**Honors Fiction Writing**

**CRW 2100-2269**

**Spring 2018**

**Instructor:** Wynne Hungerford

**Course Time & Place:** FLI 117, Thursdays 6-8 (12:50 – 3:50)

**Office Hours:** Turlington 4307, Thursdays 11:00 – 12:30

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**Course Description:**

This course is an intensive study of literary fiction that is designed to develop students’ reading, writing, and critiquing skills. Weekly readings will come from an anthology of contemporary American fiction that offers a variety of voices, styles, and subject matter. These readings will help us answer two questions: 1) What is worth writing about? and 2) How is a story constructed? Students will have the opportunity to write original fiction and participate in a traditional workshop. “Workshop” is when a writer sends out a story he/she has written for the class to read & comment upon. We discuss the story as a group, with the ultimate goal of helping the writer get to the next draft. Our aim is to study and create good writing, so you must be prepared to work hard, participate, and have fun. What I seek to *avoid* is boredom.

**A Loose Definition of Literary Fiction:**

Literary Fiction does not *typically* fit into a genre such as mystery, horror, western, et cetera. Literary Fiction often attempts to represent, explain, and explore the human condition. It is a response to the question: What does it mean to be alive? This vein of fiction is also focused on the craft of writing, the sentences themselves, the individual words.

**Reading as a Writer**:

In this class, we are reading as writers. We are trying to understand how a thing is written, so we might be able to understand the techniques used and improve our own work. For every assigned story, you should ask yourself: Are there techniques here that I should try? Does this subject matter remind me of something from my own life that I could write about? We may discuss what a story is “about” but I won’t ask you to explore “themes.” We will never discuss “symbols.” Objects can have meaning, of course, but they should also work as simple, physical things. A top hat can represent “class” or “societal privilege” or whatever you want to call it, but it is also just a hat that sits on a fancy dude’s head.

Students who work in an earnest and lively fashion will:

1. Leave this course writing better than they entered, including both academic and creative writing.
2. Leave this course reading better than when they entered.

The ideal student will be:

1. Imaginative
2. Empathetic
3. Awake (in class & in the world)

**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 Texts:**

*The Ecco Anthology of Contemporary American Fiction* – selected by Joyce Carol Oates

**Texts that will be available on Canvas:**

*Making Shapely Fiction* – Jerome Stern

*Elements of Style* – Strunk & White

**Assignments** (see below for Grading Rubric):

**Participation: 80 points**

Being prepared for this course means not only doing the reading and writing, but also participating in discussion and engaging in class. You should bring the required reading to class every day. On workshop days, I expect you to come to class having read each piece carefully *at least once*. You should make line edits, marginal comments, and provide a final note that summarizes strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions for the next draft. This can be written at the end of the story or typed on a separate page. You should be honest, constructive, and encouraging. The participation of those who fail to respect their peers’ thoughts and feelings will be graded accordingly.

**Creative Exercises: 100 points**

You will complete 2 creative exercises at the beginning of the semester (50 points each). These should be about one page (300ish words) in length.

**Reading Quizzes: 120 points**

There will be a total of 12 reading quizzes (10 points each) throughout the semester. These are not designed to torture you, but rather make sure you are engaging with the assigned readings. These will be fun.

**Two Stories: 300 points**

You will write 2 stories (150 points each) that will be workshopped. The first story will be 1-5 pages in length. The second story will be 5-10 pages in length. They should be literary fiction written for an adult audience, which is what we will be reading and studying. They should NOT be “genre” fiction, such as fantasy, sci-fi, zombie, vampire, Harry Potter fan fiction, et cetera. Do not write your stories the night before they are due. I will be able to tell if this is the case and will deduct points accordingly. I am looking for clarity, attention to language, and an understanding of craft. Manuscripts must be turned in *the week before* they are to be workshopped. You will print out copies for the entire class and also turn in your story on Canvas. If you turn in a story late, we will not workshop it in class.

**Midterm Paper: 200 points**

For the midterm, you will read a collection of short stories from a provided list and write a 3,000-word analytical paper on the collection. It will be due MARCH 1st. This should be in third-person and include a works cited page, along with in-text citations. The paper should be broken into three sections:

1. Provide a portrait of the writer
2. An overview of the collection
3. An in-depth analysis of one story

This is an opportunity for you to read an entire collection by a single writer. Do some googling before you pick the collection you want to read and find something that truly interests you. The paper will be graded on organization, clarity, critical thinking, and depth of analysis. Have some fun and focus on what matters to you.

**Final Paper: 200 points**

For the final, you will read a novel from a provided list and write a 3,000-word analytical paper with a fictional twist. This will be due on the last day of class, APRIL 19th. You should pretend that the book has just been published and you are meeting the writer for an interview. (What year would this have happened? Where would the meeting take place? The writer’s house? A location from the novel itself?) You should interview the writer, discuss the book, and let you, the narrator/interviewer, reflect. (What is happening during the interview? A horseback ride? A rock concert?) There is a lot of fun to be had. By the end of this 3,000-word journey, I should feel that you have come to some new understandings about the novel. What are these new understandings? That is for you to figure out.

This paper will be graded on elements such as organization/structure, clarity, originality, a demonstrated reading of the text, and engagement with the material. Proofread, proofread, proofread.

**Course Policies:**

1. You must complete all assignments to receive credit for this course.
2. ***Attendance****:* You are allowed one absence without explanation, but do not miss the day your story is workshopped. Skipping your workshop will result in a failing grade for that story. A second absence requires a doctor’s note or equivalent documentation. A third absence will result in a failing grade for this class. Only those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays, are exempted from this policy––provided that students have documentation. Two tardies (arriving more than five minutes late, or leaving class early) equals one absence. <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>
3. ***Paper Format & Submission***: Each assignment must be submitted in double-spaced, 12-point, Times New Roman typeface. Pages must be numbered. One staple goes in the left-hand corner if you are submitting a hard copy. There must be a title. Formatting failures will result in a point deduction. Concerning submissions, all assignments should be submitted electronically on Canvas. Some assignments will also be brought into class as hard copies. This will not be a mystery. I will remind you throughout the semester how/when things should be submitted. The schedule will also serve as a guide.
4. ***Late Papers/Assignments***: Late submission will be decided on a case-by-case basis.
5. ***Paper Maintenance Responsibilities****.* Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.
6. ***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://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>.
7. 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 the instructor.
8. For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>
9. ***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.
10. ***Course Evaluations****.* Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages asking you to go online and evaluate this course: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/Default.aspx>
11. Students who face difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help may call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352) 392-1575, or contact them online: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>
12. ***Classroom behavior and netiquette:*** Behave in a respectful manner in class. If you do not, you will be asked to leave. As far as email goes, remember to include a greeting, complete sentences, and have an appropriate signature. Please do not send me frantic emails late at night and expect me to answer., please be aware of the tone of your emails. Sometimes students who aren’t intending to be rude do indeed come across as rude. This is off-putting and disrespectful. **Also**, please check your email regularly. This is how I will communicate with you to send announcements, changes of readings, cancelled class, et cetera.
13. ***UF’s policy on Harassment***: UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty: <http://hr.ufl.edu/manager-resources/recruitment-staffing/institutional-equity-diversity/resources/harassment/>
14. ***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](http://folacld.org/) annual book sale.)

**SCHEDULE**

**January 11––ONE**

*In Class*: Introductions & syllabus

**January 18––TWO**

*Read*: “The Toughest Indian in the World” by Sherman Alexie

 “Lobster Night” by Russell Banks

“The Hermit’s Story” by Rick Bass

*In Class*: Reading Quiz #1

 Share Exercises

*Due*: Creative Exercise #1 (Canvas + hard copies)

**January 25––THREE**

*Read:* “1-900” by Richard Bausch

 “Poor Devil” by Charles Baxter

 “Off” by Aimee Bender

*In Class*: Reading Quiz #2

 Share Exercises

*Due*: Creative Exercise #2 (Canvas + hard copies)

**February 1––FOUR**

 **\*\*\*WORKSHOP STARTS\*\*\***

*Read*: “Mercy” by Pinckney Benedict

 “Television” by Lydia Davis

*In Class*: Reading Quiz #3

 Workshop

*Due*: Workshop Response Letters

**February 8––FIVE**

*Read*: “Death of the Right Fielder” by Stuart Dybek

 “The Girl Who Left Her Sock on the Floor” by Deborah Eisenberg

 “Disaster Stamps of Pluto” by Louise Erdrich

*In Class*: Reading Quiz #4

 Workshop

*Due*: Workshop Response Letters

**February 15––SIX**

*Read*: “Reunion” by Richard Ford

 “The Girl on the Plane” by Mary Gaitskill

 “The Paperhanger” by William Gay

*In Class*: Reading Quiz #5

 Workshop

*Due*: Workshop Response Letters

**February 22––SEVEN**

*Read*: “To Those of You Who Missed Your Connecting Flights Out of O’Hare” by Amy Hempel

 “Emergency” by Denis Johnson

 “Old Boys, Old Girls” by Edward P. Jones

*In Class*: Reading Quiz #6

 Workshop

*Due*: Workshop Response Letters

**March 1––EIGHT**

*Read*: “Once in a Lifetime” by Jhumpa Lahiri

 “Some Terpsichore” by Elizabeth McCracken

 “Cowboy” by Thomas McGuane

*In Class*: Reading Quiz #7

 Workshop

*Due*: Workshop Response Letters

 MIDTERM PAPER (Canvas)

**March 8** –– SPRING BREAK

**March 15––NINE**

*Read*: “Sault Ste. Marie” by David Means

 “Ranch Girl” by Maile Meloy

 “The New Automaton Theater” by Steven Millhauser

*In Class*: Reading Quiz #8

 Workshop

*Due*: Workshop Response Letters

**March 22––TEN**

*Read*: “Landfill” by Joyce Carol Oates

 “On the Rainy River” by Tim O’Brien

 “People in Hell Just Want a Drink of Water” by Annie Proulx

*In Class*: Reading Quiz #9

 Workshop

*Due*: Workshop Response Letters

**March 29––ELEVEN**

*Read*: “The Red Bow” by George Saunders

 “The Brown Chest” by John Updike

*In Class*: Reading Quiz #10

 Workshop

*Due*: Workshop Response Letters

**April 5––Week Twelve**

*Read*: “Incarnations of Burned Children” by David Foster Wallace

 “Cinnamon Skin” by Edmund White

*In Class*: Reading Quiz #11

 Workshop

*Due*: Workshop Response Letters

**April 12––Week Thirteen**

*Read*: “Who Invented the Jump Shot?” by John Edgar Wideman

 “Bullet in the Brain” by Tobias Wolff

*In Class*: Reading Quiz #12

 Workshop

*Due*: Workshop Response Letters

**April 19––Week Fourteen**

*Due*: FINAL PAPER (Canvas)

**Rubric**:

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| --- | --- |
| Content | Ideas and analyses should be complex and critical. Papers should offer fresh insights into the material.  Go beyond surface matter! |
| Organization and Coherence | Use an orderly structure that facilitates reading, sustaining the reader’s interest through effective paragraph development and use of proper transitions, presenting a logical flow of ideas. Use section headers! |
| Risk-Taking/Originality | Are you dealing with material in creative and challenging ways?  |
| Evidence | You must support your ideas with actual examples from the text, and use relevant details from stories that explain and support your main ideas.  Try to use quotations from stories that support your points (one or two lines will do—you will be marked down for excessive use of quotations). Plagiarism will not be tolerated. A paper that includes research should have in-text citations and a works cited page. MLA format. |
| Development | Analyze evidence in a way that supports your claims and overall thesis, including identifying literary devices/figures of speech and explaining how they contribute to the meaning of the text.   |
| Mechanics | Spelling, grammar, punctuation must be correct.  Papers must show careful proofreading, subject-verb agreement, no run-on sentences or sentence fragments, clear pronoun usage. |