

**Carleton University**

**Fall 2018-19**

**Department of English**

**ENGL 1500A: Introduction to Creative Writing**

**Tuesday, 2:30-4:30 pm**

**UC 282**

**Instructor: Nadia Bozak**

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**Office Hours: Tuesday, 12-1:00**

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's 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, 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:

- A lecture by the instructor on weekly topics
- A workshop (led by a tutorial assistant or the instructor, wherein students share, respond to, and revise assigned prompts)

### **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 creative writing functions as an industry, an academic discipline, a profession, and a practice, within Canada and North America.

3. Students will learn to read literary 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 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. In-class quizzes on assigned readings, lecture material, and guest speakers:**

**4 x 5 % = 20%**

Quizzes cover all lectures, assigned readings, and guest speakers. The quizzes are cumulative and are meant to evaluate comprehension of lectures and readings. They 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: 10%**

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 review is due TWO WEEKS after the event.

### **3. Four Writing Prompts (revised and handed in with a “reflection” statement):**

**4 x 10 = 40 % total**

Students will write eight prompts over the semester. From these eight prompts, students will choose their best four to revise and hand in to the instructor for grading (two from Weeks 3-6; two from Weeks 7-11). The editorial comments the prompts receive from your workshop group are the starting point for your revisions. Once you have thought about the feedback, revise your piece TWICE with the aim to clarify, solidify, and polish your writing. You will then write a statement reflecting on the editorial and revision experience (300-500 words in length). This reflection statement will be written in formal, academic English, in full sentences. Please write a reflection statement for each revised prompt. Each statement will be worth approximately 4% of the 10% allocated for each prompt.

You could comment on some of the following in your reflection statement:

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 (unrevised) prompts, a draft of each original prompt showing evidence of your revisions (you can use highlighting, track changes, or hand-written annotation to show your revisions), and a final polished draft of each prompt. [Thus: 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.

#### 4. **Editorial feedback: 20%**

Students will read each others' prompts (posted on CU Learn) BEFORE their designated workshops and offer 2-3 sentences of editorial feedback. They will then bring these comments to workshops to discuss in person during "peer editing" sessions. TAs will monitor students' written and verbal 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. This is the workshop portion of the course, dependent on reciprocally offering and receiving feedback on your creative writing with the aim of improving both your writing and your editorial skills.

#### 5. **Participation: 10%**

Your TA will monitor your spoken contributions made during workshops (during peer editing sessions and group discussions). The quality of comments made during workshops is more valuable than the quantity of them. Please come prepared to make a contribution on a fairly regular basis. Asking a question about a lecture, a reading, or a prompt workshoped in class is a perfectly valid way to contribute.

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

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

### 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 been presented to your workshop group. If a student hands in a prompt that has not been workshopped by peers during the workshop, the grade allocated will be zero.
- Prompts must be circulated to the workshop group in advance (posted on CU Learn by the deadline). Unless there is a medical reason (or the equivalent) for not making your prompt available to your group on time, late prompts will not be accommodated.

### PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentionally 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 that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts 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.

### **Requests 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**

Please contact your instructor 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, visit the Equity Services website: [carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf](https://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf)

#### **Religious obligation**

Please contact your instructor 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, visit the Equity Services website: [carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf](https://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf)

### **Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC 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 your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. [carleton.ca/pmc](https://carleton.ca/pmc)

### **Survivors of Sexual Violence**

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and its survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: [carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support](https://carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support)

### **Accommodation for Student Activities**

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor 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. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

### Weekly Schedule

Date and Topic	Readings	Work Due
<b>Week 1:</b> Tues. Sept. 11  Course outline; CU Learn and ARES; Workshop mechanics/ Reading as a Writer	Raymond Carver, “Popular Mechanics”  Francine Prose, “Close Reading”  Anton Chekhov: “Lady with the Dog”	
<b>Week 2:</b> Tues. Sept. 18  Can creative writing be taught? Can it be an academic discipline? Should it be?	Raymond Carver, “Fires”  Louis Menand, “Show Don’t Tell: Should Creative Writing Be Taught?”	“Getting to Know You” prompt due for Workshop
<b>Week 3:</b> Tues. Sept. 25  Elements of Fiction #1 Show vs. Tell/ Writing with the Senses  Elements of Fiction #2 Character / Plot vs Story	Chris Lombardi, “Description: To Picture in Words” Binyavanga Wainaina “Ships in High Transit”  Brandi Reissenweber, “Character: Casting Shadows” Junot Diaz, “Otravida, Otravez”	Writing Prompt #1 due for Workshop
<b>Week 4:</b> Tues. Oct. 2  Elements of Fiction #3 Voice and Point of View  Elements of Fiction #4 Setting	Valerie Vogrin, “Point of View: The Complete Menu” Chimimanda Adichie “The Thing Around Your Neck”  Jack Hodgins, “A Plausible Abode;” Henrietta Rose-Innes, “Promenade”	Quiz #1 (in lecture)  Writing Prompt #2 due for Workshop



<b>Week 5:</b> Tues. Oct. 9  Write what you know? Topics in appropriation of voice  Revising and editing	Lenore Keeshing Tobias "Stop Stealing Native Stories" Mary Gaitskill, <i>The Mare</i> (selections)  Stephen King, <i>On Writing</i> , 208-231	Writing Prompt #3 due for Workshop
<b>Week 6:</b> Tues. Oct. 16  Topics in Creative Nonfiction #1:  The Role of the Author / Researching Your Own Life  <b>Reading Week Oct. 22-26</b>	Philip Lopate, "Writing Personal Essays: On the Necessity of...."  Lynn Coady, "Flight of the Wendybird"  <b>Reading Week Oct. 22-26</b>	Quiz #2 (in lecture)  Writing Prompt # 4 due for Workshop  <b>Reading Week Oct. 22-26</b>
<b>Week 7:</b> Tues. Oct. 30  Topics in Creative Nonfiction #2:  Mixing Genres	Durga Chew-Bose, <i>Too Much and Not in the Mood</i> (selections)  Michael Ondaatje, <i>Running in the Family</i> (selections)	First Two Revised Prompts + Drafts + Reflection Statements due
<b>Week 8:</b> Tues. Nov. 6  Poetry #1: "Word Images"  Poetry #2: Making Comparisons, Simile, Metaphor, Comparison	Kevin Clark, "Words That Paint, Colors that Speak" Lorna Crozier, "Fear of Snakes"  Patrick Lane, "The Man"; David Mason and John Frederick Nims, "What's It Like?"	Writing Prompt # 5 due for Workshop
<b>Week 9:</b> Tues. Nov. 13  Poetry #3: Poetry, Society, Activism/ Poetry of Witness	Carolyn Forché, "The Colonel" Yusef Komunyakaa, "Boat People"	Quiz #3 (in lecture)  Writing Prompt # 6 due for Workshop

<b>Week 10:</b> Tues. Nov. 20  The Screenplay as a Genre	Syd Field “What is a Screenplay?”;  Damien Chazelle, <i>Whiplash</i> (short film, selections of the feature to be screened in class); <i>Whiplash</i> (screenplay, posted on CU Learn)	Writing Prompt # 7 due for Workshop
<b>Week 11:</b> Tues. Nov. 27  The Screenplay as Structure/ Screen vs. Stage	David Trottier, “How to Write a Screenplay” 3-47 Ben Cleary, <i>The Stutterer</i> (link to be posted on CU Learn)	Quiz #4 (in lecture)  Writing Prompt #8 due for Workshop  Prepare for in-class reading
<b>Week 12:</b> Tues. Dec. 4  In-class Reading  Writing as a Business: The Publishing Industry, Making a Living as a Writer, Awards	TBA	Second Two Revised Prompts + Drafts + Reflection Statements due
<b>Happy Winter Break!</b>	<b>Happy Winter Break!</b>	<b>Happy Winter Break!</b>