Professor: Marshall Boswell   Office: Palmer 305
Office Phone/Voice Mail: 843-3581   Office Hours: M-W-F 2:30-4:00
E-Mail: boswell@rhodes.edu   T-Th 11:00-12:30, and by appointment

Advanced Fiction Writing ENG 301
Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:20-12:50 — Palmer 208
Texts: *Writing in General and the Short Story in Particular*, Rust Hills
Anton Chekhov's Short Stories, Anton Chekhov
The Stories of Vladimir Nabokov
Pigeon Feathers,, John Updike
Bluebeard's Egg, Margaret Atwood
Birds of America, Lorrie Moore

Assignments

Aug	23	Introduction to Class		11	Workshop, Group 2, Story 2
	28	Chekhov, pp. 49-90, 97-128		16	**Midterm Break**
	30	Chekhov, pp., 133-201 **Narrative #1 Due**		18	Workshop, Group 3, Story 2
				23	Atwood, pp. 1-88
Sept	4	Chekhov, pp. 211-263		25	Atwood, pp. 89-170
	6	Workshop, Group 1, Story			
	11	Nabokov, pp. 147-54; 248-85; 297-311		30	Atwood, pp. 171-224
			Nov	1	Workshop, Group 1, Story 3
	13	Workshop, Group 2, Story 1			
				6	Moore, pp. 5-77
	18	Nabokov pp. 348-57; 401-405; 413-60		9	Workshop, Group 2, Story 3
	20	Workshop, Group 3, Story 1		13	Moore,, pp. 78-142
				15	Workshop, Group 3, Story 3
	25	Nabokov, pp. 461-79; 494-99; 546-459; 580-86; 589-611; 619-631		20	Moore, pp. 177-291 **Narrative #3 Due**
	27	Updike, pp. 12-73, 83-115		22	**Thanksgiving Break**
				27	Workshop, Group 1, Story 4
Oct	2	Updike, pp. 116-168, 172-210		29	Workshop, Group 2, Story 4
	4	Workshop, Group 1, Story 2			
				4	Workshop, Group 3, Story 4
	9	Updike, pp. 211-279 **Narrative #2 Due**		**12**	**Portfolios Due**

English 301 Policies

WRITING LOAD: Each of you will write and revise four (4) complete short stories during the course of this semester. You may write about whatever you wish. Each story *submitted for discussion* must consist of *at least* 6 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.) **I will not accept any story *shorter* than 6 double-spaced pages**. 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.

Everyone will also write three (3) three-to-five page narratives, either complete "short-short" stories or self-contained episodes from stories that might or might not someday exist. These narratives can be about whatever you wish. The only guidelines are as follows:

- The first narrative must, in some way, model itself on Chekhov. The piece need not be set in Russia or in the 19th century, but it should contain clearly discernible features of Chekhov's style, such as his ironic distance, his complex moral engagement, his glacial authority, and so on. You should also make various nods toward the conventions of 19th century narrative, with its more visible narrator, its greater freedom of movement through the consciousness of the point of view character(s), its air of "objective authority," and so on.
- The second narrative should mimic the style of either Nabokov or Updike. This imitation I see as primarily, though not exclusively, grounded in the precise and lyrical prose each writer employs. You should also seek to convey something discernibly "Nabokovian" or "Updikean" in the narrative's voice, its tone, its approach to its subject matter, and so on
- The third narrative should mimic the style of either Atwood or Moore. Here, again, syntax and diction are paramount, as are voice, tone, subject matter, and theme. You might also try, in this narrative, to experiment with some "post-modern" gesture of self-reflexivity.

These narratives will be graded. I will evaluate them according to how convincingly they imitate their models, how accurately they employ the required conventions, how apt those conventions are to the narrative's subject matter, and how good they are, as a whole, basically. These narratives can be used, in whatever way you deem fit, in subsequent stories, but may not be culled from stories already submitted for workshop. They can also be principally parodic (but cleverly so).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: We will workshop five stories per week. Your stories will be due according to a rotating system, so that you come up for discussion about every three or four weeks. You will submit your stories electronically, into my Faculty box, on the Tuesday before your group's Thursday workshop. I will then compile all five pieces into a single anonymous document, which I will then place back on the server. Each of you is then responsible for printing out that week's packet. Moreover, you will write *at least* a half-page of single-spaced comments for each story up for discussion. You can either write these comments on the packet printout itself or type them out on your own: 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 factor into my evaluation of your final fiction portfolio, so take this process seriously.

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, excused or otherwise, 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 unexcused absence.

ATTENDANCE: You may miss two classes, excused or otherwise, totally free of charge. So skip class wisely, because if you fall ill after you've used up your two misses, too bad. Failed pop quizzes also count as absences. For every absence *after* those initial two, you will be docked a full tier reduction in your fiction portfolio grade (B+ becomes B, B becomes B-). .

GRADING: Fiction Portfolio   70%
                     Narratives   30%

PLAGIARISM*:* All work submitted for this course must be not only new but also your own. 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. See especially the attached sheet. In general, the stories are, without caveat, subject to the requirements of the Honor System.

<div align="center">

STORY GROUPS

GROUP 1

</div>

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

<div align="center">

GROUP 2

</div>

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

<div align="center">

GROUP 3

</div>

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

How To Submit Stories Electronically

Part I. Submitting Stories

1. Finish your story.
2. If you are using Word, you should have no trouble. If you are using Word Perfect or Claris Works or something else, go under "Save As," then find Microsoft Word under "File Type." Save the file as a Word File, the most recent one if possible. I don't think it matters if you save it as Mac or Windows, so just use whatever platform you're already on so as to eliminate any translation problems.
3. Exit your word processing program, making sure you know where on your hard disc you've saved your story file.
4. Open the Academic Volume.
5. Open Faculty Folders folder.
6. Open Folder reading "A-F."
7. Find Boswell In-Box. If the icon has a belt on it—as it should if you're on a Mac—don't despair. You're on track.
8. Drag your story file from its folder on your hard disc and drop it into my In-Box. You might get a message that informs you that you do not have access privileges to that box. This is as it should be: once you drop it into my in-box, you can't retrieve it. I'm the only person who can open that folder.
9. You're done.

Part II. Retrieving Story Packets

1. Open Academic Volume.
2. Open "Faculty Folders" folder.
3. Open "A-F" folder.
4. Go to *other* Boswell folder. This is my "out" box. You can open this one.
5. Drag Packet file from the "Boswell" folder and onto your Desktop (or some appropriate folder, if you like.)
6. Open Word.
7. Open packet file.
8. Print Packet.

Note: It is important that you follow these instructions. It is particularly important that you use the SAVE AS function—that is, that you save your file as a Word 6 document, with the .doc extension. I'll give you one (1) pass on this. Once, and only once, can you "forget" to use "Save As." Afterwards, **if I can't read it, I won't accept it**. So make sure you do this right.