

CRW 2100- FICTION WRITING (sec. 12307) Fall 2021

Instructor Name: Angela Bell

Course Meeting Time and Location: MAT 0007, Wednesday 4:05-7:05 pm

Office Location and Hours: TBD

Course Website: Canvas

Instructor Email: angelabell@ufl.edu (please contact using Canvas)

Course Description:

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

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. You can find more information about the **University Writing Requirement** [here](#)

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:

Critical responses: 30% (300 points)

Critical responses are 1200 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.

There are five critical response assignments, with each one commenting on the assigned readings in response to a given theme. Your assignment will be submitted to Canvas one week prior to our class discussion of the readings (dates provided in syllabus).

Structure and content of these responses will be outlined in class. These responses 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.

Class participation: 27.5% (275 points)

In-class discussion is an essential and required aspect of this course. 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 your peers' work and provide a brief typed note of comments and thoughts on the work's strengths, weaknesses, and possible improvement. There is no hard word requirement for this note, but I would suggest coming prepared with at least 100-200 words of balanced commentary in order to be prepared for class discussion.

Attendance is a part of this grade. In the case of illness or family emergency, alternative measures of participation can be arranged.

Workshop story with Writing Note: 150% (150 points)

For this course you will write one short story between 3 and 10 pages long, 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. Your workshop submission is due one week prior to the date of your workshop, rather than the date of your workshop. You can write about anything you want, but I ask that you avoid conventions of genre fiction (fantasy, sci-fi, etc.), as that type of writing demands a different kind of lens for productive review than literary fiction. Along with your story, please provide us with a brief note that outlines your intentions; you may choose to describe your process, your audience, the craft decisions you've made, your goal for the work, and/or any unresolved questions you have at this point in the revision process. We will use this note to help guide workshop.

Revision Plan and Portfolio: 150% (150 points)

For the revision portfolio, you will revise one short story and one flash (aka "short-short") piece, keeping in mind the comments and thoughts that your peers and instructor have offered (incorporation of any one specific comment is not mandatory). A revision in this instance is not just correcting typos or moving paragraphs around, but requires changing the story in some significant way. Success will be judged based on your re-engagement with the text as well as your execution of your revision plan, which will articulate how you plan to approach the process. More detailed expectations will be provided in class.

Flash Fiction—or, "The Short-Short": 7.5% (75 points)

After students become familiar with workshopping expectations and etiquette, the Flash Fiction unit allows students to experiment with leading discussions and implementing alternative approaches to workshop. For this unit, each student will generate one complete story of 600 words or less to be brought to class and discussed.

Workshop Self-Reflection and Conference: 5% (50 points)

Following the workshop of your material, you are expected to write a brief (250-500 words) reflection on the experience: what was or wasn't helpful, what resonated with you, how you felt about the process, any lingering questions or concerns, etc. There are no right answers to these questions-- this prompt is intentionally broad and open-ended. Upon completing your reflection, I ask that you schedule a brief meeting with me outside of class time so that we can talk about your experience. I will not approach you to schedule these meetings.

Required Texts:

Readings listed in the syllabus are subject to change, but all required readings will be made available to you through Canvas. You will not need to purchase a textbook.

A Note on the Workshop:

Our class will attempt a slightly modified approach to the traditional workshop, described as the “Modified Critical Response Process” by Matthew Salesses. Rather than implementing the “cone of silence” on writers, the format of our workshop will offer structured discourse between writer and readers and will emphasize questioning rather than critique. In doing so, I hope we can better center the writer’s experience and intentions.

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 three 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 six unexcused absences, or two class sessions. Absences can be excused for a variety reasons (for example, illness, serious family emergency, religious exemption), but you must communicate with the instructor in advance of the scheduled class session in order to receive approval for that excusal. Latecomers receive partial absences. 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.
3. 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/>
4. Paper Format & Submission: Formal exercises and short stories are to be sent to your classmates and instructors via Canvas. Critical responses are to be posted using the discussion group function on Canvas.
6. 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.

7. Paper Maintenance Responsibilities. Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.

8. 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:

- 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, <https://disability.ufl.edu/>) 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 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 (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/>

15. In the interest of privacy, the department requires that all **class-related communications are conducted via the messaging function in Canvas rather than through email**. For your convenience, it is possible to arrange your Canvas settings so that any Canvas messages are automatically forwarded to your UF email.

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, January 5: First Day

Introductions and syllabus

Generative exercise (theme: vulnerability)

Assign workshop dates

Week 2, January 12: *No Class Meeting this week*

Read: “The School,” Donald Barthelme

“The Perfect Gerbil” George Saunders

In Class: **No meeting this week**

Due: Stories 1 & 2

Week 3, January 19: Plot and Arc (Part 1)

Read: “All Will Be Well” Yiyun Li

“Without Inspection” Edwidge Danticat

In Class: Discussion and generative exercise on plot; Workshop 1 & 2

Due: Stories 3 & 4

Week 4, January 26: Plot and Arc (Part 2)

In Class: Discuss Li/Danticat; Workshop Stories 3 & 4

Due: Stories 5 & 6

All: Critical Response 1 due Friday, 1/28 at 11:59 pm

Week 5, February 2: Characters (Part 1)

Read: “Drinking Coffee Elsewhere,” ZZ Packer

“Gravity,” David Levitt

In Class: Discussion and generative exercise on characters; Workshop 5 & 6

Due: Stories 7 & 8

Week 6, February 9: Characters (Part 2)

In Class: Discussion on Leavitt/Packer; Workshop 7 & 8

Due: Stories 9 & 10

All: Critical Response 2 due Friday, 2/9 at 11:59 pm

Week 7, February 16: Setting (Part 1)

Read: “The Resident,” Carmen Maria Machado

In Class: Discussion and generative exercise on setting; Workshops 9 & 10

Due: Stories 11 & 12

Week 8, February 23: Setting (Part 2)

In Class: Discuss Machado; Workshop 11 & 12

Due: Stories 13 & 14

All: Critical Response 3 due Friday, 2/25 at 11:59 pm

Week 9, March 2: Tone and Voice (Part 1)

Read: “Doppelgänger Poltergeist,” Denis Johnson

“Wants,” Grace Paley

In Class: Discussion and generative exercise on tone; Workshop 13 & 15

Due: Stories 15 & 16

Week 10, March 9: *No Class for Spring Break*

Week 12, March 16: Tone and Voice (Part 2)

In Class: Discuss Paley/Johnson; Workshop 15 & 16; Plan flash fiction workshops

Due: Stories 17 & 18

Critical response 4 due Friday, 3/18 at 11:59 pm

Week 12, March 23: Flash Fiction (Part 1)

Read: “Girl,” Jamaica Kinkaid

“Sticks,” George Saunders

“Taylor Swift,” Hugh Behm-Steinberg

“Aubade,” Joy Williams

“Curriculum,” Sejal Shah

“How Many,” Bryan Washington

“I Don’t Need Anything From Here,” Laszlo Karsznahorkai

“The Job Application,” Robert Walser

In Class: Workshop Stories 17 & 18; Lecture on Flash Fiction

Week 13, March 30: Flash Fiction (Part 2)

In Class: Student-led workshops of Flash Fiction

Due: Flash fiction piece (bring to class)

Week 14, April 6: Revision

Read: Two versions of Raymond Carver’s “Why Don’t You Dance”

In Class: Discuss Carver; Revision Exercises; Mini-lecture on Revision

Critical Response 5 (topic of your choice) due on Friday, 4/8 at 11:59 pm

Week 15, April 13: Revision

In Class: Workshop revised flash fiction; Collaborative Revision

Due: Revision Plan / Revised Flash Fiction

Week 16, April 20: (Final Day of Classes):

In Class: Last day to meet for self-reflections (must be scheduled in advance!)

In class office-hours/publishing talk (optional)

Revision Portfolio DUE

Buffer date in the event of illness

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.