

**Carleton University
Winter 2017
Department of English**

ENGL 1500B: Introduction to Creative Writing

Monday and Wednesday, 4:05-5:25 pm

Tory Building, Room 210

Instructor: Nadia Bozak

Email: nadia.bozak@carleton.ca

Office: Dunton Tower, 1918

Phone: 613-520-2600 x 2330

Office Hours: Monday, 3-4

Note: this course is **not** a prerequisite for taking the Creative Writing workshops offered in the Department of English. In other words, taking this course does not guarantee admission into the department's Creative Writing workshops. These workshops (listed on the English Department website) are all based on the submission of a quality portfolio (which this course will give you the opportunity to prepare) and the permission of the instructor.

As such, if you already have a portfolio of creative work, you might consider submitting it to one or more of the workshops we offer without taking this course.

But:

- If you feel you need time and guidance preparing a portfolio, this course is the ideal place to do so.

- If you never plan on taking a Creative Writing workshop but still have an interest in writing (as a practice or perhaps as a business, or just because you love reading and wonder what goes on behind the scenes) this course is also for you.
- If you are already in a Creative Writing workshop but are interested in learning more about the ins and outs of creative writing (here at Carleton and in North America more broadly), this course is also for you.

Course Description:

This course is designed for students of any academic discipline or level who have an interest in creative writing—as an artistic practice, an industry, or an academic discipline. Students who have never written creatively are welcome in this course: they just need a desire to try it out. Students who have written creatively are also welcome.

The weekly schedule is divided into:

- lectures by the instructor on a weekly topic
- writing in response to targeted prompts
- workshopping prompts in a small groups on CU Learn and in class

Learning outcomes:

1. Students will emerge from this course with the foundations of a portfolio of creative work in multiple genres (poetry, short story, creative non-fiction, screenwriting, as well as others). With a complete portfolio, students can opt to apply for acceptance into the

Creative Writing workshops at the 2000 and 3000 level offered in the Department of English.

2. Students will learn to read literary texts as writers and to speak about these same texts as writers (rather than as readers or scholars)
3. Students will learn how to critique a piece of writing, employing key terms such as “voice” and “character” for fiction, “image” and “rhythm” for poetry
4. Students will learn how to edit their own creative work and that of others
5. Students will learn the basics of writing effectively, including formatting dialogue, paragraphing, and active voice
6. Students will have the opportunity to practice reading their own creative work in front of others

Required texts:

Each week we will read creative writing (poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction) and/or an essay on the weekly topic(s). These readings will be on ARES (a digital repository of class readings made available through MacOdrum library). Using CU Learn, students will download, print out, and read the assigned readings, and come to class prepared to discuss them.

Evaluation and Assignments:

1. **Midterm test on assigned readings and lecture material: 15%**

The midterm will be held during lecture time indicated on the schedule. The midterm will cover all lectures and assigned readings, but will not include writing anything creative (i.e. I will not ask you to write a poem etc.)

2. Final test on assigned readings and lecture material: 20%

The final test will be held during the spring exam period. It will be cumulative, structured much like the midterm.

3. Literary reading review assignment: 10%

Each of you will attend a literary reading this winter/spring here in Ottawa and write a review of it (two-three double-spaced pages, approximately five hundred words).

VerseFest poetry festival in March (dates TBA) is free for Carleton students, offering many tempting readings for you to attend and review. I will post specific times and dates of possible events for you to attend.

You may begin your review by introducing the time, date, location, name of the reader(s). Please don't spend too much time on this component (one or two sentences is sufficient). You can then comment on such things as the content of the reading, the reading style, the experience of listening to authors speak about their writing, what you learned from the experience. As with all assignments in this course, this review will be typed in Times New Roman 12-point font, and double spaced.

Your review is due TWO WEEKS after the event. No reviews will be accepted after the end of classes.

4. Seven Writing Prompts (posted on CU Learn, best four are revised and handed in with a “reflection” statement): 40%

Students will write and post seven writing prompts on CU Learn over the semester.

From these seven prompts, students will choose their best four to revise and hand in to the instructor for grading (two from before midterm and two from after midterm). The editorial comments the prompts receive from your workshop group on CU Learn and in class are the starting point for your revisions. Once you have read and thought about the feedback, revise your piece TWICE with the aim to clarify, solidify, and polish your writing. You will then write a statement (approximately 300 words) reflecting on the editorial and revision experience for EACH prompt.

These reflection statements will be written in formal, academic English, in full sentences. Some points to include could be:

1. Why or why you have not integrated comments received in the workshop (especially if there was an overwhelming class consensus on a certain point).
2. Was the workshop helpful to you? Why or why not?
3. What have you learned from the workshop going forward? What writing skills or techniques do you feel you know need to address in your writing?
4. Anything else you think is relevant.

The final HARD COPY package you hand in includes: two original prompts, two drafts of each original prompt showing evidence of your revisions (three drafts in total for each prompt: original prompt +second draft + final draft), and a reflection statement for each of the final prompts (two reflection statements in total). INCLUDE YOUR NAME AND STUDENT NUMBER ON ALL PAGES.

5. Editorial feedback posted on CU Learn: 15%

Seven times over the semester, students will post their assigned writing prompt on CU Learn for their designated workshop group to read and comment upon (workshop groups will be determined during Week 1). Using CU Learn, students will read each others' prompts and offer 2-3 sentences of editorial feedback. TAs and the instructors will monitor students' editorial comments, ensuring it is constructive and makes use of terms and concepts discussed in lectures and readings. Please look at the course outline for prompt due dates. The instructor will notify you of any changes. There are seven writing prompts over the semester. This is the workshop portion of the course, dependant on reciprocally offering and receiving feedback on your creative writing with the aim of improving both your writing and your editorial skills.

6. **ATTENDANCE** will be taken at the beginning of each class. A student who misses more than four classes without a medical note or note of accommodation will automatically lose 10% of their final grade.

Note:

The instructor will make the prompts available on CU Learn one week before they are due.

- The revised prompts you turn in **MUST** have appeared on CU Learn. If a student hands in a prompt that has not been posted, the grade allocated will be zero.
- If a student misses posting a prompt, they will lose **10%** of their final grade.
- You will hand in two pairs of revised prompts over the term (two prompts before midterm, two from after midterm). Please see the schedule for the due dates.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1

Mon. Jan 9

- Topic: Course outline/ CU Learn and ARES/ Assign workshop groups
- Reading due: n/a

Wed. Jan 11

- Topic: Less is more?
- Reading due: Raymond Carver "Popular Mechanics"
- Work due: Warm-up prompt #1 to be posted on CU Learn

Week 2

Mon. Jan. 16

- Topic: Workshop mechanics/ Reading as a Writer
- Reading due: Francine Prose, "Close Reading"; Anton Chekhov: "Lady with the Dog"
- Work due: Prompt #1 due on CU Learn

Wed. Jan 18

- Topic: Can creative writing be taught? Should it be?/ Effective Writing #1: dialogue
- Reading due: Raymond Carver, "Fires"; Louis Menand, "Show Don't Tell"

Week 3

Mon. Jan. 23

- Topic: Elements of Fiction #1 Show vs. Tell/ Writing with the Senses
- Reading due: Chris Lombardi, "Description: To Picture in Words"; Flannery O'Connor, "Good Country People"; Toni Morrison *The Bluest Eye*
- Work due: Writing Prompt #2 to be posted for workshop groups on CU by Mon. Jan. 23rd; Comments due by Fri. Jan. 27th

Wed. Jan. 25

- Topic: Elements of Fiction #2 Character / Plot vs Story; Effective Writing #2: Paragraphing
- Reading due: Brandi Reissenweber, "Character: Casting Shadows"; Junot Diaz, "Otravida, Otravez"

Week 4

Mon. Jan. 30

- Topic: Elements of Fiction #3 Voice and Point of View; Effective Writing #3: Active voice
- Reading due: Valerie Vogrin, "Point of View: The Complete Menu"; Chimimanda Ngozi Adichie "The Thing Around Your Neck"
- Work due: Prompt #3 due on CU Learn Mon. Jan. 30th; Comments due Fri. Feb. 3rd

Wed. Feb. 1

- Topic: Elements of Fiction #4 Setting; Effective Writing #4 sentence length and structure
- Reading due: Jack Hodgins, "A Plausible Abode"; Alice Munro "Ottawa Valley"

Week 5

Mon. Feb. 6

- Topic: Write what you know? Topics in appropriation, imagination, audience

- Reading due: Toni Morrison and Junot Diaz on YouTube (link posted on CU Learn); Lenore Keeshing Tobias, "Stop Stealing Native Stories,"; Lloyd Jones, *Mister Pip*
- Work due: Prompt# 4 to be posted on CU Learn Feb 6. Comments posted by Feb 10.

Wed. Feb. 8

- Topic: Creative Nonfiction, The Role of the Author / Researching Your Own Life
- Reading due: Philip Lopate, "Writing Personal Essays"; Lynn Coady, "Flight of the Wendybird"; Michael Ondaatje, *Running in the Family* (Selections)

Week 6

Mon. Feb. 13

- Creative non-fiction cont'd
- In-class editing session

Wed. Feb. 15

- Revising and editing/ Effective Writing #5 TBA
- Reading due: Stephen King, *On Writing*, 208-231
- Work due: First Two Revised Prompts + Rough Drafts + Two Reflection Statements due Fri. Feb 17th, drop off in the English Dept drop-box, 18th Floor Dunton Tower.

FEBRUARY 20-24, University closed.

Week 7

Mon. Feb. 27 MIDTERM TEST

Wed. Mar. 1

- Poetry #1 "Word Images"
- Reading due: Kevin Clark, "Words That Paint, Colors that Speak"; Lorna Crozier, "Fear of Snakes"; Patrick Lane, "The Man"

Week 8

Mon. Mar. 6

- Topic: Poetry #2, Making Comparisons, Simile, Metaphor, Comparison
- Reading due: David Mason and John Frederick Nims, "What's It Like?"
- Work due: Prompt #5 to be posted on CU Learn Mar. 6th, comments posted Mar. 10

Wed. Mar. 8

- Topic: the shape, structure, and possibilities of poetry
- Reading due: Marianne Moore, "The Fish" (link posted on CU Learn / Anne Carson, *Autobiography of Red*)

Week 9

Mon. Mar. 13

- Topic: Poetry #4, Poetry, Society, Activism/ Poetry of Witness
- Reading due: Carolyn Forché, "The Colonel"; Yusef Komunyakaa, "Boat People"
- Work due: Prompt # 6 to be posted on CU Learn Mar. 13th; Comments posted Mar. 17

Wed. Mar. 15

- Topic: Screenwriting
- Reading due: Syd Field "What is a Screenplay?"; *Whiplash* (short film); *Whiplash* screenplay (excerpt)

Week 10

Mon. Mar. 20

- Topic: Screenwriting cont'd; Publishing in Canada
- Work due: Prompt #7 to be posted on CU Learn; Comments due Fri. 24th.

Wed. Mar. 22

- Topic: Digital Humanities

Week 11

Mon. Mar. 27

- Topic: Digital Humanities

Wed. Mar. 29

- In-class editing session, prompts # 5-7

Week 12

Mon. Apr. 3

- Topic: In-class reading/ Final exam review

Wed. Apr. 5

- In-class reading / Final exam review

- Work due: Two revised prompts + Two reflection statements and rough drafts due in class

FINAL TEST: scheduled during exam period**REQUEST FOR 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*). **Requests made within two weeks will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.** After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website (www.carleton.ca/pmc) for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*).

PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or 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 or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings;
- 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 serious offence, which 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 a final grade of "F" for the course