Syllabus: Introduction to Fiction (ENCR-210)
Wintersession; M-F 1-4 pm
Professor: Lauren Ward
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“A writing workshop is one of the last places you can go where your life still matters.”
– Richard Hugo

*Syllabus is subject to change.

Course Texts
There will be no materials you need to purchase from the bookstore; alternatively, I'll provide the class with photocopied handouts of each story or novel excerpt we’ll be reading. I may also hand out certain sections discussing writing techniques from a fiction anthology.

Class Requirements
Expect daily writing exercises and at least one short story or novel excerpt to be read for each class. You will write a short response to each story (~200 words) to show you’ve done the reading. Writing exercises will range from 1-2 pages in length, double spaced, and are intended to help you hone your writing skills. For this reason, each exercise will focus on a different aspect of fiction writing (dialogue, establishing setting, vivid descriptions of place, etc.) After learning the basics, each student will turn in either one or two original stories of his/her own (this will be determined by the progress of the class). These stories will be e-mailed to the rest of the class and myself four days before the student’s assigned workshop date. Each student must provide a critical response to every story, and these responses should be at least 300 words. You should bring two copies of these critical responses to class—one for the student being workshopped and one for myself. The stories will then be workshopped in class. After critique, each student must revise his/her original stories and include them in a final portfolio, which will be turned in the last day of class. If time allows, I will have an individual conference with each student before our final class to discuss your previous work and possible revisions.

*If I read a daily written exercise that is remarkable, or admirably demonstrates the techniques we’re discussing that day, I will contact you and ask if I can share your work with the rest of the class. As a class, we will discuss what’s working in your writing (and why) and give suggestions for possible improvement.

Learning Outcomes
CRWR 210: Introduction to Creative Writing: Fiction
- 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.
**Attendance**
Since this course is essentially cramming a semester’s worth of material into three weeks, attendance is crucial. Two absences will not affect your grade over the duration of the course; however, a third absence will drop your final grade by **one letter grade**. A fourth absence will result in a failure of the course. Personal situations and required university events may, on occasion, make it impossible for you to be in class. Remember, however, that two absences are permitted for instances such as these—please reserve your allowed absences for such situations.

**Office Hours**
Office hours will be held on Tuesday from 4-6 pm and on Thursday from 4-5:30 in LA 129. If you aren’t available for these hours, contact me via e-mail and we can set up an appointment.

**Grading**
The grading breakdown for this course is as follows:

a. **30%**: Class participation and attendance
b. **20%**: Typed workshop responses
c. **20%**: Writing exercises + story responses
d. **30%**: Final portfolio (one or two revised stories that show significant improvement and two revised 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 assignments in on time, add valuable insights to group discussions, and actively work at improving your fiction writing. Late work will not be accepted—you will receive a 0 for each assignment that is not turned in on time.

**Academic Conduct**
Please refer to the Student Conduct Code (http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/documents/Student%20Conduct%20Code%20PDF-%20FINAL%208-27-13.pdf). If you have any questions about academic dishonesty, refer to the conduct code or come see me. Plagiarizing fiction is not only unacceptable but also extremely detectable—don’t do it!

**Students with Disabilities**
Students with documented disabilities will receive appropriate accommodation in this course. Please talk to me after class or come in during my office hours to discuss these arrangements if necessary. Be prepared to provide a letter from your DSS coordinator.

**Community**
Successful workshops are dependent on courteous behavior and constructive comments towards your classmates’ work. Workshop is a writing community of sorts that only functions through a sense of shared respect. If you dislike how workshop is being run, or feel that the atmosphere is
more negative than positive, let me know and the issue will be resolved. No one should feel uncomfortable while sharing his/her work, especially with something as personal as a story.