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Office Hrs: Tue/Thu: 2-3pm/5-6pm
& by appointment

English 201/01

Introduction to Fiction Writing

Fall 2014

Tue/Thu: 12.30-1.45pm

Palmer 211

Required Text: Writing Fiction, 9th Edition, Janet Burroway

Overview: In this course we study introductory narrative form and theory while applying what we learn to our own writing of short fiction. By the end of the course we should have a good introductory level knowledge of the key elements of fiction writing and we should be able to apply what we have learnt to your own writing. The following elements make up the foundation of the course:

The Writing Process
Showing and Telling
Characterization
Dialogue
Setting & Time
Form, Plot & Structure
Point of View
Revision

Literary Fiction: In this class we read, write, discuss and revise literary fiction. Literary fiction aims to disclose aspects of experience in a moving and artful way. Literary fiction strives for seamless mimesis while simultaneously making creative and aesthetically appropriate use of various aspects of storytelling, all through the tool of language. For the purposes of this class you cannot write so-called genre fiction, that is, fantasy, science fiction, mystery, children's or young adult fiction, and so on.

Work Load: While we read and discuss published work by a number of writers, much of our time will be invested in critiquing your own writing exercises. In addition to writing exercises, you will write one short story (with a 2000 word minimum word count, a 4000 word maximum word count) that will be critiqued three times during the second half of the semester.

Assignments: You will turn in your own original work. All work must be typed in twelve point font and double spaced. All work must be handed in on time. Late assignments will be disqualified from submission and will not be graded unless you have an advance agreement with me. *As this is a workshop that depends on your dependable participation while also testing and developing your ability to write and produce text on deadline, it is unlikely that I will allow assignments to be handed in beyond deadline.*

Final Portfolio: At the end of the semester you hand in a final portfolio. The Portfolio will comprise your writing exercises together with the first version (at times referred to as a draft), the second or third version and the final version of your short story. I will not return your portfolio to you unless you specify to me, in writing, that you will collect it during the first two weeks of the

following semester. Students who wish to discuss their portfolios the following semester are encouraged to do so, by making an appointment to see me.

Quizzes, Tests & Exams: There are no scheduled quizzes, tests or exams for this class. However, if class discussion lags or if, in my opinion, work is not up to scratch, I shall include any of these methods of assessment. Scores for any such unscheduled assessment will be included in your participation grade. Should you miss any such tests for whatever reason, it is your responsibility to reschedule with me.

Attendance: As this class is based on participation, you are allowed three excused absences but no unexcused absences. Absences are not excused unless you have offered me a reasonable motivation such as illness, disease or disaster *before class*. A fourth absence means your grade will automatically go down by one third of a letter, for example, from a B+ to a B. Being late for workshop will be severely frowned upon. Three late arrivals for class will constitute an absence. If you have missed six workshops, you automatically fail the course.

Grade:

Class Participation:	25	(10% of which is peer evaluation)
Writing Exercises:	25	
Short Story Earlier Versions:	25	
Final Portfolio:	25	
TOTAL:	100	

Make sure to write your own name with the comments you hand back to your fellow workshopers: this will stand your grade in good stead during peer evaluation.

The Hours of Writing: This course requires a substantial amount of reading and writing. I suggest you will have to do at the very least an hour of writing per day in addition to extensive reading in order to complete the course with a reasonable grade.

Classroom Language and Culture: This is a creative writing space. As such, imagination and creativity must be celebrated. This means we will at times be working with provocative material, subject matter and language that may be uncomfortable to some of us. As a teacher I will aim to maintain a safe and respectful space while also at times making use of provocative remarks and language aimed at stimulating debate, inquiry and creativity. You are free to come and discuss the classroom culture with me if you are experiencing problems in this regard.

Plagiarism: Work handed in for this class is governed by the Honor Code. All work you hand in during the semester must be entirely your own and *produced exclusively for this class*. Plagiarism is the act of presenting as one's own the work done by anyone else. This act defeats the purpose of education and carries severe penalties. The use of anyone else's ideas or expressions requires giving that person explicit credit. Penalties for plagiarism may include: failing grades for those assignments which were plagiarized; failing grades for the course; suspension from school.

Disabilities: Rhodes College makes every effort to provide appropriate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students may request accommodations by making an appointment to speak to Melissa Butler, the Coordinator of Disability Services.
Phone: 843 3944. E-Mail: mbutler@rhodes.edu

Schedule of Classes:

- Week 1: 08/28: Class Introductions
The Writing Process
- Week 2: 09/02: The Writing Process (Chapter 1)
Showing and Telling (Chapter 2)
Group A: send out Exercise Nr 4, p 66 on Tue by noon. (Send out to everyone in class)
*Stuart Dybek: *We Didn't*.
- 09/04: We workshop Exercise Nr 4, p66
I select a few of these to discuss in workshop (every week)
Your comments go to each of the writers (every week)
*Stacey Richter: *Goal 666*
*Edith Pearlman: *Binocular Vision*
- Week 3: 09/09: Characterization & Dialogue (Chapter 3)
Group B: send out Exercise Nr 2, p 115
*Junot Diaz: *Fiesta*
*ZZ Packer: *Every Tongue Shall Confess*
- 09/11: Workshop Exercise Nr 2, p 115
*Dennis Johnson: *Emergency*
- Week 4: 09/16: Characterization (Chapter 4)
Group A: send out Exercise Nr 4, p 155
*Tobias Wolf: *Bullet In The Brain*
*Richard Bausch: *Tandolfo The Great*
- 09/18: Workshop Exercise Nr 4, p 155
*Sandra Cisneros: *Eleven*
- Week 5: 09/23: Setting/Place and Time (Chapters 5 & 6)
Half of Group B sends out Exercise Nr 3, p 191
Half of Group B sends out Exercise Nr 4, p229
*Karen Rusell: *St Lucy's Home for Girls Raised by Wolves*
*Alice Walker: *The Flowers*
- 09/25: Workshop both Exercises 4 on pp 191 & 229
*Eudora Welty: *A Visit of Charity*
*Sherman Alexie: *The Fun House*
*Hannah Bottomy Voskuil: *Currents*
- Week 6: 09/30: Form, Plot & Structure (Chapter 7)
Group A sends out Exercise Nr 6, p 275
Flannery O'Connor: *Everything That Rises Must Converge*
Geoffrey Forsyth: *Mud*
Joy Williams: *Escapes*
- : 10/02: Workshop Exercise Nr 6, p 275

Week 7: 10/07 Point of View (Chapter 8)
 Group B sends out Exercise Nr 3, p 315
 George Saunders: *Victory Lap*
 Elizabeth Tallent: *No One's A Mystery*
 Robin Hemley: *Reply All*

10/09 Workshop Exercise Nr 3, p 315

Week 8: 10/14 Charlaine Harris visits class
 Revision (Chapter 9)
 Everyone sends out one revised Exercise

: 10/16 Workshop Revisions handed back

Week 9: 10/21 Fall Break
 The Meerkats: First Version of Short Story by Wed 8am

10/23 We Workshop: The Meerkats
 The Nudibranchs: First Version of Short Story Sat Midnight

Week 10: 10/28 We Workshop: The Nudibranchs
 The Ostriches: First Version by Wed 8am

10/30 We Workshop: The Ostriches
 The Baobabs: First Version by Sat Midnight

Week 11: 11/04 We Workshop: The Baobabs
 The Meerkats: Second Version by Wed 8am

11/06 We Workshop: The Meerkats
 The Nudibranchs: Second Version by Sat Midnight

Week 12: 11/11 We Workshop: The Nudibranchs
 The Ostriches: Second Version by Wed 8am

11/13 We Workshop: The Ostriches
 The Baobabs: Second Version by Sat Midnight

Week 13: 11/18 We Workshop: The Baobabs

11/20 We Workshop: The Meerkats: Third Version

Week 14: 11/25 Thanksgiving Break

11/27 Thanksgiving Break

Week 15: 12/02 We Workshop: The Nudibranchs: Third Version

12/04 We Workshop: The Ostriches: Third Version

Week 16: 12/09

We Workshop: The Baobabs: Third Version

12/06

Reading Day

Week 17: 12/13

Final Portfolio Due: Hard Copy, in my door, by 12pm.

End ...