

Department of English & Writing Studies

**The Alice Munro Chair in Creativity Seminar: Creative Writing Workshop
English 4899G (001)
Winter 2023**

Instructor: Ivan Coyote

Course Day/Time: Tuesday 2:30-5:30pm

Course Location: UC 4401

Prerequisites: 1.0 from English 3000-3999 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

Participants will be introduced to methods and means for creating their own personal writing discipline and creative practice. This course is crafted for students who are serious about creating an early draft or developing a work of narrative prose, a short story collection, a poetry manuscript, or a song cycle. There will be short readings from contemporary authors introduced for the purposes of inspiration and discussion. Weekly word-count based writing assignments will be produced, and workshopped in a creative and encouraging environment. This course is built on the premise that a writer learns to write through a scheduled, sustained, and supported writing practice.

Success in this course is dependent upon you attending class, participating in our feedback and discussions, and, of course, you creating and cementing your own writing discipline and practice.

Objectives:

By the end of the course, successful students will be able to:

- Develop a personal writing discipline and creative practice.
- Compile an approximately 10,000 word rough draft of a work in progress.

Course Materials

Course reading materials will be (for the most part) provided via online resources/links, and will be drawn from the works of predominantly Canadian creators, with a focus on texts that use the power of word and story to centre the voices of writers that speak to issues of gender, sexuality, family, class, race, and ability. Full reading list TBA.

Methods of Evaluation

The grade for the course will be arrived at as follows:

Final Portfolio 20%

Attendance/punctuality/participation 10%

Completion of weekly writing assignments 40%

Completion of readings and commentary 30%

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/Student%20Information.html>.

Attendance

Attendance in class is mandatory. Attendance and being on time will be a part of your grade. Students will be asked to complete weekly writing assignments (approximately 1,000 words or page equivalent for poetry or songwriting) with the goal of developing a manuscript in mind.

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth (either alone or in combination) 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 Student Medical Certificate (SMC) can be found at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

The full policy is set out here:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Religious Accommodation:

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

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 The University of Western Ontario 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.

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.

Timetable

Please see your course syllabus in OWL for exact class dates, and deadlines.

DEADLINES – all questions/observations for each class reading are due in by 8am of the day of each class. Please schedule time to do the readings and answer the questions accordingly. Weekly 1000-word additions to your manuscript portfolio must be uploaded to the Assignment tool by noon (12pm) on the day of the class.

January 10th class introduction, in-class writing prompt, short lecture/discussion “Why Write This Anyway?”, reading #1 assigned with 3 discussion questions included. Writing assignment: 1000 words for portfolio (or equivalent pages for poets) AND/OR Twitter thread assignment, details of which are listed in your assignment for this class.

January 17th Reading #1 questions are due, writing assignment must be uploaded. Short lecture/discussion about manuscript formatting, submission guidelines. Workshopping of student work. Reading #2 assigned. Writing assignment: 1000 words for portfolio.

January 24th Reading #2 questions are due, weekly writing assignment must be uploaded. Short lecture/discussion about editing practice and methods. Workshopping of student work. Reading #3 assigned. Writing assignment #3 assigned.

January 31st Reading #3 questions are due. Writing assignment #3 is due. PLEASE NOTE details of this week’s writing assignment. Class discussion about writing about real people, writer’s block, confronting common writerly fears. Student self-evaluation of portfolio progress. Reading #4 assigned. Writing assignment: 1000 words for portfolio.

February 7th Reading #4 questions are due, weekly writing assignment must be uploaded. Class discussion about publisher's submission guidelines, plot synopsis, query letters. Reading #5 assigned. Writing assignment 1000 words for portfolio.

February 14th Reading #5 questions are due. Weekly writing assignment must be uploaded. Workshopping of student work. Class discussion about narrative arc, outlines, order of pieces, methods and strategies for structuring a longer work or short story/poetry collection. Reading #6 assigned. Writing assignment #6 assigned.

February 28th Reading #6 questions/observations are due. At some point during this week students will be provided with a mid-term evaluation based on stated grading criteria, and individual portfolio development. Writing assignment #6 is due. PLEASE NOTE details of writing assignment for this week. Reading #7 assigned.

March 7th Reading #7 questions/observations are due. Writing assignment #7 due. Class discussion will focus on beginnings and endings. Workshopping of student work. Writing assignment: 1000 words for portfolio. Reading #8 assigned.

March 14th Reading #8 questions and observations due. Weekly writing assignment must be uploaded. Class discussion will centre around working with multiple drafts, backing up work, writing software options. Workshopping student work. Reading #9 is assigned, which is to go out and select your own favourite excerpt (max 7-10 pages) from a book or magazine and provide your own synopsis of the work, and come up with three questions to foster discussion and discourse around your selected piece. Writing assignment: 1000 words for portfolio.

March 21st Reading #9 selection and questions are due. Weekly writing assignment must be uploaded. Discussion of student's selected readings. Class discussion will be focused on where we find our inspiration, sharing of favourite books, authors, and the reasons why these books moved you. Writing assignment: 1000 words for portfolio. Reading #10 assigned.

March 28th Reading #10 questions and observations due. Workshopping student work. Writing assignment: 1000 words for portfolio.

April 4th Final writing portfolio is due. Final class discussion is about setting long term goals, finding a writing partner or group, structuring a sustainable and lasting writing discipline and creative practice.

Course Readings List

Reading #1 January 10th - Twitter thread by nupqu? ak·#am / Troy Sebastian

Reading #2 January 17th - The Most Precious Substance on Earth by Shashi Bhat

Reading #3 January 24th - The Three Times Rule by Becky Blake

Reading #4 January 31st - Heirlooms by Bryan Washington

Reading #5 February 7th – Shouldn't I Feel Pretty by Ivan Coyote

Reading #6 February 14th - Outside, People Were Crying, or They Weren't by Billy-Ray Belcourt

Reading #7 February 28th - Who Could Have Lived by Erin Soros

Reading #8 March 7th - Writing is Not Therapy by T Kira Madden

Reading #9 March 14th – choose your own adventure

Reading #10 March 21st – After 'While by Cherie Dimaline