

INTRODUCTION TO FICTION

CRWR 210, Section 2
Fall Semester 2016

Writing is easy. All you have to do is cross out the wrong words. – Mark Twain

Instructor: Brian Groh

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Class Room: LA 303

Class Time: T/R, 9:30-10:50 a.m.

Mailbox: LA 133

Office: COR 258

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 8-9:30 a.m., or by appointment

Course Texts

- The Oxford Book of American Short Stories, Second Edition, edited by Joyce Carol Oates, ISBN: 978-0-19-974439-8
- What If? Writing Exercises for Fiction Writers, ISBN 978-0-06-272006-1

Additionally assigned readings will be posted online or via email. You are responsible for bringing a *printed* version of each reading to class for discussion.

Course Description

All of life is a story, and the reading and writing of stories is one of the primary ways we share our understanding of the world.

In Creative Writing 210, Intro to Fiction, we will approach the study of story from the perspective of a writer. Everyone has told stories in various forms. In this class we will explore how to shape those stories into fiction.

Through the reading and discussion of short stories, you will deepen your understanding of the qualities of narrative art. Also, through the practice of writing and of receiving criticism of your writing, you will—in time—learn to craft compelling stories yourselves.

Course Requirements and Objectives

Expect to read one or two short stories and to complete a writing exercise for each class. You will write a short response to each story (roughly 200 words), including three comments or questions that you think might improve our discussion about it. Writing exercises (not your story responses) must be in Times New Roman 12-pt font, double-spaced, with page numbers and, of course, your name.

In this course students will:

- Acquire foundational skills in reading, discussing and writing short fiction
- Demonstrate an understanding of the terminology and concepts that apply to fiction
- Practice the art of writing and revising short fiction
- Learn to critique the quality of their own work and that of fellow students.

Grading

I encourage you to talk with me at any time to better understand my comments or to discuss your overall progress and success in this class.

Participation 35%

Participation includes coming to class prepared and on time, taking part in class discussions, asking questions, contributing your knowledge and insights in whatever form is appropriate, and striving to make all your contributions excellent. It also includes doing the required reading and writing for each class.

Final Portfolio 65%

Your final portfolio should include 1) the printed stories we have read, including your handwritten notes upon them, 2) your typed or handwritten 200 word response (including questions and comments) to each story, 3) your typed writing exercises.

Your grade will *not* be based on your inherent skill as a writer, but rather on the improvement of your work and commitment to your material. You will receive a high grade if you come to class, turn your assignments in on time, add valuable insights to group discussions, and actively work at improving your writing. Late work will not be accepted—you will receive a 0 for each assignment that is not turned in on time.

Attendance

More than two absences from this Tuesday/Thursday class will greatly compromise your grade. Five or more absences from this class will result in a failing grade. Here's the breakdown:

- ★ 3rd absence: final grade drops one letter grade
- ★ 4th absence: final grade drops one letter grade
- ★ 5th absence: final grade is an F

Here's the reasoning behind the attendance policy: Without attending class, you cannot perform your role as a student involved in learning, planning, inventing, drafting; discussing reading and writing; collaborating with your instructor and classmates. Personal situations and required university events may arise which, on rare occasions, make it impossible for you to be in class. Remember, however, that's why two absences are allowed; please reserve those for emergencies.

I reserve the right to adjust the policy in cases of significant, documented illness or emergency. Please note that instances of poor time management on your part do not constitute extenuating circumstances. If you must miss class, you are responsible for obtaining any handouts or assignments for the class from a classmate. Make sure you talk with me in advance if you are worried about meeting a deadline or missing a class.

If you must miss class, *you are responsible* for obtaining any handouts or assignments for the class. Make sure you talk with me in *advance* if you are worried about meeting a deadline or missing a class.

Note: Please come to class on time. Students who arrive after attendance is taken cause unnecessary interruption, miss valuable information, and will be considered absent for the day.

Late Work

Your writing exercises need to be typed, printed, and in class with you to be considered "on time".

- ★ Late or handwritten writing exercises will not receive credit.
- ★ You are always welcome to complete assignments early if you will be missing class.

Academic Conduct

You must abide by the rules for academic conduct described in the Student Conduct Code. If you have any questions about when and how to avoid academic dishonesty, particularly plagiarism, please review the Conduct Code and talk with your instructor. The Council of Writing Program Administrators describes plagiarism as follows: "plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas or other original (not common-knowledge) material without

acknowledging its source.” Academic honesty is highly valued in the University community and acts of plagiarism will not be tolerated.

The use of laptops, phones, or other mobile communication devices is disruptive, and is therefore prohibited during class. If you are texting, surfing the internet, etc., on your phone, laptop, or any other electronic device, you will be dismissed and considered absent for the day.

Students with Disabilities

Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course.

Please speak with me privately after class or in my office. Please be prepared to provide a letter from your DSS Coordinator.

*This syllabus is subject to change