

Carleton University

Fall 2016

Department of English

ENGL 1500A: Introduction to Creative Writing

Monday and Wednesday, 10:00-11:30 am

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, 11:45-1:00

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
- guest lecturers (local writers, publishers, organizers of literary festivals, as well as instructors in the Department of English who teach Creative Writing and Drama)
- writing in response to targeted prompts
- workshopping prompts (sharing and critiquing) in a small groups on CU Learn

Learning outcomes:

1. Students will emerge from this course with a portfolio of creative work in multiple genres (poetry, short story, creative non-fiction, screenwriting, perhaps others). With this 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 also gain a critical understanding of how the publishing industry functions in Canada and North America and be able to situate literary trends (self-publishing, fan fiction, literary fiction) within that landscape (a landscape which includes literary prizes and festivals).
3. Students will learn to read literary and dramatic texts as writers and to speak about these same texts as writers (rather than as readers or scholars)
4. 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
5. Students will learn how to edit their own creative work and that of others
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, dramatic writing, 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:

1. Two tests on assigned readings, lecture material, and guest speakers: 15% each + 30%
2. Ottawa Writers Festival/ literary reading review assignment: 10%

3. Seven Writing Prompts (posted on CU Learn, best four are revised and handed in with a “reflection” statement): 40%
4. Editorial feedback on CU Learn: 20%

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.

Assignment descriptions:

1. **Tests:** Tests will be held during lecture days indicated on the schedule (ie, there is no final exam scheduled during the exam period). Tests are cumulative, covering all lectures, assigned readings, and guest speakers. The tests will involve short and long answer, but will not include writing anything creative (i.e. I will not ask you to write a poem etc.)
2. **Ottawa Writers Festival/ literary reading review assignment:** Each of you will attend a literary reading this fall here in Ottawa and write a review of it (two double-spaced pages, approximately five hundred words).

The Ottawa Writers Festival in mid-October (dates TBA) is free for Carleton students, offering many tempting readings for you to attend and review. I will also post some alternate readings (of fiction and poetry) throughout the term for you to attend.

You may begin your review by introducing the time, date, location, name of the reader(s). You can then comment on such things as your general impressions about the content of the reading, the reading style, the venue, and/ or the experience of listening to authors

speak about their writing. As with all assignments in this course, this review will be typed in Times New Roman 12-point font, and double spaced. Your name and the name of your TA will appear on each page.

3. **Writing Prompts (posted on CU Learn, revised with a “reflection” statement):**

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 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 1-2 page statement reflecting on the editorial and revision experience. This reflection statement 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: the revised prompts, two drafts of prompt showing evidence of your revisions, a reflection statement. **INCLUDE YOUR NAME, STUDENT NUMBER, AND THE NAME OF YOUR TA ON ALL PAGES.**

4. **Editorial feedback posted on CU Learn:** 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. Prompts will be posted on Mondays, comments posted by Friday of that same week. 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.

Notes:

The instructor will make the prompts available on CU Learn 1-2 weeks 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

Date and Topic	Readings	Guest Speaker	Work Due
Week 1 Wed. Sept 7: Course outline; CU Learn and ARES; Assign workshop groups	Raymond Carver, "Popular Mechanics"	n/a	n/a

<p>Week 2</p> <p>Mon. Sept 12:</p> <p>Workshop mechanics/ Reading as a Writer</p>	<p>Francine Prose, “Close Reading”</p> <p>Anton Chekhov: “Lady with the Dog”</p>	n/a	<p>“Getting to Know You” exercise due on CU Learn</p>
<p>Week 2</p> <p>Wed. Sept 14:</p> <p>Can creative writing be taught? Should it be?</p>	<p>Raymond Carver, “Fires”</p> <p>Louis Menand, “Show Don’t Tell: Should Creative Writing Be Taught?”</p>	n/a	n/a
<p>Week 3</p> <p>Mon. Sept 19</p> <p>Elements of Fiction #1 Show vs. Tell/ Writing with the Senses</p>	<p>Chris Lombardi, “Description: To Picture in Words”</p> <p>Flannery O’Connor, “Good Country People”</p>	n/a	<p>Writing Prompt #1 to be posted for workshop groups on CU Learn</p>
<p>Week 3</p> <p>Wed. Sept 21</p> <p>Elements of Fiction #2 Character / Plot vs Story</p>	<p>Brandi Reissenweber, “Character: Casting Shadows”</p> <p>Junot Diaz, “Otravida, Otravez”</p>	n/a	n/a
<p>Week 4</p> <p>Mon. Sept 26</p> <p>Elements of Fiction #3 Voice and Point of View</p>	<p>Valerie Vogrin, “Point of View: The Complete Menu”</p> <p>Chimimanda Adichie “The Thing Around Your Neck”</p>	n/a	<p>Writing Prompt #2 to be posted for workshop groups on CU Learn</p>
<p>Week 4</p> <p>Wed. Sept 28</p> <p>Elements of Fiction #4 Setting</p>	<p>Jack Hodgins, “A Plausible Abode”</p> <p>Alice Munro “Ottawa Valley”</p>	Jared Young, author of <i>Into the Current</i>	

<p>Week 5</p> <p>Mon. Oct 3</p> <p>Write what you know? Topics in appropriation, imagination, audience</p>	<p>Toni Morrison and Junot Diaz on YouTube (link posted on CU Learn)</p> <p>Lenore Keeshing Tobias "Stop Stealing Native Stories,"</p> <p>WP Kinsella, <i>Dance Me Outside</i> (selections)</p> <p>Toni Morrison, <i>The Bluest Eye</i> (selections)</p>	n/a	n/a
<p>Week 5</p> <p>Wed. Oct 5</p> <p>Revising and editing/ The Role of the Writers Festival</p>	<p>Stephen King, <i>On Writing</i>, 208-231</p>	<p>Sean Wilson, Ottawa Writers Festival</p>	n/a
<p>Week 6</p> <p>Mon. Oct. 10</p>	<p>Thanksgiving. Carleton is closed.</p>	n/a	<p>Writing Prompt # 3 to be posted for workshop groups on CU Learn by Tues. Oct 11.</p>
<p>Week 6</p> <p>Wed. Oct 12</p> <p>Topics in Creative Nonfiction #1:</p> <p>The Role of the Author / Researching Your Own Life</p>	<p>Philip Lopate, "Writing Personal Essays: On the Necessity of...."</p> <p>Lynn Coady, "Flight of the Wendybird"</p>	<p>Rick Taylor, Carleton Creative Writing Instructor and author</p>	
<p>Week 7</p> <p>Mon. Oct 17</p>	<p>Michael Ondaatje, <i>Running in the Family</i> (Selections)</p>		<p>Writing Prompt # 4 to be posted for workshop</p>

Topics in Creative Nonfiction #2: Mixing Genres			groups on CU Learn
Week 7 Wed. Oct. 19	Midterm Test	Midterm Test	Midterm Test
Mon. Oct 24 Fall Break, No Classes Wed. Oct 26 Fall Break, No Classes	Fall Break, No Classes	Fall Break, No Classes	Fall Break, No Classes
Week 8 Mon Oct 31 Poetry #1: “Word Images”	Kevin Clark, “Words That Paint, Colors that Speak” Lorna Crozier, “Fear of Snakes” Patrick Lane, “The Man”	n/a	First Two Revised Prompts + Drafts + Reflection Statements due at the beginning of class
Week 8 Wed. Nov 2 Poetry #2: Making Comparisons, Simile, Metaphor, Comparison	David Mason and John Frederick Nims, “What’s It Like?”	Amal El-Mohtar, poet, fiction writer, Carleton instructor	Ottawa Writers Festival Review due at the beginning of class
Week 9 Mon. Nov 7 Poetry #3: Poetry, Society, Activism/ Poetry of Witness	Carolyn Forché, “The Colonel” Yusef Komunyakaa, “Boat People”	Monty Reid, Poet and Director of VerseFest	Writing Prompt # 5 to be posted for workshop groups on CU Learn

<p>Week 9</p> <p>Wed Nov 9</p> <p>Writing for Stage and Screen #1</p> <p>The Screenplay as a Genre</p>	<p>Syd Field “What is a Screenplay?”</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>Week 10</p> <p>Mon. Nov 14</p> <p>Writing for Stage and Screen #2</p> <p>The Screenplay as Structure/ Screen vs. Stage</p>	<p>Brian Trottier “How to Write a Screenplay” 3-47</p>	<p>Sarah McVie, actor, writer, drama instructor</p>	<p>Writing Prompt # 6 to be posted for workshop groups on CU Learn</p>
<p>Week 10</p> <p>Wed. Nov 16</p> <p>The Business of Literary Awards/ The Climate of Competition in the Arts</p>	<p>http://www.scotiabankgillerprize.ca/ Please read any and all pages of this website. Further reading may be announced.</p>	<p>Dr. Rosemarie Hoey, Carleton instructor (“The Giller Effect”)</p>	
<p>Week 11</p> <p>Mon. Nov 21:</p> <p>Review for Term Test</p>	<p>Test Review</p>	<p>Test Review</p>	<p>Test Review</p>
<p>Week 11</p> <p>Wed. Nov 23</p>	<p>FINAL TEST</p>	<p>FINAL TEST</p>	<p>FINAL TEST</p>
<p>Week 12</p> <p>Mon Nov 28:</p> <p>Hybrid Literary Forms</p>	<p>Anne Carson, <i>Autobiography of Red</i> (selections) Leanne Shapton, <i>Important Artifacts and</i></p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>Writing Prompt # 7 to be posted for workshop groups on CU</p>

	<i>Personal Property</i> (selections)		Learn
Week 12 Wed. Nov. 30 Topics in Publishing	TBA	Dr. Collett Tracy, editor-in-chief of In/Words press	n/a
Week 13 Mon Dec 5	In-class reading	In-class reading	In-class reading
Week 13 Wed Dec 7	In-class reading	In-class reading	Second Two Revised Prompts + Drafts + Reflection Statements due at the beginning of class
Week 13 Fri Dec 9 Final thoughts and wrap-up			

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