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Office: Palmer 319
Office Hours: MWF 1:00- 2:30 p.m.
and by appointment

Advanced Fiction Writing ENG 401
Tuesday-Thursday 9:30-10:45 Buckman 330

Texts: *In Our Time*, Ernest Hemingway (EH)
The Things They Carried, Tim O'Brien (TO)
A Model World, Michael Chabon (MC)
The Wonder Spot, Melissa Bank (MB)
The Collected Stories of Peter Taylor, Peter Taylor (PT)
The Stories (So Far) of Deborah Eisenberg, Deborah Eisenberg (DE)

Reading Assignments

Aug 27: INTRODUCTION

Sept 1: EH, *In Our Time*, pp. 1-77
3: EH, *In Our Time*, pp. 79-156

Group 1, Story #1

8: TO: *The Things They Carried* pp. 1-85
10: WORKSHOP

Group 2, Story #1

15: TO: *The Things They Carried* pp. 86-161
17: WORKSHOP

Group 3, Story #1

22: TO: *The Things They Carried* pp. 162-246
24: WORKSHOP

Group 1, Story #2

29: MC, *A Model World*: "S Angel," "A Model World," "Blumenthal on the Air,"
"Millionaires"
Oct 1: WORKSHOP

Group 2, Story #2

6: MC, *A Model World*: Part II: "The Lost World" complete
8: WORKSHOP

Group 3, Story #2

13: MB, *The Wonder Spot*: "Boss of the World," "The Toy Bar" : "20th Century Typing"
15: WORKSHOP

20: FALL BREAK

22: MB, *The Wonder Spot* "Dena Blumenthal + Bobby Orr Forever" "Teen Romance,"
"The One After You," "The Wonder Spot"

- Group 1, Story #3**
 27: PT: "Dean of Men," "The Other Times," "At the Drugstore"
 29: WORKSHOP
- Group 2, Story #3**
 Nov. 3: PT: "What You Hear From 'Em?" "A Wife of Nashville," "Venus, Cupid, Folly and Time"
 5: WORKSHOP
- Group 3, Story #3**
 10: PT: "1939," "Guests," "Heads of Houses"
 12: WORKSHOP
- Group 1, Story #4**
 17: DE, "Flotsam," "Rafe's Coat," "A Lesson in Traveling Light"
 19: WORKSHOP
- 24: DE: "Transactions in a Foreign Currency," "A Cautionary Tale," "Under the 82nd Airborne"
 26: **THANKSGIVING BREAK**
- Group 2, Story #4**
 Dec. 1: DE: "The Robbery," "Presents," "The Custodian"
 3: WORKSHOP
- Group 3, Story #4**
 8: WORKSHOP

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This class functions as the final installment of a three-part sequence of fiction-writing workshops. All students in the class should already have taken the Intro workshop, as well as at least one of the Advanced workshops, hereafter to be designated as "Intermediate." As such, students are expected to have achieved a mastery of the basics of fiction writing worthy of "Advanced" status.

In this class we will read, discuss, write, and revise **literary short fiction**, with particular attention paid to the short story cycle, broadly defined. Literary fiction discloses truths about human experience in a moving and artful way. It strives for seamless mimesis while simultaneously making resourceful and aesthetically sound use of all the various aspects story telling, including language, point of view, plot, character, setting, metaphor, symbolism and tone. In short, you will endeavor to write *literature*. For the purposes of the class, you cannot write genre fiction—that is, fantasy, science fiction, mystery, children's fiction, young adult fiction, and so on.

WRITING LOAD: Everyone will write and revise four (4) complete short stories during the course of this semester. Each story submitted for discussion must consist of *at least* 8 double-spaced pages and should be "complete," with a worked out ending—even a bad one. (Coming up with better endings is one of the things workshop is for.) You are encouraged, although not required, to conceive of the individual submissions as part of some larger sequence, whether a linked story cycle, or a set of pieces exploring a consistent set of themes, or even a novella. If you are working on a novel or a novella, you can submit installments, yet these, too, must consist of self-contained units (i.e.,

“chapters” or “parts”). At the end of the semester, you will gather these revised stories into a portfolio, which you will submit to me for final evaluation. While there is no page limit on the total number of pages you write, there is a minimum requirement of 25 typewritten, double-spaced pages.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Each Thursday, we will workshop five (5) stories. You will submit your stories on a rotating system, so that you come up for discussion about every three weeks. By the conclusion of the Tuesday class just prior to your Thursday workshop, you will send me, via e-mail attachment, a Word document of your story. I will then remove your name and compile a packet including your story as well as the remaining four stories from your group and resend this packet to the class as a whole. Each of you will then write *at least* a half-page of single-spaced comments for each story up for discussion. You can either write these comments on the mimeographed copy of the story itself or type them out: the former method is easier, the latter option is more conscientious. These comments—both those you compose and those you verbalize in class during workshop—will constitute a sizable portion of your final grade, so take this process seriously. You are not being asked to pass opinions but to provide specific and considered constructive criticism. In addition, you are required to keep up with the assigned reading and to participate in our class discussions of these stories.

I will also begin most Tuesday classes with a brief “pop quiz” on the assigned reading. A failed grade on one of these quizzes will result in an unexcused absence *on top of any other absences you might already have accrued*. If you miss class on a day on which a pop quiz has been assigned, then, clearly, you cannot make it up, for your absence will cover that “missed” grade. Failure to arrive at Thursday workshop with a carefully annotated story packet will also result in an absence.

SPECIAL NOTE: This is a degree-level English course further designated as an advanced workshop in fiction writing. As such, I expect the stories you submit to exhibit correct grammar, spelling and punctuation, as well as demonstrated mastery of narrative craft. Because each of your stories will be closely read by the entire class, you are also required to submit stories that justify the good faith effort of your readers who, contrary to normal practice, cannot simply set aside a story they deem unworthy of close scrutiny. For these reasons, I reserve the right to withdraw stories that display egregious spelling, mechanical, and/or punctuation errors, or which constitute a waste of our workshop time, which is, after all, limited. Any story submitted after 2:30 p.m. on the relevant Tuesday will not be included in that packet. Your *final portfolio grade* will be docked *a full letter grade* if a story of yours has been excised from the packet. If more than one story is excised for whatever reason, you will fail the course.

ATTENDANCE: You may miss two classes, totally free of charge. An F on a pop quiz will count as an absence, as will failure to bring to class your book or a carefully annotated workshop packet. Absences after those initial two will result in a tier reduction in your fiction portfolio grade (B+ becomes B, B becomes B-). If you miss more than seven (7) classes, you will fail the course.

PROBLEMS? Take care of them in advance. If you know a story won’t be ready in time, work out an exchange with a classmate, or let me know well in advance so that we can make adjustments. I am more than happy to work with you if you give me enough lead time. Do not email me with questions that you could just as reasonably ask me in person the next class period. I will try to respond to emails sent during the week but won’t answer emails sent over the weekend, unless they are particularly urgent.

PLAGIARISM: All work submitted for this course must be not only your own but also composed specifically for this class. If you want to turn in a revised version of a story you wrote for another fiction-writing class here at Rhodes or elsewhere, *you must get permission from me in advance*. This is very important. The stories are, without caveat, subject to the Honor System.

GROUP 1

GROUP 2

GROUP 3
