

Department of English & Writing Studies

The Short Story
English 2511G (001)
Winter 2017

Instructor: Steven Bruhm
AHB 2G19 | sbruhm2@uwo.ca
Office Hours: Thur 2:30-4:30 pm

Class Location: Arts & Humanities Building 1B06

Class Date/Time: Tuesday 1:30-3:30 pm,
Thursday 1:30-2:30 pm

Teaching Assistant: Samuel Shearman
AHB 2G30A | sshearman@uwo.ca
Office Hours: Wed 1:00-3:00 pm

Prerequisite(s): At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020E or 1022E or 1024E or 1035E or 1036E or both English 1027F/G and 1028F/G, or permission of the Department.

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.

Course Description:

Everything in our culture requires us to receive and process information quickly, and in increasingly short bites. Because of this, text messages, tweets, and even emails need to be simple and to the point so that we can glean their information and get on to the next thing. In English 2511 we will engage with the shortness of text but slow it down, way down. We will use the short story – from different historical moments, different geographical locations, different literary sensibilities – to attend carefully to questions of meaning, ambiguity, cultural context, and cultural resistance. We will consider thematic questions addressed across a number of texts with an eye to their individual treatments of those questions, and ask how about the form of the narrative contributes to or complicates its meaning. We'll also talk about death a lot. Sex too.

Desired Outcomes for the Course:

- To identify in short fiction the common strategies for meaning making, as in the difference between plot and story, the use and abuse of first-person narration, the epiphany, etc;
- To consider abstract theoretical approaches to literature and how they might help us to determine meaning-making strategies in literary texts;
- To write with clarity and precision on the meanings a text makes, especially meanings that are ambiguous, contested, or counter-intuitive;
- To occupy comfortably the spaces of “not-knowing” that ambiguity may produce, and to think productively about what “not-knowing” may allow us;
- To engage with authors and colleagues in asking questions, presenting ideas orally, and trying on new ideas in a respectful but intellectual vigorous atmosphere.

Course Materials

Required Texts (available at the Western Book Store):

- Course pack of short stories
- Lorrie Moore, *Anagrams* (Knopf Doubleday)

Methods of Evaluation

Three essays, 1000 words each:

Essay 1	due 7 Feb	10%
Essay 2	due 9 March	15%
Essay 3	due 6 April	15%
Mid-term Examination	in class, 16 February	15%
Final Exam	date TBA	35%
Class Participation		10%

A student must receive a passing grade for both term work and the final examination in order to receive a passing grade for the course. This applies to all courses in all programs offered by the department. Students whose term and final exam grades average 50% or above, even though one of the two is a failure, shall receive a default grade of 48%. **Please note:** The Department of English & Writing Studies does not release final grades. All undergraduate grade reports will be available online from the Office of the Registrar.

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/info%20for%20students.html#grade>.

Late Papers: Essays are due on the day assigned. Essays that are late without prior consultation with me will be docked 2% per day including weekends. A hard copy of the late paper should be placed in the English Department's Essay Drop Box in the Arts and Humanities Building lobby and an electronic copy should be sent to me at the time of deposit. My receiving of the electronic copy will count as the date and time for the essay's submission.

Attendance and Participation: Please note that missing three weeks' worth of class or more is sufficient grounds for the instructor to bar a student from taking the final exam. It is your responsibility to attend class, which is why attendance will be taken. Also note that while your 10% Participation grade depends upon consistent attendance, attendance is not the same thing as participating. You were encouraged to come to class prepared by having read all of the assigned material for the day, and to actively engage with the teaching staff and your fellow students in a robust intellectual discussion of the material. The participation grade, then, will be based upon consistency of attendance and both the quality and quantity of active verbal engagement with the course.

Responsible Use of Technology in the Classroom: Ontario law makes it difficult to ban laptops or other electronic devices from the classroom, so you are permitted to use them in class. However, laptops, tablets, cell phones and such used in class must be used solely for the purpose of engagement with class material: that is, taking notes, checking facts on line, drawing upon new information relevant to the lecture or the work being discussed. Any other use of electronics – watching irrelevant videos, playing games, Facebooking and other social media use, for example – will be dealt with briskly. You will receive one warning about use of technology, and should a second incidence arise, I will seek to have you removed from the course. The principle here is simple: what you have on your computer screen in front of you, and the attention you pay to it, distract and compromise anyone one else in the room, including your instructor.

Timetable:
Short Fiction Syllabus

Jan 5		Introduction to the Course
10	The Art of Brevity	Hemingway, "Cat in the Rain"; Heti, "Mermaid in the Jar"
12		Porter, "The Grave"
17	Coming of Age	Munro, "Boys and Girls"; Walker, "Everyday Use"
19		Gaitskill, "Because They Wanted To"
24	Coming of Age in History	"Story of Grandmother"; "Little Red Riding Hood"; "Little Red Cap"
26		Carter, "The Company of Wolves"
31	Family Values	Hawthorne, "Rappaccini's Daughter"; Poe, "Ligeia"
Feb 2		Faulkner, "Barn Burning"
7		Wright, "The Man Who was Almost a Man" [First essay due]
9	Flannery O'Connor: A Case Study	O'Connor, "Revelation"
14		O'Connor, "Good Country People"; "The Life You Save May Be Your Own"
16		Mid-term Examination
Reading Week: No Classes		
Feb 28	Just Be Yourself	Poe, "William Wilson"; Hawthorne, "Feathertop"
Mar 2		Jackson, "Nightmare"
7		King, <i>Secret Window, Secret Garden</i>
9		Jackson, "The Tooth" [Second essay due]
14	By the Way	Williams, "The Mysteries of the Joy Rio"; "Hard Candy"
16		Gaitskill, "Secretary"
21	Loving Death	Lawrence, "The Horse-Dealer's Daughter"; "Odor of Chrysanthemums"
23		Gowdy, "We So Seldom Look on Love"
28	Lorrie Moore: More of a Case Study	Lorrie Moore, <i>Anagrams</i>
30		<i>Anagrams</i>
Apr 4		<i>Anagrams</i> ; Moore, "You're Ugly Too"
6		Exam Preparation [Third essay due]

Accommodation

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical 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 cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at 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

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage 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.

Plagiarism Checking:

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 Western University and Turnitin.com: <http://www.turnitin.com>.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

Your teaching staff makes every effort for you to understand what plagiarism is and how it occurs. If you have any further questions, please ask us. Professed ignorance of plagiarism will not excuse the penalty should it occur.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

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.