

St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo
Department of English
ENGL 201: The Short Story
T/TH, 10:00-11:20, SJ2 2003, Winter 2019

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Course Overview and Objectives:

This course provides an introduction to short fiction by tracing its rising popularity during the nineteenth century, its flourishing during the modernist period, and its resurgence in the present day. We will focus on the artistic conventions and innovative changes that have taken place within the broadly constructed traditions of literary realism, but we will also pause to explore some of the social and cultural questions that each story asks us to consider. In order to do this, we will be highly attentive to the subtleties of language and the intricate design of each story. By the end of the term, you will be well acquainted with a wide range of authors, critical conversations about literature, and various strategies for writing about the genre. In the process of earning university credit, you will, of course, further develop your critical thinking skills by reading, conversing, and writing about short fiction. However, it is also my hope that you will find pleasure when reading each of these unique depictions of reality, and occasionally stop to ponder the mysterious nuances and particularities that are embedded in these accounts of our mutual human existence.

Required Texts:

Dana Gioia and R.S. Gwynn, eds., *The Art of the Short Story*, Pearson: New York, 2006.
Electronic Materials on Course Reserve (access available via UW library website)

Marking Scheme and Due Dates:

Critical Exercise #1 (2 pp.)	15%	Due: Week 3 (Thursday, 1/24)
Critical Exercise #2 (2 pp.)	15%	Due: Week 6 (Thursday, 2/14)
Critical Exercise #3 (2 pp.)	15%	Due: Week 9 (Tuesday, 3/12)
Short Essay (4 pp.)	25%	Due: Tuesday April 9th (by 4:00 PM)
Exam	20%	In class: Week 12 (Thursday, 4/5)
Participation	10%	

General Instructions for Assignments:

As the course progresses, instructions and expectations will be distributed for the critical exercises and the short essay. Generally speaking, the **critical exercise** assignments will provide opportunities for you to examine the workings of a specific nuance, feature, or aspect of design within a particular short story. I will provide specific ideas and topics for each exercise. Working from a general set of guidelines, the **short essay** will allow you to develop a thesis driven essay on a specific short story from the course. The **exam** will be closed book and may consist of short passages of identification and analysis, and/or an essay question. As a general means of guidance, I am providing the following description of my marking in regard to the types of written work that I tend to receive:

“90-100” indicates that an assignment is worthy of truly exceptional recognition. The work is original and presented with qualities of voice and argumentation that suggest the emergence of a future literary scholar. After encountering such work, I tend to remember the assignment for months (perhaps years) to come. Work of this caliber is a rare species.

“80-89” indicates that an assignment reflects excellence in all areas. The work is not only thought provoking and structurally polished, but it is also completed with a high level of style and critical independence. The work presents obvious signs of fresh and independent thinking, a sense of skilled organization, and excellent control over mechanics and style.

“70-79” indicates that an assignment is average or above average. The work explores difficult questions in ways that are creative, critical, and thought provoking. The work is critically and organizationally sound, contributing to the interpretive concerns present in the course.

“65-69” indicates that an assignment meets the minimum requirements. The work is functional and all aspects of the assignment have been addressed, but the assignment may be hindered by a lack of critical argument, sophistication, or organizational clarity.

“55-64” indicates that an assignment is presented in a way that is haphazard, incomplete, or reckless. The work tends to be completed in haste and suggests a lack of commitment. Major portions of the assignment are completed poorly and are in need of revision.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week One

T- 1/8 Introductions: syllabus, reading schedule, and assignments
A prose poem to consider: Robert Hass, “A Story About the Body”

Nineteenth Century Traditions: Romanticism, Realism, and Naturalism

TH- 1/10 Gioia and Gwynn, “Introduction” (3-6); Edgar Allan Poe, “The Tell-Tale Heart” (721-725) and “The Tale and Its Effect” (725)

Week Two

T- 1/15 Nathaniel Hawthorne, “The Birthmark” (357-369)

TH- 1/17 Kate Chopin, “The Storm” (153-156), “The Story of an Hour” (157-158) and “My Writing Method” (159)

Week Three

T- 1/22 Ambrose Bierce, “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” (Course Reserve), film *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* (Robert Enrico, 1962)

Variations of Twentieth Century Modernism: Objects, Images, the Body, and the Mind

TH- 1/24 James Joyce, “Araby” (430-434) and “Epiphanies” (464); in class: some notes on modernist writing techniques
Due: Critical Exercise #1

Week Four

T- 1/29 Anton Chekhov, “The Lady with the Pet Dog” (135-147) and “Natural Description and “The Center of Gravity”” (151)

TH- 1/31 Ernest Hemingway, “A Clean Well-Lighted Place” (372-375), “Hills Like White Elephants” (Course Reserve) and “One True Sentence” (375)

Week Five

T- 2/5 D.H. Lawrence, “Odour of Chrysanthemums” (503-517) and “The Novel is the Bright Book of Life” (528-529)

TH- 2/7 Doris Lessing, “A Woman on a Roof” (538-545); Nadine Gordimer, “A Company of Laughing Faces” (333-343) and “How the Short Story Differs from the Novel” (345-346)

Week Six

T- 2/12 Shirley Jackson, “The Lottery” (390-396) and “The Public Reception of ‘The Lottery’” (396-398)

Questioning the Nature of Reality: Magical Realism, Liminal Spaces, and Dreamscapes

TH- 2/14 Aimee Bender, “The Doctor and the Rabbi” (Course Reserve); in class: some notes on magical realism
Due: Critical Exercise #2

Reading Break (2/18 - 2/22)

Week Seven

- T- 2/26 Gabriel García Márquez, "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" (289-293)
- TH- 2/28 Leslie Marmon Silko, "The Man to Send Rain Clouds" (739-742) and "The Basis for 'The Man to Send the Rain Clouds'" (742-743)

Week Eight

- T- 3/5 Sherman Alexie, "This is What it Means to Say Phoenix, Arizona" (Course Reserve)
- TH- 3/7 Joyce Carol Oates, "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" (664-675); Bob Dylan, "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue" (1965) and "Like a Rolling Stone" (1965, Handout)

Week Nine

Between the Said and the Unsaid: Relationships in Modern and Contemporary Short Fiction

- T- 3/12 James Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues" (27-49) and "Race and the African-American Writer" (49-52); Billie Holiday, "Strange Fruit" (1939, Handout)
Due: Critical Exercise #3
- TH- 3/14 Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, "The Thing around Your Neck" (Course Reserve); in class, Adichie, "The Danger of a Single Story"

Week Ten

- T- 3/19 Raymond Carver, "A Small, Good Thing" (88-104); "The Bath" (Course Reserve); "Commonplace but Precise Language" (104-105)
- TH- 3/21 Jhumpa Lahiri, "A Temporary Matter" (Course Reserve)

Week Eleven

- T- 3/26 Alice Munro, "How I Met My Husband" (649-661) and "How I Write Short Stories" (661-662)
- TH- 3/28 John Updike, "Separating" (800-807) and "Why Write?" (808)

Week Twelve

T- 2/2 Bobbie Ann Mason, “Shiloh” (578-588) and “Minimalist Fiction” (588-589)

TH- 4/4 **Exam (in class)**
Due: Short Essay (Tuesday, April 9, by 4PM in my SJ1 drop box)

ADDITIONAL DETAILS AND PROCEDURES

LATE ASSIGNMENTS AND PARTICIPATION

- Late Assignments:
All assignments are to be handed in (hardcopy) at the start of class on the due date. **Late assignments will be penalized 2% per day late, including weekends.** Late assignments must be submitted to me electronically (so I know when they were completed) and then submitted in hard copy to my drop box (2nd floor of SJ1).
- Participation:
It should go without saying that I expect that you will attend class on a regular basis. I also expect that you will have read the material for each day in thoughtful and critical ways. In addition, I also expect that you will have something to say about the readings each day – meaning that you should attempt to discussion on a regular basis. In terms of participation marking, you should expect the following: If you do not attend class on a regular basis, your participation mark will be assessed at 0-50; if you attend class but do not contribute to course discussion on a regular basis, expect a mark between 60-70; if you attend class regularly and participate in meaningful ways, you should expect a participation mark ranging from 75-100.

EMAIL COMMUNICATION AND OFFICE HOURS

Students using email to contact me should include their first and last names, as well as the course in which they are enrolled in the email subject line. Feel free to contact me about the course through email, but please keep the following in mind:

- I am unable to provide in-depth email responses about assignments, readings, and proofreading. If you wish to discuss these matters, please visit me during my office hours.
- I am unable to provide in-depth email responses about materials and lectures that you may have missed due to an absence. Again, if you want to talk about these matters, please stop by during my office hours.
- I am unable to answer last-minute emails about assignments, formatting, or editing. For questions about MLA formatting, you may want to consult Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab. <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

I am committed to establishing a face-to-face classroom environment that is conversational and relational. For this reason, please be respectful to others and their ideas, and please, do not text or be distracted with your phone during class.

UW POLICY REGARDING ILLNESS AND MISSED TESTS

The University of Waterloo Examination Regulations (www.registrar.uwaterloo.ca/exams/ExamRegs.pdf) states that:

- A medical certificate presented in support of an official petition for relief from normal academic requirements must provide all of the information requested on the “University of Waterloo Verification of Illness” form or it will not be accepted. This form can be obtained from Health Services or at www.healthservices.uwaterloo.ca/Health_Services/verification.html.
- If a student has a test/examination deferred due to acceptable medical evidence, he/she normally will write the test/examination at a mutually convenient time, to be determined by the course instructor.
- The University acknowledges that, due to the pluralistic nature of the University community, some students may on religious grounds require alternative times to write tests and examinations.
- Elective arrangements (such as travel plans) are not considered acceptable grounds for granting an alternative examination time.

THE WRITING CENTRE

The Writing Centre works across all faculties to help students clarify their ideas, develop their voices, and communicate in the style appropriate to their disciplines. Writing Centre staff offer one-on-one support in planning assignments, using and documenting research, organizing papers and reports, designing presentations and e-portfolios, and revising for clarity and coherence.

You can make multiple appointments throughout the term, or drop in at the Library for quick questions or feedback. To book a 50-minute appointment and to see drop-in hours, visit www.uwaterloo.ca/writing-centre. Group appointments for team-based projects, presentations, and papers are also available. Communication specialists guide you to see your work as readers would. They can teach you revising skills and strategies, but will not change or correct your work for you. Please bring hard copies of your assignment instructions and any notes or drafts to your appointment.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Academic Integrity: To maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo and its Affiliated and Federated Institutions of Waterloo (AFIW) are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity](#) webpage [for more information](#).

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek

guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the [St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline](#). For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [University of Waterloo Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. [Read the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances](#).

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to the [St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Appeals](#).

Note for Students with Disabilities: The [AccessAbility Services](#) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.