

CRW 2100: Fiction Writing (Honors) | Sec. 1655 | Fall 2017

Instructor Name: Alex Siwiecki

Course Meeting Times & Location: Fridays, Periods 6-8 | WEIM 1070

Office Location and Hours: Turlington 4405. Wednesdays, Periods 2-3 (8:30 A.M.–10:25 AM), or by appointment

Course Website: <https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/339907>

Instructor Email: asiwiecki@ufl.edu

Course Description:

This is an honors workshop in contemporary fiction writing. You will learn and practice the basics of fiction writing: the creation of interesting characters, the construction of a plot, the development of a conflict, the development of themes and symbols, the construction of strong dialogue, etc. Discussions of our stories and those of published writers will aid us when we write and revise our work.

The first half of the course consists of reading, discussion, and critical responses. The second half of the course will incorporate student stories into writing workshops while continuing the practices of the first half of the course.

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).
- 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:

Texts

1. *New American Stories* edited by Ben Marcus
2. *Making Shapely Fiction* by Jerome Stern
3. Various assigned readings (Provided for free)

Supplies

You are required to make copies of your stories for each of your classmates and your professor. Please, never tell me that you are broke, that your printer's out of ink, etc.

Assignments

Overview

Over the second half of this semester, you will print and submit any combination of stories that equal 12 pages the week before your submission is due. Your classmates and I will read the submission for homework. We will annotate and discuss them during scheduled class time in a workshop.

Reading and Contribution Grade

Reading assignments will include classmates' submissions, published short stories, and whatever other material I ask you to look at and respond to. You must read assignments on time. Failure to do so may lead to your dismissal from class (yes, you'll be counted absent).

People who fall behind generally stay there. I highly recommend reading, taking notes, and annotating pages every day.

An excellent contribution grade depends, first and foremost, on your willingness to raise your hand, speak about the matter at hand, and/or ask questions.

It depends on your completion of in-class writing and your willingness to volunteer to read samples of your in-class writing.

It depends on your completion of outside reading assignments and whatever homework I assign.

You will be counted absent if you aren't prepared to contribute, so please don't show up unprepared.

Subjects for Story and Requirements

No targeted genre writing. No writing about people in our workshop. Make something up. Be creative. Set aside your preconceptions about what fiction can or should be. Disregard what seems popular or cool to so-called normal people. Open your weird mind.

Your story drafts must be revised thoroughly beforehand, checking for mechanics, style, and general advice given in the first half of the semester.

Critical Responses

In 400-word responses, critically analyze each fiction assigned for the given class day. Certain days may have three or four readings assigned. A critical response format will be assigned to you.

The responses will be graded based on a 15-point maximum point scale, of which you will earn either 15, 10, or 5 points.

A 15-point critical response:

- Critically analyzes the prescribed fiction with thoughtful analysis, creative and risky approaches, and an acute attention to literary methods in the story in 250 words and no less.
- Has been proofread, with as many structural, grammatical, and mechanical issues resolved.
- Strictly follows the provided MLA friendly Critical Response document format.

Any deviation from these criteria will result in 15, 10, or 5 points. Be a 15-pointer by taking the class seriously and following instructions. Be a 0-pointer by not turning in anything.

Final Revision

The final revision will be like a final exam. You will take your submission and revise it thoroughly.

This revision will demonstrate what you have learned from reading, writing, and discussing fiction this semester. It will demonstrate your ability to respond effectively to the criticism you have received. It will demonstrate your ability to write college-level English. It will demonstrate your ability to think about and describe how you operate as a writer.

Consider the best advice you've received in the workshop. Also consider examples of quality fiction, strategies, and methods we have discussed in class. Think about which characters do and do not work, what kinds of scenes should be added or trashed, etc. Then make adjustments. Yes, we'll discuss how to accomplish these things this semester.

Grade Breakdown

Class Contribution:	100 points
15 Critical Responses @ 20 pts:	300 points
Workshop Story:	250 points
Story Revision:	350 points
Total:	1000 Points

Grading scale for submissions and final grades.

A=95
A-=91
B+=88
B=85
B-=81
C+=78
C=75
C-=71
D+=68
D=65
D-=61
F=55 (or lower)

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

Course Policies:

1. You must complete all *assignments* to receive credit for this course.
2. *Attendance:*
 - This class is based on your writing and your responses to your fellow students' writing. Your commitment to the success of the class is required, so you must attend class regularly.
 - You have two free absences. If you're absent three times unexcused by me, you will fail.
 - Do not miss the day your story is workshopped. Doing so will result in a failing grade.
 - You may be counted absent for any class in which you are not prepared to participate.
 - You have two tardies. After that, I may count you absent, and you'll be subject to the rules described in the previous paragraphs.
 - By tardy, I mean you are late by 1-15 minutes. If you're more than 15 minutes late, you are absent, and you should go home.
 - It is your responsibility to know whether I've counted you tardy or absent. If extenuating circumstances occur, you must inform me in a timely manner beforehand. You will keep further your academic integrity by doing so.
3. *Paper Format & Submission:*
 - Story submissions will be printed for the class and distributed. All other assignments, including the final story revision, will be submitted on Canvas.
 - Story submissions and revisions only require double-spacing, page numbers, a title, and your name.
 - Critical responses **must** be in proper MLA style. Follow the provided template on Canvas and use Purdue Owl, especially the sample paper: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/13/>
4. *Late Papers/Assignments:* Do not ask me to either read or grade late submissions.
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/), 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, etiquette, integrity, and electronics policy.:*

Workshop Etiquette

-Personal attacks have no place here. Attacks on a person's race, religion, sexuality, intelligence, general appearance, etc. will not be tolerated. If you make such attacks, you will be dismissed from class, and you will have to ask permission both from me and your classmates to return.

-In this class, a special civility is necessary. When we write essays, we usually write with the brain. We may be honest or we may B.S. Writing fiction, however, requires an effort not only of the brain but also of the heart. Fiction is personal. Therefore, all submissions must be treated with respect, even when we believe a particular piece would best serve as kindling. A regularly negative person will be dismissed from class.

-Honest criticism requires neither cruelty nor mockery. It points out flaws and strengths where they can be seen in stories. In this class, criticism is always intended to help the writer.

-At the same time, you must be willing to accept legitimate criticism of your work. You are taking a chance here: someone in this room may tell you a thing or two about your writing that you would rather not hear. If you want only praise, you should call your mom.

Academic Integrity

-When you're stressed about a deadline or just have trouble with a story, contact me before it is due. I will help you as best I can, and you will maintain your integrity.

-If you choose to get "help" in any way—by copying someone else's work entirely, by copying it partly, by changing a few words here or there, or anything in between—you will fail.

Electronic Equipment

-Your cell phones, laptops, iPods, etc., are not allowed in this class. Please set your social life aside till the break or after class. I will give you a warning for a first offense, will dismiss you from the day's class for a second, will dismiss you and fail you for a third.

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/>

Syllabus Schedule

Aug 25

Introductions
Syllabus Overview
Schedule Workshops

Sept 1

“Some Other, Better Otto” Deborah Eisenberg
“The Deep” Anthony Doerr
Making Shapely Fiction: Beginnings, Exposition
Critical Response #1 & #2 Due

Sept 8

“Home” George Saunders
“This Appointment Occurs in the Past” Sam Lipsyte
Making Shapely Fiction: Dialect, Dialogue
Critical Response #3 & #4 Due

Sept 15

“Men” Lydia Davis
“The Country” Joy Williams
Making Shapely Fiction: Character, Epiphany, Interior Monologue, Names, Stereotype
Critical Response #5 & #6 Due

Sept 22

“Meet the President!” Zadie Smith
“A Happy Rural Seat of Various View: Lucinda’s Garden” Christine Schutt
Making Shapely Fiction: Comedy, Diction, Genre, Grotesque, Metafiction, Stream of Consciousness, Style, Voice
Critical Response #7 & #8 Due

Sept 29

“The Largesse of the Sea Maiden” Denis Johnson
“Raw Water” Wells Tower
Making Shapely Fiction: Objective Correlative, Cliché, Description, Imagery, Imagination, Mise-en-scene, Places and Place Names, Showing and Telling, Symbolism, Texture
Critical Response #9 & #10 Due

Oct 6

HOLIDAY: HOMECOMING

Oct 13

“The Arms and Legs of the Lake” Mary Gaitskill
Workshop
Making Shapely Fiction: Atmosphere, Cliff-hanger, Crisis, Episode, Frame story, Plot, Premise, Scene, Structure, Tension
Critical Response #11 Due

Oct 20

“Slatland” Rebecca Lee
Workshop
Making Shapely Fiction: Flashback, Imagination, Immediacy, Legend
Critical Response #12 Due

Oct 27

“The Lost Order” Rivka Galchen
Workshop
Making Shapely Fiction: Bathos, Catharsis, Cliché, Didacticism, Melodrama, Sentimentality, Subtlety
Critical Response #13 Due

Nov 3

“The Diggings” Clare Vaye Watkins

Workshop

Making Shapely Fiction: Trust Your Material, Endings, Revision

Critical Response #14 Due

Nov 10

HOLIDAY: VETERAN'S DAY

Nov 17

"Wait Till You See Me Dance" Deb Olin Unferth

Workshop

Critical Response #15 Due

Nov 24

HOLIDAY: THANKSGIVING

Dec 1

Workshop

Dec 8

HOLIDAY: READING DAYS

Final Revision Due