

Fall 2013
AND 0021
R, 9-11

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Office hours by appointment

Required Texts:

1. *Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft*, 8th Edition by Janet Burroway
2. Coursepack
3. *Circle Mirror Transformation*, Annie Baker

Course Objectives:

1. To leave this course writing better than you did when you entered.
2. To leave this course reading better than you did when you entered.
3. To write fiction with more precision, force, and surprise than before.

Course Format:

1. Reading: to be a great writer, you must read.
2. Writing: to be a great writer, you must write.
3. Critiquing: to be a great writer, you must critique thoughtfully and frequently, knowing that this close reading of another's prose will help your own.

BEWARE: This course is reading intensive and writing intensive. Do not fall prey to the pandemic impression that creative writing courses are easy. I would err on the side of expecting much work from this course.

Reading

Read. Class time is wasted if no one has anything to say about the reading. Because of this, I have required specific "thought papers" to the assigned texts. I will know if you haven't done it; it will be obvious in your writing. I will also be giving pop quizzes. On the schedule, the "Readings" section tells you what you should read in between that date and the next class.

Writing

1. Short creative exercises: you will write short exercises most weeks, which will be assigned in class throughout the semester. Please always bring the completed exercise to class.
2. Critical response papers: you will be required to write ten small "thought papers" in response to the assigned readings (see below).
3. Five-page draft of story: midway through the semester, the first five pages of your final story will be due to your three-person peer group and me.
4. Story: twenty copies of your manuscript must be delivered **ONE CLASS BEFORE** it is to be discussed. Your final story should be written for an

adult experience; no science fiction/fantasy/fan fiction. Length: eight-twelve pages.

Warning: There is NO late delivery. There is no switching. No last-minute writing. Get the work done. And remember: you are responsible for knowing the basic conventions of style and usage—see Strunk and White’s *The Elements of Style* for guidance.

Critiquing

You will write comments on each workshop story (whether for peer group or the whole class): marginal notes in ink or pencil AND a TYPED letter to the author. Attach this letter to the piece and return it to the author at the end of class. You will also deliver one copy of this letter to me. In order for the critique to be valuable, it needs to be balanced and specific. There will be one story to which you will be the First Responder. This means I will expect you to begin the discussion. You should come in prepared to ask questions of the class, to give suggestions, and to point out what’s working in the story.

Critical Response Papers/Thought Papers

You must write weekly critical responses to the assigned readings. At the end of this syllabus, I have included some detailed suggestions for approaching structuring these responses. Each critical response must be total 600 words. Do not go over or above, please. No late papers will be accepted. (Note that you will be required to turn in ten responses, though we have twelve weeks with assigned readings. This means you may choose two weeks when you don’t response, though you are still responsible for reading the stories.)

Please avoid “rating” the stories with remarks of taste, such as “I hated this” or “I liked this.” We will work during the semester to develop your ability to talk about fiction, but please keep in mind that these are published, professional writers, meaning whether you enjoyed their writing or not, they have something to teach you about the practice and art of the written word.

These papers require no library or Internet research. Your ideas should be original and fresh. Just give me your take on the material you can pick just one passage to concentrate on in depth or you can do a more general reading of the entire story. Either way, I’m interested to hear it.

It is required that you come to class each day fully prepared (I love cold-calling and don’t feel even a little bad about it). We are here to study and create serious fiction, which requires serious work. If you’re hoping for an easy A, this class is positively not for you.

Graded Assignments and Other Course Components

1. Class Participation*:	200 points
2. Creative exercises:	150 points (25 each)
3. Critical response papers:	250 points (25 each)
4. Story draft:	50 points
5. Story:	100 points
6. Final story revision:	250 points
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	1000 points total

*Class participation includes written and oral peer critiques as well as your presence and regular contributions in class.

Attendance

You are allowed two absences without explanation, but do not miss the day your story is workshopped. Skipping your workshop will result in a failing grade for that story. Each absence after the second will lower your final grade by one full letter.

There is no distinction between excused and unexcused absences. Arriving late to class is considered an absence (and it is #rude!). Leaving class early is considered an absence.

Meeting Outside of Class

You must meet with me outside of class to discuss your story within the week following your workshop. Making an appointment with me is YOUR responsibility, not mine.

Final Notes

1. You are responsible for checking your university emails. I will sometimes give or change assignments via email, as well as make any necessary changes to the schedule. You are responsible for checking your email and approaching me with any questions. If I have sent an email to you, I will assume you have read and understood it.
2. I may change anything on this syllabus at any time.
3. Use of cellphones (with hands or ears) is NOT permitted in class. Again, that is #rude.

The following is useful information on university policies you should know. Please read over the links provided.

Statement of Writing Requirement (WR)

This course can satisfy the UF requirement for Writing. For more information, see: <http://gened.aa.ufl.edu/writing-math.aspx#writing>

Statement of student disability services.

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides students and faculty with information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities in the classroom. For more information, see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

Statement on harassment.

UF provides an education and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://regulations.ufl.edu/chapter1/1006.pdf>

Statement on academic honesty

All students are required to abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

Statement on grades and grading policies.

Note: UF has recently instituted minus grades. As a result, letter grades now have different grade point equivalencies. For more information, see:

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

Assessment Rubric for Critical Papers

Below are the criteria by which I will grade your critical response papers.

Content	Ideas and analyses should be complex and critical. Papers should offer personal, 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.
Risk-taking	You must deal with the material in creative and challenging ways, developing main points based on self-initiated criteria independent of my class discussion comments, and avoiding summary unless necessary.
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).
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. AVOID SUMMARY.
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.

Suggestions for Critical Responses/Thought Papers

You must mention all of the readings or the week in your critical response papers, but you are free to concentrate more on one story that particularly piques your interest.

Here are some suggestions on how to structure and focus your critical responses.

1. Use the Theme of the Week: almost every week, we will be focusing on a specific aspect of writing. This aspect, or theme, will be introduced by the chapter you read in Burroway. For instance, we might be talking about plot that week, or dialogue. For your critical response paper, you could write about that specific aspect as it applies to the readings for the week. So, if we are talking about dialogue, you can analyze the dialogue in the assigned stories. Remember, though, that this means you need to reference Burroway as well—it is important to explain the ways in which her take on dialogue applies to the stories. And, as always, you need to include specific quotations from the stories themselves.
2. Do a Close Reading: sometimes just a few lines can be applied to the story as a whole. To do a close reading, you should pick 2-5 lines you think perfectly represent some important aspect of the story. You should quote those lines and analyze their language carefully, then apply that analysis to the entire story. Be sure to, by the end, also mention how this analysis does or does not apply to the other story or stories we've read that week.
3. Compare/Contrast a Specific Aspect: pick something the stories have in common. Compare and contrast the appearance/use of that something in the stories we've read that week. Be sure to use specific quotations as evidence.
4. Look at the Structure: we'll talk more about this later, but there are two basic structures of a story: the checkmark and the character portrait. Using specific

- quotations, you can decide the structure of each story and make a case for that decision.
5. Something Else I Haven't Thought of: If you have another way to approach the stories that uses specific quotations and mentions all of the readings, please, go ahead!

Daily Schedule (see coursepack for readings)

Aug 22- D'erasmo; Hempel [Unsayable]

Aug 29- Olson; Ashbery; Harvey [Disappointment]

Sep 5- Canty; Packer [Mistakes]

Sept 12- Saunders; Diaz [Horror]

Sept 19- Kraus; Reines [Wants]

Sept 26- Lee Ann Brown; Williams; July [Casual encounters]

Oct 3- Haslett; O'Connor [Bad Sex]

Oct 10- Baker [Dialogue]

Oct 17 No Class (Attend writer's festival!)

Oct 24- Barthelme; Sims [Dark humor]

Oct 31- Chekhov; Johnson [Dead things]

Nov 7- Writing Activity

Nov 14- Robison; Hannah [Lies]

Nov 21- Mayer; Davis [Memory]