

Special Topics: Forms of Narrative
VAH 3395G/AH 3393G
Winter 2019

Instructor: Nino Ricci
University College 2414
nricci5@uwo.ca
Tel: (519) 661-2111 ext. 85790

Course Location: NCB 296

Course Date/Time: Wednesday 11:30am - 2:30pm

Prerequisite(s):

VAH - 1.0 from VAH 1040 or two of VAH 1041A/B - VAH 1045A/B or permission of the department.

AH - Arts and Humanities 2200E, 2220F/G, and 2230F/G or permission of the program.

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

This is a workshop course that will allow students to explore a range of narrative strategies in their storytelling, from the traditional short story to such genres as metafiction, microfiction, podcasts, graphic novels, and fan fiction. Students will be encouraged to consider how narrative informs a wide variety of other fields, from history and the social sciences to law, medicine, business and the natural sciences, and to draw on their own educational backgrounds and interests in exploring new directions for their creative work.

Course Objectives

- To enhance students' understanding of narrative and of its central role across a wide variety of disciplines;
- To instruct students in the characteristics of successful narratives and in the practice of constructing them;
- To improve students' ability to analyse and edit their work and that of others and to communicate their insights about it both orally and in writing.

Course Materials

Students will be provided with a selection of short narrative works in various genres culled from a variety of sources. In addition, students will be required to present to the class a short piece of published work of their own choice in any genre that demonstrates the use of narrative techniques along with an original piece of writing of their own that emulates, parodies or in some way comments on their chosen published piece.

A sample of course readings:

- “Araby,” by James Joyce
- “Misery,” by Anton Chekhov
- “A Madman’s Diary,” by Lu Xun
- “The Case of Miss Lucy R,” in *Selected Papers on Hysteria and Other Psychoneuroses* by Sigmund Freud
- “The Continuity of Parks,” by Julio Cortazar
- “Royal Beatings,” by Alice Munro
- “The Story, Victorious,” by Etgar Keret
- “Prisoner of War,” by Muna Fadhil
- “Great Rock and Roll Pauses,” by Alice Blake,” from *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, by Jennifer Egan
- “Night Vale, Episode 1,” by Joseph Fink and Jeffrey Cranor

A number of these selections can be found either in *The Norton Anthology of Short Fiction*, edited by Richard Bausch and R.V. Cassill, or in *Flash Fiction International: Very Short Stories from Around the World*, edited by James Thomas, Robert Shapard, and Christopher Merrill.

Methods of Evaluation

This is a workshop course. Students will be expected to submit at least two pieces of original creative work as well as written critiques of fellow students’ work. A workshop schedule will be established early in the semester.

Final grades will be based on the following:

- Workshop story submissions: 60%
 - A first submission of 1500 – 3000 words (25%)
 - A second submission that includes a published piece of the student’s choice and an original story of 1500 – 3000 words that in some way comments on it (35%)
- Class participation: 20%
- Written commentaries (150-250 words for each submission): 20%
 - Bring two copies of each commentary to class, one to be given to the instructor and one to the student whose piece it comments on.

There is NO final exam in this course.

For a creative writing workshop to function effectively, students MUST ATTEND REGULARLY and MUST SUBMIT WORK ON DEADLINE. Absences not supported with a doctor’s note or other acceptable documentation will affect a student’s participation mark and can result in a failure in the course if they amount to more than 15% of class time. (See Department Policies below.) Late submissions will be penalized or not accepted.