

Carleton University
Winter 2015
Department of English

ENGL 3903A: INTERMEDIATE FICTION WORKSHOP

Tuesdays 2:35-5:25 / RB 1200 (Please confirm on Carleton Central)

Professor Nadia Bozak

Office Hours: Dunton Tower 1918; Tuesday 1-2 or by appointment

Email: nadia.bozak@carleton.ca

*This is a preliminary syllabus subject to change and further development.

**Enrollment in this workshop is limited to 18-20 students. Students must submit a fiction portfolio to the instructor by the stated deadline in order to be considered for the workshop. Acceptance is at the discretion of the instructor and is therefore not guaranteed.

Portfolio Submission Guidelines:

1. Please send a **brief biographical statement** (maximum 250-300 words) indicating:
 - a. A few of the writers you like to read/ who inspire you to write
 - b. Why you want to take this workshop
 - c. Previous experience in creative writing workshops
 - d. Any previous creative writing publications
2. Please send examples of prose fiction (short stories or novel chapters) of **no more than ten double-spaced pages in total**. Use 12-point Times New Roman font and proper formatting. Choose work which demonstrates an aptitude for writing fiction. In other words, send your best, most polished work. If you are sending an excerpt from a longer work, please provide a brief contextualizing explanation.
3. Include a cover page with your **full name, Carleton email and student ID number**
4. Please email this portfolio to Professor Nadia Bozak nadia.bozak@carleton.ca by **Friday, December 12th, 2014**.
5. Decisions will be sent to students by email on **Friday, December 19th**. As there is no guarantee a student will be accepted into this workshop, students are advised to make an alternate course selection.

Course Description:

The objective of this intermediate fiction-writing workshop is to further develop students' creative writing skills and, attendant to that, their reading and editorial skills as well. Students in this workshop are expected to have a solid foundation in the fundamentals of fiction writing (such as character development, setting, point of view) upon which this workshop will build.

They will also have a sincere interest in writing fiction and a willingness to learn from their fellow writers, the instructor, and works of exemplary fiction assigned by the instructor.

While the focus is on writing short literary fiction—short stories, novel chapters— other formats and genres will be considered as well.

Students will emerge from this workshop with two polished fiction manuscripts.

They will also post a short piece of fiction or a review of a local creative writing reading event (on campus or in Ottawa) on "Passages," the Carleton Creative Writing Concentration site.

The majority of each class will be spent critiquing and discussing each others' short fiction manuscripts. However, over the term students will also prepare a short presentation on an assigned topic, participate in targeted writing exercises, and perform close readings of short stories and essays by exemplary writers.

Note well: The success of this class and your development as a writer depends upon attending each and every session, contributing to discussions, and fully engaging with in-class exercises and workshops. You must, therefore, be ready to circulate your creative work among your peers and have it openly discussed in class. As well as receiving and perhaps integrating the comments of others into your writing, you will offer your peers constructive, thoughtful and forthright critiques as well.

Required weekly readings will be available digitally on Ares through the MacOdrum Library and/or distributed in class.

Evaluation:

- 1) **40%**: Quality and originality of TWO short fiction manuscripts (10 pages **maximum** each) submitted **a)** for workshops and **b)** to the instructor in a revised form within two-weeks of being workshopped.

Effort, creativity, effective writing, proper grammar, and formatting are taken into consideration when grading. As the labour of revision/re-writing is the foundation of all creative writing, a 10% portion of the above mark includes submitting (to the instructor) a draft of your work revised in accordance with (or contrary to) the comments received in workshop.

This revised manuscript will include a separate **FORMAL** summary (1-2 pages) reflecting upon why or why not you have integrated comments received in the workshop and what it was like to experience the workshop process.

- 2) **20%**: Quality of editorial comments given to the work of others.

This includes in-class comments offered to your fellow classmates about their manuscripts as well as comments written on the manuscripts.

Each week students will read and comment upon three or four 10-page manuscripts submitted by fellow class members. These manuscripts will be returned to their respective writers, marked with respectful, insightful editorial commentary including a 3-4 sentence summary.

- 3) **20 %** Participation/ Weekly prompt

Participation is based on: attendance, the quality and frequency of students' contributions to discussions (including critiques, discussions about readings, and writing exercises), and preparedness. Students must come to class having a) read the assigned readings and b) prepared to speak about the manuscripts up for critique.

Also: each week the instructor will give students a "take-home" writing prompt which will be presented and discussed in class and will be considered part of participation.

- 4) **10%**: Mini-Seminar Presentation

This presentation should be **10-12 minutes** in length, put together with the aim to generate class discussion about an assigned topic from weekly readings. The ability to succinctly organize your points and make good use of examples from the assigned readings/ stories poems will be graded.

Include 3 questions for the class to discuss.

The presentation and questions will be **formally** written up (2 pages) and handed in to the instructor on the same day. **Always include a works cited list.**

A full list of presentations topics and schedule will be decided in Week One.

5) **10%:** “Passages” contribution (review of a fiction reading or a weekly prompt)

Over the course of the term each student will post either a short piece of fiction (based on take-home prompt) or a review of a local creative writing reading on the Carleton Creative Writing Concentration website, “Passages.”

A schedule for postings will be decided in Week One.

Attendance:

Students who miss more than three classes without documentation of a medical or personal situation will automatically have his/her grade reduced by a full letter grade. Provide such documentation to the instructor as soon as possible.

Thus, over the course of the term you will:

- Prepare and revise two fiction manuscripts and write a brief revision summary thereof
- Read/comment upon three or four 10 page manuscripts weekly
- Prepare a short mini-seminar presentation, including questions and formal write-up
- Write/ post a fiction prompt/ reading event review as assigned by the instructor
- Keep up with all assigned readings
- Prepare weekly “take home” prompts and speak about them in class

There are no tests or exams. You can expect to devote a minimum of 6-8 hours per week to this course.

Weekly Course Schedule—Winter 2015

Week 1: Introduction/ Keep it Simple: Raymond Carver

Jan. 6

- In-class writing exercises
- ***Sign up for presentations and manuscript submission dates***
- Reading due: Raymond Carver, “Gazebo”

Week 2: Whose Stories Can We Tell?

Jan. 13

- In-class writing exercises
- Presentations: TBA
- ***First submissions by 3 or 4 participants are due; copies of manuscripts are to be handed out to the group in order to be critiqued in class during Week 3***
- Reading: Helen Hoy, *“How Should I Read These? Native Women Writers in Canada (excerpts)”*; Anne Cameron, *Stories of Copper Woman*; Sherman Alexie, “Introduction to Native American Literature”

Week 3: Heavy Editing: Carver and Lish

Jan. 20

- Presentations: TBA
- Workshop manuscripts
- Reading due: Raymond Carver “So Much Water So Close to Home”

Week 4: Prose and Poetry: Michael Ondaatje

Jan. 27

- Presentations: TBA
- Workshop manuscripts
- Reading due: Michael Ondaatje, *Coming Through Slaughter* (excerpts)

Week 5: Writing and Routine: Murakami

Feb. 3

- Presentations: TBA
- Workshop manuscripts
- Reading due: Haruki Murakami *What I Talk about when I Talk About Running* (excerpts)

Week 6: The Second Person: Lorrie Moore

Feb.10

- Presentations: TBA
- Workshop manuscripts
- Reading due: Lorrie Moore, *Self Help* (excerpts)

Reading Week: February 17th, University Closed; Library Open. ☺

Week 7: Magical Sentences: Garcia Marques

Feb. 24

- Presentations: TBA
- Workshop manuscripts
- Reading due: *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (excerpts)

Week 8: Allusion and Intertext: Junot Díaz

Mar. 3

- Presentations: TBA
- Workshop manuscripts
- Reading due: Junot Díaz, “Nilda”

Week 9: Fiction and Reality: Munro

Mar. 10

- Presentations: TBA
- Workshop manuscripts
- Reading due: Alice Munro, “Days of the Butterfly”

Week 10: Young Voices: NoViolet Bulawayo

Mar. 17

- Presentations: TBA
- Workshop manuscripts
- Reading due: NoViolet Bulawayo, “Hitting Budapest”

Week 11: When is a story ready? Stephen King

Mar. 24

- Presentations: TBA
- Workshop manuscripts
- Reading due: Stephen King, *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft* (excerpts)

Week 12: Publishing Overview

Mar.31

- Presentations: TBA
- Workshop manuscripts
- Reading due: C. Michael Curtis, “Publishers and Publishing”

- Presentations: TBA
- Workshop manuscripts
- Cookies and treats ☺

PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines **plagiarism** as **presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas, or the work of others as one's own.**

This can include:

- * reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source
- * submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else
- * using ideas, quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts or ideas without appropriate acknowledgement in an essay or assignment
- * failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's works, and/or failing to use quotation marks
- * handing in substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs

Plagiarism is a form of intellectual theft. It is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly with the course's instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include failure of the assignment, failure of the entire course, suspension from a program, suspension from the university, or even expulsion from the university. See the Section on Academic Integrity in the Student Conduct Portion of the Undergraduate Calendar.

Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the [Student Guide](#).

Religious obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the [Student Guide](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation.

If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable).

After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the [PMC website](#) for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).