:** You must complete *all assignments* to receive credit for this course.
- **Attendance:** This class thrives on participation and personal engagement, so you are expected to attend every class. Still, if you find yourself unable to make it to class, you are allowed two unexcused absences for any reason. Once you have three unexcused absences, though, you risk both a docked grade and failure of the class, depending on how class participation is otherwise.
- **Tardiness:** If you arrive to class 10 or more minutes late, you will be considered tardy. 3 tardies equal one absence.
- **Classroom Etiquette:** This course values all voices dedicated to depicting an honest world-view. We will read work by writers of various religious backgrounds, ethnicities, sexualities, and politics. You may not agree with certain texts; this course, like art itself, does not require your agreement. In this course, we will engage adult themes and controversial issues. Some of these texts may make you feel uncomfortable or challenge your worldview. However, each text does insist upon your intellectual participation and creative engagement. I expect everyone to discuss the assigned texts thoughtfully and respectfully.

This same policy goes for the workshop poems that we will discuss. You should respect your peers and their work as they do the same for you. No hateful or discriminatory comments will be tolerated. We are not here for debate—we are here for attentive and considerate discussion that helps us become better writers.

- **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/>

- **Formatting:** Your stories should be typed in 12 pt., black, legible and professional font (think Times, Times New Roman, etc.) and submitted to Canvas. Use one-inch margins, DOUBLE-SPACED.
- **Late Work:** You are allowed to turn in one critical response or workshop letter up to one week late. Beyond that, there will be points taken off for lateness. Workshop stories and revisions should be on time—late assignments will only be accepted under extenuating circumstances.
- **Paper Maintenance Responsibilities:** Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.
- **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. Plagiarism has no place in any class, let alone a creative one, and any attempts at passing over another’s work as your own will result in a substantial grade reduction and, in some cases, a report to the Dean of Students.
- **Students with Disabilities:** I believe in a level playing field for all students in this course. If you have a documented disability, please have a conversation with me regarding your specific needs. 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 your instructor early in the semester.
- **Students in Distress:** 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/>
- **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. For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>
- **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>
- **Policy on environmental sustainability:** Whenever possible, I will use paper-sparing electronic media to distribute our course materials. Consider purchasing electronic editions of assigned

texts when they are available, or used copies of print texts. If you do not elect to keep your print books, consider sharing them with others after the semester ends. (For example, you could donate them to the Alachua County [Friends of the Library](#) annual book sale.)

Grading Scale:

93-100: A
90-92: A-
87-89: B+
83-86: B
80-82: B-
77-79: C+
73-76: C
70-72: C-
67-69: D+
63-66: D
60-62: D-
0-59: E

Schedule

Week 1, September 1: Welcome

Due: Please come to class with the name of a fiction author that you appreciate and why you appreciate them.

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

“Jaguar” by Wells Tower

Due: Critical Response No. 1

Week 3, September 15: Premise

Read: “Perfect Gerbil” by George Saunders

“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

WORKSHOP BEGINS

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