

Carleton University
Winter 2025 Preliminary Course Outline
Department of English

ENGL 3903B: Writing Fiction (Intermediate)

Prerequisites: a grade of B+ or higher in one of: ENGL 2901, ENGL 2903, ENGL 2915, or departmental permission. If you do not meet the prerequisite, please submit a registration override. 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 intermediate fiction-writing workshop continues developing students' creative writing skills and, attendant to that, their reading and editorial skills. Students registered in this workshop should have a solid foundation in the fundamentals of fiction writing (such as character development, setting, and 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. The focus will be on writing short fiction and possibly novel chapters in genres of students' choosing.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will emerge from this workshop with two revised, polished fiction manuscripts. They will also attend and review a literary event (on campus or in Ottawa), thus gaining an appreciation for literature as it is read out loud by the author and learning what authors have to say about the writing process.

Most of our in-class time will be spent critiquing and discussing each other's short fiction manuscripts, thus developing skills in self-editing, reading as writers, and offering constructive feedback with diplomacy and tact. Students will also read exemplary contemporary fiction, developing skills in close reading and learning from the success of various published works. Students will also prepare a short presentation on an assigned topic and participate in class discussions.

Note well: The success of this class and your development as a writer depends upon attending sessions regularly, contributing to discussions, and fully engaging with in-class exercises and

workshops. Students can expect to circulate their creative work among their peers and have it openly discussed in class. In addition to receiving and perhaps integrating the comments of others into your writing, you will also offer your peers constructive, thoughtful and forthright critiques.

Course Assessment:

- 1) Two short fiction manuscripts submitted a) for workshops and b) to the instructor in a revised form within two weeks of being workshopped.
- 2) Peer-editing comments given to the work of others.
- 3) Participation: attendance, the quality and frequency of students' contributions to discussions (including critiques and discussions about readings), and preparedness. Students must come to class having a) read the assigned readings and b) prepared to speak about the manuscripts up for critique. I take attendance at each session; missing more than three workshops without explanation will seriously affect your grade.
- 4) Mini-Seminar Presentation or Reading Responses (students may choose which option) OR: Students will submit TEN 200-word responses to the assigned readings. These responses may be informal (hand-written "diary" form).
- 5) Literary Event Review

Required weekly readings will be available digitally on Ares through the MacOdrum Library (students will be assigned to read one short story or chapter per session)

There are no tests or exams.