

**Carleton University**  
**Fall 2025 Preliminary Course Outline**  
**Department of English**

**English 4915 Advanced Writing Workshop:**  
**Poetry and Fiction — Detail and Design.**

**Prerequisites:** Students who have completed a 3000-level Creative Writing workshop and received a grade of B+ or higher may register in this workshop following the same procedures and deadlines that apply to other courses in the Department of English.

Other students need to seek permission of the Creative Writing Committee. This permission will require the submission of a writing sample. Instructions on this process can be found at <https://carleton.ca/english/courses/creative-writing-workshops/>.

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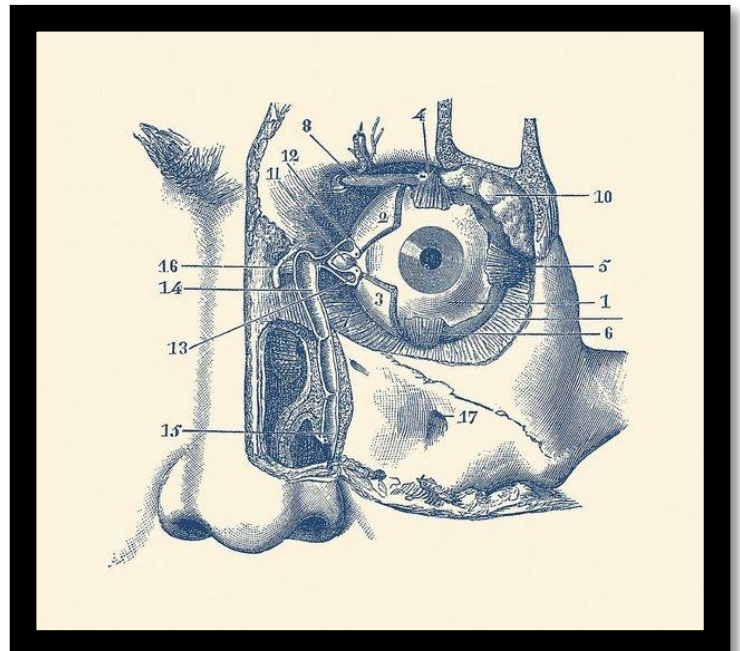
**\*\*\* This is a preliminary syllabus only—texts and assignments are subject to change.**  
**A complete version will be available closer to the start of the term. \*\*\***

### **Course Description and Learning Outcomes**

This workshop helps writers develop their writing skills along with their ability to plan and structure creative work. Writers can explore a number of writing forms in this workshop: poetry, short stories, or a segment of a novel or a play.

One aspect of this workshop explores descriptive detail and visualization. The novelist Toni Morrison remarked, “I’m just trying to look without blinking.” Close observation, in the hands of a skilled writer, enables readers to picture and inhabit a fully realized fictional reality. The ancient Greeks called this art *Mimesis*.

The other major aspect of the workshop involves design. How a writer structures, shapes, sequences, and selects their material is an essential aspect of successful writing. Edgar Allen Poe in his writing worked to produce what he called “effect.” This effect could be one of horror, suspense, a moment of enlightenment or discovery. He carefully constructed sequences of incident in order to produce this emotional “pay-off.” Design was key.



As a workshop, this course offers the opportunity to strengthen your skills both as a creative writer and as an editor. Every few weeks, you will be handing in drafts of your own original compositions for the rest of the class to read, discuss, and offer constructive, supportive criticism.

While we spend much time workshoppping our fellow writers' work, we also read and discuss the work of critics and writers. At the end of the term, you will submit revised work in a portfolio for grading.

## **In-Person Section. Not Suitable for Online Students**

### **Workshop Participation**

Since this is a workshop, every student needs to attend, read and comment on fellow student's work, read assigned texts, and come prepared to engage in lively discussions. Part of being a good writer is to become a great reader of other people's work. The more you are willing to put into the workshop, the more you will get out of it!

### **Workshop Structure and Expectations**

As this is an advanced workshop, students will be expected to write independently on topics that interest them without the need for prompts.

Your writing is due at the beginning of class the week before we discuss it. We distribute the writing electronically and then read and think about it. Advance distribution allows the time necessary to provide thoughtful commentary.

Workshop protocols:

- Everyone reads and writes comments on your classmate's work before class starts.
- The author reads their work aloud in class. The author can introduce their work before they read. (If the author feels uncomfortable reading, an alternate can be found to read the work)
- The class discusses the work at length.
- While your work is being "workshopped," you need to let debate take its own course and don't intervene. You can offer clarification after the discussion.
- Record significant comments in order to assist in the revision process.

### **Evaluation**

Editorial Contribution <i>(editorial attention to other students' work, quality of contribution to the workshop process)</i>	15%
Active Participation <i>(discussion in class, prompt submission of writing, reading preparation, attendance)</i>	10%
Critical Review of a Contemporary Book	20%
Final Portfolio (16-20 pages of your creative work)	55%