



EH4037: Introduction to Creative Writing

AY 2023/24

Module Faculty:

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Module Aims and Objectives

Ireland has a long and well-established tradition of excellence in the genres of short story, drama, creative non-fiction and poetry writing. This creative writing module draws on that tradition and offers students an opportunity to develop their skills in creative writing in these four genres. Students will benefit from lectures and workshops in which they will learn about the practices of other writers, and from thence explore strategies for effective writing. Students will participate in regular writing activities, working collectively and individually to complete a piece of work in their chosen genre.

Learning Outcomes - By the end of this course students should have:

- Read the work of a variety of contemporary authors and developed an understanding of the formal, structural, and thematic concerns surrounding that work.
- Enhanced their critical and analytical skills through reading and commenting on the writing both of their fellow classmates and of a variety of published authors.
- Developed their skills as creative writers by writing and revising their own creative work after receiving feedback about that work from their fellow classmates as well as from the lecturer.
- Improved their ability to analyse critically the work of other writers and to understand more fully their strengths and weaknesses as creators of text.
- Be confident of the ability to write creatively and to workshop writings in an academic situation.
- Be fully aware of the linguistic demands and expectations involved in literary composition.
- Understand the value of peer-response.

Description of Module

This Creative Writing module is unlike any of the English Literature modules offered as part of your undergraduate study here in U.L. This module will run as a weekly seminar focused on a particular aspect of Creative Writing. Class participation is central to the working of this module with students required to read their own work and give feedback on the work of their peers. In-class creative writing exercises will be a regular feature of our weekly meetings.

We will also have submission workshops beginning in Week 3 where students scheduled to present will provide the class with a copy of their work for discussion. These workshops are designed to offer helpful feedback for students in preparation for their submission of two pieces of original work in Week 7 and Week 12.

Each weekly seminar will begin with a discussion of a particular aspect of creative writing and also a discussion of the readings set for each week. Weekly readings are available in the Resources section of the EH4037 SULIS site. Students are required to submit a weekly 150 to 200-word reading report from Week 2 onwards that focuses on **one** reading designated for each week. These reports should reflect on the chosen text and the literary strategies employed/describe by the author.

Student Workshops:

When each group meets, a schedule for the student submission workshops will be arranged. These workshops will begin in Week 3. Students are expected to provide the group and lecturer a sample of their work for discussion **a week before their scheduled workshop**. If submitting prose (fiction or creative non-fiction), it should be 1,000-1,200 words. When submitting poetry, students should prepare no more than 2 poems up to a maximum of 40 lines. **All work is to be titled, double-spaced and spellchecked, in 12 point Times New Roman type, with your name and the date of delivery on every page. Students must be present when their work is being discussed.**

Feedback: Students are expected to provide helpful, written feedback when considering the work of their classmates. Avoid saying **‘it’s really good’ or ‘I really liked it’ or ‘I didn’t like it’ (not even in other languages)**. Ask yourself, Do you want to keep reading this piece? Analyse the reasons why, and tell us what they are. Be specific, concrete and purposeful. Read like a writer, not a critic or reviewer. In order to assist you in this, students will be provided with Guidelines for Providing Feedback. When unable to think of something to say, look to this handout for assistance.

Assessment:

40% - Submission 1: Due Monday of Week 7

40% - Submission 2: Due Friday of Week 12

10% - Weekly Reading Reports

10% - Weekly attendance

Submission 1

Students are required to submit a finished prose piece, fiction or creative non-fiction. The word count for this first submission is 1,200-1,500 words. Students are also required to submit a reflective piece, 500 words in length in which they discuss the writing process undertaken for this submission.

Submission 2

Students are required to submit 5 pages of poetry for this second submission, up to 40 lines per page. Students are also required to submit a reflective piece, 500 words in length in which they discuss the writing process undertaken for this submission.

Evaluation of Student Submissions:

Elements under consideration during evaluation of student submissions are as follows:

- Engagement with genre and/or form:
 - Prose — narrative structure, point of view, voice, tone, setting, characterization, use of dialogue, pacing, continuity.
 - Poetry — poetic structure, rhyme scheme, rhythm, point of view, voice, tone, setting.
- Content:
 - Prose — plausibility, consistency, creativity and originality of subject matter or treatment, dramatization
 - Poetry — consistency, creativity and originality of subject matter or treatment, logical flow of ideas/ images.
- Awareness of reader:
 - Prose — holding the reader’s attention, story-telling control, tension, resolution.
 - Poetry — well constructed verses and stanzas that hold the reader’s attention, design of poem (internal/ visual), poetic control and tension.

- Language: clarity, vividness, freshness, avoidance of cliché, imagery, use of literary elements (metaphor, simile, etc.). Use powerful verbs, precise nouns, appropriate adjectives, phrases that enhance meaning.
- Mechanics: Grammar, syntax, punctuation, spelling.

Policy on Late Submissions:

No late submissions will be accepted without a medical certificate.

All applications for extensions to submission deadlines should be made to the relevant Module Leader. In general, applications should be made ahead of the submission date. Extensions without loss of marks will normally only be allowed where there is a relevant medical certificate or written evidence of other significant difficulties that have interrupted work. Computer problems, such as failure of printer and inability to access shared facilities, will not constitute a reason for the granting of an extension.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism in its simplest form is the attempt to present someone else's ideas or arguments as your own. Incidents of plagiarism in individual assessments will be awarded zero marks and can lead to the award of an F for the whole module. See also the University Code of Conduct. **Plagiarism includes:**

- Reproducing sections of a book or article and submitting these as your own.
- Cutting and pasting material from the internet and submitting these as your own ideas or critical assessments.
- Passing off someone else's work as your own.
- Submitting an assignment or parts of an assignment for more than one class.
- Paraphrasing, imitating or rewriting in your own words the ideas or concepts of another author without properly citing your sources.

Repeats: Students who fail the module will have to submit to the module leader a short story or non-fiction piece of up to 3,000 words (+/- 10%) or 10 pages of poetry, up to 40 lines per page, in the Summer which will count for 100% of the student's mark, with the final mark capped at C3.

AUTUMN TERM WEEK-TO-WEEK SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Workshop	Readings
1	30/9	Introduction: Igniting the creative spark. Basics of grammar and	Craft: 'Toolbox,' Stephen King; 'Close Reading' and 'Words,' Francine Prose

		punctuation. <i>Organize workshop schedule.</i>	
2	7/10	Basics of Storytelling. <i>First reading Report due.</i> <i>First workshop group email texts to class and lecturer.</i>	Fiction: 'Sunday in the Park' Fiction: 'There Will Come Soft Rains,' Ray Bradbury Creative Non-Fiction: 'Life-Writing,' by Zadie Smith Craft: 'Shitty First Drafts,' Anne Lamott
3	14/10	Character and characterization. <i>Workshops begin.</i>	Fiction: 'Berghain,' Lisa McInerney Edna O'Brien, 'The Rug' Creative Non-Fiction: 'Blue Hills and Chalk Bones,' by Sinead Gleeson
4	21/10	Voice and Point of view.	Fiction: 'This Hostel Life,' Melatu Uche Okorie 'Diamonds' – Colin Barrett Creative Non-Fiction: 'You can't kill the rooster,' David Sedaris.
5	28/10	Setting / Show Don't Tell	Fiction: 'Nirvana' by Adam Johnson 'Breakfast wine' by Kevin Barry Creative Non-Fiction: 'Mother Tongue,' Amy Tan
6	4/11	READING WEEK	
7	11/11	Basics of Poetry <i>First Submission due on Monday</i>	'Introduction to Poetry' by Billy Collins 'The Listeners' Walter De La Mare 'Dolls' by Jo Slade 'Laundry,' Mary Coll
8	18/11	Voice	'Death of an Irishwoman,' Michael Hartnett Carol Ann Duffy Seamus Heaney
9	25/11	Verse and Form	'Howl', Allen Ginsberg, 'The Depths' Denise Levertov, 'Morning at the Window' T.S.Eliot, 'The Red Wheelbarrow' William Carlos Williams.
10	2/12	Language	Benjamin Zephaniah Maeve McGuckian Paul Muldoon
11	9/12	Revising and Editing	'How to edit your own lousy writing'- Gough
12	16/12	Final Assessment Due – No Class <i>Second submission due on Monday of Week 13</i>	