LogoHbwTRU

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| **Course Outline**  Department of English and Modern Languages  Faculty of Arts |

**ENGL 3360-3 (3,0)**

**Advanced Fiction Writing**

**Winter 2019**

**Instructor:** Karen Hofmann **Phone/Voice Mail:** 250-377-6016

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**Office hours:** Monday 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., or by appointment

**Calendar Description:**

This is a course in the advanced study and practice of writing fiction. Through readings and workshops, students will define their own projects and produce a substantial portfolio of original work.

**Course Description:**

This course focuses on the writing of literary short fiction. Students will be expected to work on projects of prose fiction and to practice techniques of point of view, voice, structure, and style. Successful writing pieces will explore the uses of language to comment significantly on aspects of the world, from the personal through the political, epistemological, and aesthetic, using the medium of represented experience. Course activities will include readings, writing exercises, a critical essay, and a longer project to be submitted in two drafts or stages, as well as participation in discussions and workshopping.

**Prerequisites:**

Six credits of first-year English, as well as third-year standing.

**Educational Objectives/Outcomes:**

In this course students will build on skills learned in earlier creative writing courses, with emphasis on gaining more depth, control, and originality in character development, style, and voice. Students will produce an original, thematically-layered work or works of a minimum of 20 pages that

(a) demonstrates understanding and exploration of current ideas in short fiction,

(b) shows a clear understanding of story structure, with beginning, middle and end and appropriate use of scene and pacing,

(c) uses a variety of methods of characterization and consistent and appropriate control of voice and point of view,

(d) shows attention to and control of tone, diction, and figurative language, and

(e) shows ability to read own work critically and make revisions in structure, style, and editing matters.

Projects will be graded on **originality and depth of detail and characterization, control of** **narrative structure, stylistic sophistication, and thematic engagement**. The instructor will look for the material from weekly readings and discussions as well as individual feedback to be applied to new work and revision.

# Evaluation:

Short Exercises Portfolio (minimum 1000 words; due ongoing until January 29): 10%

First Story Instalment (minimum 10 pages or 2500-3000 words; due February 19): 20%

Critical Summary or Analysis (1000-2000 words; due March 19): 15%

Final Story Instalment (minimum 20 pages or 5000-6000 words; due April 9): 35%

Workshopping (participation and quantity/quality of posted feedback): 20%

**Texts/Materials:**

Burroway, Janet, Elizabeth Stuckley-French, and Ned Stuckley-French. *Writing Fiction*.

Eighth edition. Pearson, 2011.

Treisman, Deborah, ed. *20 under 40*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010.

**Course Structure and Policies:**

Students are expected to attend classes meetings consistently and to spend several hours per week out of class completing assigned writing exercises and reading assigned chapters and sample stories. Assignments must meet requirements of style and deadline to be graded. All assignments are to be typed, double-spaced, and proofread.

Students should avoid clichés of language or situation, as well as bigotry or stereotyping of, or hatred toward, any group of people that is implicitly or explicitly condoned by the author. (A character may display these attitudes, but the point of view will include clear distance between the character’s and author’s voices.) Vernacular language is acceptable, but be aware that too much use of epithets will lead the instructor to suspect the writer of having a limited vocabulary. Graphic violence and sexuality are also acceptable, in context, but be aware that you may be required at any time to read your work aloud to the class, and that sensationalism for its own sake is a weakness in writing: the purpose of literary fiction is to engage the reader in an exploration of subject through style and technique, not to simply entertain, or to excite visceral responses of various types.

Any student who submits work that is not his or her own, in content, structure, or language, may be asked to redo the assignment, or may receive a failing grade for the assignment or course, at the instructor’s discretion. Severe penalties incur from plagiarism: check “Academic Honesty” in the calendar.

**Workshopping (20%):**

Workshopping will be done in groups, which will be assigned a couple of weeks before workshopping starts. Students MUST be able to upload their stories successfully to Moodle at least a week before their turn to be workshopped. Feedback must also be made on Moodle, as well as in class. Marks are given for in-person participation in workshopping as well as for quality of feedback on Moodle.

It’s possible to workshop only a limited number of stories during class time, but students are expected to attend every session for their group. When your story is not being workshopped, you will offer feedback for the stories that are up that week.

If you are ill or have some crisis that will prevent you from attending your own workshopping session, you should try to reschedule as soon as possible. It might not be possible to reschedule toward the end of term, and if this happens, the missed workshop will be treated like a missed exam – ie, you will need to have a doctor’s note, or will forfeit that part of your mark.

**Course Topics :**

**Part I: Review of Fiction Techniques**

**Week One** (January 8): Introduction, Process

**Week Two** (January 15): Using Detail

Readings: Burroway chapters 1 and 2

**Week Three** (January 22): Characterization and Dialogue

Readings: Burroway chapters 3, 4; “Blue Water Djinn” (Treisman 283); “The Christmas Miracle” (Moodle)

**Week Four** (January 29): Fictional Place

Readings: Burroway chapter 5; “Dayward” (Treisman 307); “The Dredgeman’s Revelation” (Treisman 325)

**Week Five** (February 5): Using Scene and Summary; Story Structure, Beginnings and Endings

Readings: Burroway chapter 6,7; “Here We Aren’t, so Quickly” (Treisman 137); “The Kid” (Treisman 351)

**Week Six** (February 12): Voice and Point of View

Readings: Burroway chapter 8; “An Honest Exit” (Triesman 211); “The Young Painters” (Treisman 177); “Lenny Hearts Eunice” (Treisman 327)

**Week Seven** (February 19): No classes; reading week

**Part II: Workshopping**

**Week Eight** (February 26): Group One

**Week Nine** (March 5): Group Two

**Week Ten** (March 12): Group Three

**Week Eleven** (March 19): Group One

**Week Twelve** (March 26): Group Two

**Week Thirteen** (April 2): Group Three

**Week Fourteen** (April 9): Wrap-up and Final Story Assignment Due

**Assignment Criteria:**

1. **Portfolio of Exercises**

Weight: 10%

Due date: Ongoing until January 29th

Minimum of three exercises/1000 words total from first few weeks of chapter readings. Exercises are found at the end of chapters, and will be submitted on Moodle. Please upload in Word doc; include author name and chapter and exercise number; double-space; proof-read.

1. **First Story Instalment**

Weight: 20%

Due Date: February 19th (Upload to Moodle in Word doc)

Minimum 10 pages (2500-3000 words, double-spaced) comprising one or two complete\*, edited drafts of short stories. Stories should contain all of the following elements, used in a thoughtful, original, and unified way:

1. a structurally balanced beginning, middle, and end
2. appropriate use of dramatization and summary
3. a climactic event, mood, or recognition
4. characterization and setting description that go beyond basic exposition
5. specific and concrete diction
6. consistent and appropriate use of point of view
7. thematic interest or subtext

\*If story is not complete, please include a summary of what is still to come.

1. **Critical Summary or Analysis**

Weight: 15%

Due date: March 19th

Choose one story from the collection *20 under 40*, and write a critical summary or analysis of 1000 to 2000 words of the story. Do not do a critical analysis, as you would for a literature class, but rather focus on the writer’s techniques and choices, including those of setting, characterization, structure, and point of view. A useful form might be to summarize the story briefly and then identify and comment on the four techniques, using brief examples. Although I am asking you not to write a literary analysis, which would focus on theme and how some part of the story contributes to the development of that theme, you should show in your analysis that you do understand how the choices that the writer has made have contributed to the story’s central idea or purpose.

1. **Final Story Instalment**

Weight: 35%

Due date: April 9th

Minimum 20 pages (5000-6000 words, double-spaced) of one to three finished, revised short stories. All criteria for first instalment apply; as well, stories should now show revision for and consciousness of thematic unity, symbolism, and structural innovation and integrity.