

WRITING 2218F: To Make a Long Story Short (Introduction to Writing Short Fiction)

Fall 2013

Section: 001

Time/Room: Tuesday, 6 – 9 PM in SH-3307

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Course Description and Objectives

The course consists of thirteen 3-hour classes, conducted in the “**workshop**” mode (as opposed to the lecture format), in which students will develop not only fiction writing ability, but also critical reading skills. **The short story** will be the focus of the course.

Based on professional models, instructor guidance and class discussion, students will produce their own short fictions, progressing from short “flash” fictions of 500-750 words, to interim lengths of 1000-1250 words (“sudden” fiction), to the final assignment of 1500-2500 words.

The ability to communicate information, arguments and analyses accurately and reliably, orally and in writing to a range of audiences, is an objective of all the Writing Program courses.

This is not a lecture course. It is a discussion, reading and **workshop** course, and as a result students must be prepared to **participate** in the workshop process: peer evaluation, editing, drafting, discussion topics, etc. In a writing workshop, one learns to write for others besides oneself – to respect one’s readers and work toward their seamless reading. And clearly, as there are only 13 classes (and no final examination), attendance is mandatory. I will take attendance at the beginning of each class. Should you arrive late, it will be your responsibility to ensure that you are not marked absent by seeing me after class. **[See note regarding Writing Program policy for documenting absences and penalties for absences in Section 5 of this Course Outline.]**

Required Texts (available in University Bookstore)

1. *Flash Fiction Forward*, ed. by James Thomas & Robert Shepard [*\$21*] (80 very short stories)
[to be read by **Week 2**]
2. *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*, by Raymond Carver [*\$17*] (short stories)
[to be read by **Week 7**]

Course Requirements

Flash Fiction #1	20%	Week 5/6
Flash Fiction #2	20%	Week 7/8
Sudden Fiction	25%	Week 10/11/12
Final Short Story	35%	Week 13
Total	100%	

Assignments/Assignment Format

Assignments must be typed, double-spaced and stapled. All assignments must have your name, course name, section number, and instructor's name on the first page.

Submitting Assignments

- **NOTE:** All work submitted for grading or shared with other students in a workshop setting must be computer-printed for legibility. All writing must be backed up on CD, disk or memory stick (**including all drafts**), for submission if requested.
- All work submitted for this class must be developed from a draft approved by the instructor. If, for any reason, a draft of any creative work is deemed unacceptable (*originality, topic, language, genre, etc.*), it must be replaced by an acceptable draft, which will subsequently be developed into an acceptable finished work.
- **All assignments must be accompanied by a draft and Revision Notes.**
- Late assignments will be penalized 5% a day (including weekends) unless an extension has been negotiated at least 48 hours in advance of due date.
- Assignments more than 1 week late will receive no credit (unless mutually arranged in advance).

Attendance policies

Attendance is required to improve as a writer. If you miss more than 6 hours of class meetings your final grade will be penalized a full letter grade (an earned grade of 80% would be reported as 70%); if you miss more than 9 hours of class meetings, you will not be given a passing grade for the course.

This policy will only be waived for medical or compassionate reasons.

Note: a class meeting missed in order to write a test, exam, or other form of 'make-up class' in another course **will** count as non-attendance, and **will** attract penalties as defined above if applicable. Instructors at the University of Western Ontario **shall not require** a student to write a make-up test or similar at times which conflict with that student's other scheduled class times. If you are asked or 'required' to do this, you should immediately contact an academic counsellor in your Dean's office. If you elect to miss a class in order to write such a test, that is **your** choice; your absence will not be excused.

See also: '**Medical Accommodation Policy**' below.

Scholastic Offences, including Plagiarism

The University Senate requires the following statements, and Web site references, to appear on course outlines:

"Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/schloff.pdf>.

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy as above).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Prerequisites

The University Senate requires the following statement to appear on course outlines:

“Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.”

The prerequisite for registration in this course is a) a final grade of 65 or more in one of Writing 2101, 2121, 2111, or 2131, or b) a final grade of 70 or more in Writing 1000F/G, or c) Special Permission of the Program.

Medical Accommodation Policy

For UWO Policy on Accommodation For Medical Illness, see:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf>

(downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading)

Students seeking academic accommodation **on medical or other grounds** for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments **worth 10% or more of their final grade** must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation on medical grounds cannot be granted by the instructor or the Program in Writing, Rhetoric, and Professional Communication, and the Program requires students in these circumstances to follow the same procedure when seeking academic accommodation on non-medical (i.e. non-medical compassionate or other) grounds.

Students seeking academic accommodation **on medical grounds** for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments **worth less than 10% of their final grade** must also apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Where in these circumstances the accommodation is being sought on **non-medical grounds**, students should consult in the first instance with their instructor, who may elect to make a decision on the request directly, or refer the student to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive medical documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds, or for other reasons (e.g. to explain an absence from class which may result in a grade penalty under an ‘Attendance’ policy in the course). **All** medical documentation **must** be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student’s home Faculty.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western:
<http://www.uwo.ca/uwo.com/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Special Requests: Special Examinations, Incomplete Standing, Aegrotat Standing

Please refer to the “Information for All Students in a Writing Course” for more detailed information.

Briefly, remember that your instructor does not have the discretion to initiate, consider, or grant (or not) such requests; you must go directly to the Dean’s office of your home faculty.

Class Meeting Schedule

Date	Meeting focus	Readings/Assignments (and other information)
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to course Writing assignment for next class: Select 5 stories from Flash Fiction Forward and explain (a page or 2) the reasons why you singled them out. Be prepared to read and share your responses in class discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pick up textbooks from bookstore Read all stories in Flash Fiction Forward (ed. Thomas & Shepard) for next class
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class discussion of Reading & Writing assignments from last week. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing assignment for WEEK 3: Write a “flash fiction” (750 words maximum) modelled on a story you admired. Print and bring sufficient copies to share (workshop) with the class. DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON WORKSHOP COPIES.
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flash Fiction #1 Workshop (Part 1). We will workshop 50% (random selection) of stories prepared. The other 50% will be workshopped next week (Week 4). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STUDENTS WILL HAVE 2 WEEKS FROM THE DATE OF THEIR STORY’S WORKSHOP TO SUBMIT FINAL DRAFT, ALONG WITH REVISION NOTES. Stories workshopped today due WEEK 5. Grade value: 20%
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flash Fiction #1 Workshop (Part 2): remaining 50%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stories workshopped today due WEEK 6. Grade value: 20% Writing assignment for next class (WEEK 5): As before, write a “flash fiction” modelled on a story you admired. Print and bring sufficient copies to share (workshop) with the class. DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON WORKSHOP COPIES.
Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flash Fiction #2 Workshop (Part 1) – random 50% of stories. [Remaining 50% will be workshopped next week (Week 6)]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flash Fiction #1 (workshopped WEEK 3) due beginning of class. Stories workshopped today due WEEK 7. Grade value: 20%
Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flash Fiction #2 Workshop (Part 2): remaining 50%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stories workshopped today due WEEK 8 Grade value: 20% Reading Assignment for WEEK 7: What We Talk About When We Talk About Love by Raymond Carver (story collection).

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Assignment for WEEK 7: Select 3 stories from the Carver collection and explain (1 page max.) the reasons why you singled them out. Be prepared to read and share your responses in class discussion.
Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class discussion of Reading and Writing assignments from last week • Print and bring assigned SAKAI downloads to class for reading and discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stories workshopped WEEK 5 due • Writing assignment: Write a story (circa 1000-1250 words) stressing use of dialogue, as seen in sample stories • Print and bring sufficient copies to share (workshop) with the class. • DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON WORKSHOP COPIES.
Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudden Fiction Workshop (Part 1 of 3). We will workshop a random 1/3 today. <p><i>(Remaining 1/3s Week 9 & Week 10 respectively)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stories workshopped today due WEEK 10 • Grade value: 25%
Week 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudden Fiction Workshop (Part 2 of 3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stories workshopped today due WEEK 11 • Grade value: 25% • Begin (or continue) planning Final Story Assignment (due WEEK 13)
Week 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudden Fiction Workshop (Part 3 of 3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stories workshopped today due WEEK 12 • Grade value: 25%
Week 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings • Discussion of stories assigned on SAKAI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Story Assignment (grade value 35%): Students to continue working on drafts of final story (6-10 pages in length) – adhering to assigned guidelines -- due Final Class (WEEK 13). • Bring a 1-2 page opening of final story-in-progress to workshop next class (WEEK 12).
Week 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Story Workshop 	
Week 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Story due, with draft and Revision Notes 	