

Carleton University
Fall 2024 Preliminary Course Outline
Department of English
ENGL 2903A: Writing Fiction

Please submit a registration override and portfolio. For more information on the portfolio submission process, please click [here](#).

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***** This is a preliminary syllabus only—texts and assignments are subject to change. A complete version will be available closer to the start of the term. *****

Course Description:

This fiction workshop aims to develop skills in writing short-form fiction, reading published texts and learning from them as our teachers, as well as building skills in offering and receiving peer-editing feedback in a workshop setting.

We will spend the course building skills in the fundamentals of fiction writing (such as character development, setting, and point of view) and experiment with both form and content, pushing our boundaries and comfort zones.

Regardless of prior experience, students will have a sincere interest in writing fiction and a willingness to learn from their fellow student-writers, the instructor, and works of exemplary fiction assigned by the instructor.

We will focus on writing short-form fiction (short story, flash fiction and micro fiction). Students are required to have the time and energy to write, read, and revise continuously this semester.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will emerge from this workshop with two polished fiction manuscripts. Most of each session will be spent workshoping each other's short fiction manuscripts, thus developing skills in editing, reading as writers, and offering constructive feedback with diplomacy and tact. Students will also closely read works of exemplary fiction, thus learning from the success of various published works. Additionally, students will lead a discussion on an assigned topic or reading, participate in class discussions, and write a review of a local literary event. Note well: Success in this course and development as writers depends upon attending the sessions regularly, contributing to discussions, and fully engaging with workshops. Students must, therefore, be ready to circulate their creative work among their peers and have it openly discussed in class. As well as receiving peer commentary about their writing, they will offer their peers constructive and thoughtful feedback.

Course Requirements:

- 1) 50%: Two short fiction manuscripts (25% each) submitted a) for workshopping and b) to the instructor in a revised form for grading. One manuscript will be 2000-2500 words; the other will be 500-750 words. A reflection statement will be submitted with each revised manuscript.
- 2) 15%: Attend and review a literary event in Ottawa (such as the Ottawa International Writers Festival)
- 3) 15% Presentation/ leading a class discussion on a selected assigned reading or topic (i.e. an informal presentation plus discussion questions)
- 4) 20%: Participation (contributions to discussions about assigned readings and manuscripts, quality of editorial comments, general preparedness and engagement)

Fuller descriptions of assignments will be available on Brightspace and discussed in Week #1. All assignments will be submitted, graded, and returned to students via Brightspace. The instructor aims to have grading completed within two weeks of a due date. Students will be graded for effective writing, imagination, level of engagement, strength of revisions, and correct grammar and punctuation. These criteria will be described in more detail with each set of assignment instructions.

Required reading: Approximately one contemporary short story or novel chapter per week, made available online through Ares.

There are no exams in this course. **Late penalty** = 2% a day (maximum 20%)

ATTENDANCE: Students who are absent due to medical reasons or other extenuating circumstances must fill out a missed coursework form in order to be considered for accommodation regarding missed work or extensions. Missing more than two workshops without explanation or without submitting a self-declaration form will significantly compromise your participation grade.