

Department of English & Writing Studies

English 3998E – Creative Writing Workshop
Academic Year 2015/16

Section: #001

Time/Room: Wednesdays 6 – 9pm
WL-258

Instructor: Claudia B. Manley

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Office: 3270 Lawson Hall

Office hours: Wednesdays 3:30 –
4:30pm, Thursdays 1:00 – 2:00pm, and by
appointment

Course Description:

This course will help students craft solid pieces of fiction and establish a life-long writing practice. The goal of this practice-based class is two-fold: to acquaint students with the variety of short fiction, from traditional approaches to contemporary, experimental styles being published today, and to provide them with the tools to produce short fiction of their own. Primarily a workshop-based class, we will break-up workshop sequences with units discussing stories that exemplify various elements of fiction and complete in-class writing exercises to “underpin” the themes of each class. Writers we will read and discuss in this class may include D.H. Lawrence, Raymond Carver, Lydia Davis, James Baldwin, Barbara Gowdy, Lynne Tilman, John Cheever, and Alice Munro.

Required Text:

Readings will be made available on class Owl site

Grade Breakdown:

In-class work	25%
Assignment 1	15%
Assignment 2	20%
Assignment 3	15%
Assignment 4	25%

Courtesy and Decorum: Due to the nature of this class, which at times can explore raw, sensitive and highly personal material, all workshop pieces and discussions thereof are to remain confidential.

Submitting Assignments

Assignments are due in-class on the date specified on the schedule. **Late essays will be penalized a full letter grade per day** unless your instructor has granted you an extension beforehand. You must apply for extensions ahead of the due date and provide a suitable reason; they are not automatic.

If necessary, please submit essays to the Writing Department Drop Box outside Stevenson-Lawson 3270, making sure you include your instructor's name and your section number.

However, do not

- fax assignments
- e-mail assignments

Keep copies of all assignments submitted.

When submitting assignments on Owl, please title your papers thusly: Last Name_Essay # (for example, Manley_2).

Communication

All students are required to have an active UWO e-mail account and to check it regularly between class meetings. It is the primary way that I communicate with you outside of class. There will be no accommodations made for students who miss assignments or important messages because their UWO account is full and not receiving new e-mails. You are also to have a working knowledge of our Owl website. There will be required online discussions assigned throughout the semester.

Students should also carefully consider how they address me via email as well as the content of said email. While we may engender an informal community in class, email is a mode of professional communication and should be treated that way. Therefore, addressing me as "Yo, Teach!" should be recognized as inappropriate.

Please note that I only check my UWO e-mail Monday through Thursdays (10am – 6pm). I will neither be reading nor responding to e-mail on Fridays, Saturdays, or Sundays.

Attendance policies

Attendance at class is required to improve as a writer. Here is the Writing Studies attendance policy in this class:

- You may miss up to three hours (the equivalent of one week of class) of class meetings during the term without explanation. That means that the first three class hours you miss will be recorded as absences but *excused provided you don't miss any more*.
- However, if you miss a total of four to nine class hours (the equivalent of up to three full weeks of class), your final grade will be reduced by 10% (e.g. an earned final grade of 80% will be reported as a final grade of 72).
- If you miss a total of more than nine hours of class meetings (the equivalent of more than three weeks of class meetings) your final grade will be reduced by 15% (e.g. an earned final grade of 80% will be reported as a final grade of 68).

This policy will be waived only for medical or compassionate reasons. If you have good reasons for waiving an absence of one class meeting (e.g. if you've missed three hours, and need or want to miss another class meeting) discuss these reasons with your instructor within one week of that absence. If your absence is extended and prolonged (over one week of continuous non-attendance), then you should discuss it with your academic advisor in your home faculty, who may require documentation. That advisor may then contact all of your instructors. See also:

'Medical Accommodation Policy' below.

Attendance also extends to tardiness. If you are more than 20 minutes late, you will be penalized an hour of attendance. Please make every effort to be on time as late entry can disrupt the flow of discussion in our class. Early departures from class, which have not been previously arranged with the instructor, will also be counted as an absence. If you leave during the break, you will be docked an hour of attendance.

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/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.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 85 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://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

(downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf 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 Writing Studies, and Writing Studies 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/uwocom/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.

Assignment Breakdown:

In-class work (25%)

In-class work is essential to success in this course. This mark is based on your ability to take class concepts and apply those concepts to the feedback you provide to your classmates and to the discussion of class readings. It also includes your in-class writing journal (explained below) and participation in class discussions as well as all written work completed during class. Distinct elements are detailed below.

Workshop & Story Discussion Participation (10%):

There are no free rides in this class; everyone is expected to participate, especially in the workshop. The workshops will be designed to allow for optimal conversation around a story, which means that thoughts and critiques that may not have occurred to you the first (or second) time you read it will come to mind. The workshop allows for that dynamic conversation. I will record the name of everyone who speaks, and if necessary, mark whether it was a substantive comment or one just meant to “participate” in the lightest possible way. This is an advanced workshop, and I expect the participation to reflect that.

Workshop Summaries (5%):

You are to have your comments on your peers’ stories typed up *before* class and must upload a copy of these comments to the appropriate Owl thread by the class meeting for that workshop. You are also expected to hand (or email) each person being workshopped your copy of their story with your marks and marginalia on it. I will be looking at your comments for content, clarity, and care.

In-class Writing (5%):

During weeks where we’re discussing stories outside the workshop you will be provided with a writing exercise. These in-class writing prompts should be written in a dedicated notebook. We will discuss what you’ve written in class. You may also find that you use some of the material and/or comments when crafting your longer stories.

Individual Meetings (5%):

While students are welcome to see me during my office hours throughout the year, everyone is required to schedule a meeting with me at least once a term. These conferences give you the opportunity to discuss ideas as well as peer critiques and to consider the direction your work might take from there.

Assignments:

For assignments 1 – 3, students are expected to craft new stories. Assignment 4 allows for major revisions and developments of assignments 1-3 or students may choose to write a new story.

Assignment 1 (1,000 – 1,250 words) (15%)

Workshops September 30 – October 21

Final Story Due – No later than two weeks after your workshop

The class will be divided into groups to allow fuller participation and lessen fatigue (details to be explained in class). **Stories to be workshopped (according to a schedule set up in class) are to be uploaded to Owl one week before the workshop.** Everyone is expected

to read and have comments on ALL pieces in their group each week. Students may opt to print the stories or to access them in class on their computers. The reading over these few weeks will be very intensive. Prepare to have something constructive to say about each story and to provide a written summary of your comments to each author (as detailed above). The final version of your story is due no later than two weeks after your workshop (this allows you to meet with me to discuss revisions – see note above on mandatory meetings with me).

Assignment 2 (1,250 – 1,500 words)(20%)

Workshops November 4 – November 25

Final Story Due – No later than two weeks after your workshop

See Assignment 1 for details

Assignment 3 (1,250 – 1,500 words) (15%)

Workshops January 13 – February 3

Final Story Due – No later than two weeks after your workshop

See Assignment 1 for details

Assignment 4 (1,500 – 2,000 words)(25%)

Workshops February 24 – March 23

Final story due – Wednesday, April 6

This is your lengthiest assignment, and we will allow for extra time per student to be workshopped.

Weekly Breakdown (Short Story Workshop)

Fall Term

Week	Date	Focus	Assignment Due
1	September 16	Introduction – The difference between a short story and a novel	In-class reading & writing exercise
2	September 23	Refresher on fiction elements; discussion of these elements in reading	Read Cheever's <i>The Swimmer</i> In-class writing
3	September 30	Workshop A	
4	October 7	Workshop B	
5	October 14	Workshop C	A: Assignment 1
6	October 21	Workshop D	B: Assignment 1
7	October 28	Regroup: Story discussion	C: Assignment 1 Read Bartheleme's <i>The Sandman</i> and Davis's <i>Good Times</i> In-class writing
8	November 4	Workshop AA	D: Assignment 1
9	November 11	Workshop BB	
10	November 18	Workshop CC	AA: Assignment 2
11	November 25	Workshop DD	BB: Assignment 2
12	December 2	Regroup: Story discussion	CC: Assignment 2 Read Sneed's <i>Ladylike</i> In-class writing
13	December 9	Last class of semester- Writing habits over the break	DD: Assignment 2

Winter Term

Week	Date	Focus	Assignment Due
1	January 6	Winter warm-up	In-class writing exercises & small group discussions
2	January 13	Workshop AAA	

3	January 20	Workshop BBB	
4	January 27	Workshop CCC	AAA: Assignment 3
5	February 3	Workshop DDD	BBB: Assignment 3
6	February 10	Regroup: Story discussion	CCC: Assignment 3 Read Reeve's <i>The Punk Test</i> In-class writing
7	February 17	Reading Week	No class meeting
8	February 24	Workshop A4	DDD: Assignment 3
9	March 2	Workshop B4	
10	March 9	Workshop C4	
11	March 16	Workshop D4	
12	March 23	Workshop E4	
13	March 30	Regroup: Publishing & the literary journal scene	Readings TBD
14	April 6	Last class of semester: Class reading	Assignment 4 due