

**Writing 2520A:  
Write Now! Writers on Writing  
Fall 2022**

**Section:**001

**Time:** Monday 3:30-4:30, Wednesday 3:30-5:30

**Location:** UC 3130

**Instructor:** Dr. Aaron Schneider

**Email:** [aschneider4@uwo.ca](mailto:aschneider4@uwo.ca) or OWL email

**Office:** UC 2431

**Office Hours:** Monday 9:30-11:30

**Note 1:** office hours will be in-person, but I am happy to meet with you via Zoom.  
Contact me to arrange a meeting.

**Note 2:** if you cannot make the above time, I am happy to meet with you at a different  
time. Contact me to arrange a meeting.

## **Course Descriptions and Objectives:**

Though a series of lectures by contemporary writers, *Write Now!*, explores the art, craft, and process of creative writing in a variety of genres. Course topics include inspiration, overcoming creative blocks, revision, social media, publishing, literary citizenship, and the writing life.

## **Learning Outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will have demonstrated the ability to

- 1) identify the fundamental elements of the craft of creative writing
- 2) generate ideas in a variety of genres
- 3) understand concepts relating to contemporary creative writing practices
- 4) execute a dedicated writing practice through daily journal writing and class assignments

## **Required Textbooks:**

*Creative Writing: Four Genres in Brief*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition by David Starkey, Bedford St. Marin's Press, 2017.

In addition to the textbook, links to an interview with or a blog post by each writer will be posted on OWL. These are required readings and should be completed before the class in which the writer in question speaks.

## **Assignments:**

Polished Draft	10%
Midterm	20%
Portfolio	30%
Final Exam	40%

## **Assignment Format:**

All assignment should be submitted according to the instructions on the assignments. The format of an assignment or portion of an assignment will vary depending on the genre in which you are writing.

## **Submitting Assignments/Due dates/late submission penalties etc.:**

All written assignments should be handed in in hard copy in class on the date on which they are due, and submitted through OWL for plagiarism checking. Failure to submit a copy through OWL will result in a grade of 0% on the assignment.

Late assignments will receive a penalty of 5% per day.

Late assignments may be through the Department of English and Writing Studies drop box outside of the Department of English and Writing Studies office. If you submit an assignment through the drop box, please make sure that your name, your instructors name, and the course are on the first page of the assignment.

Do not submit assignments through email.

## 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.

## Scholastic Offences, Including Plagiarism:

"Scholastic Offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, which can be found here: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](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. Information for Writing Studies Instructors Fall/Winter 2022-2023

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

(Please note that the above required statement does not rule out additional cautions by the instructor—including, perhaps, reminding students that plagiarism includes double submission of an assignment to two courses without the permission of both instructors. Above all, every instance of egregious plagiarism "with intent to deceive" must be reported to the Director of Writing Studies, in order to determine the penalty and to check for previous offences. A second offence will result in more serious penalties at the Dean's level.)

***\*Remember: All students in all 1000/2000 level Writing courses must submit all written assignments to turnitin.com through their section's OWL site. This requirement is built into course outline templates, where applicable.***

## **Academic Accommodation:**

**“Accommodation by Instructor for work worth less than 10% of the overall grade in a course:** Instructors are encouraged, in the first instance, to arrange participation requirements and multiple small Information for Writing Studies Instructors Fall/Winter 2022-2023 assignments in such a way as to allow students some flexibility. A student seeking academic accommodation for any work worth less than 10% must contact the instructor or follow the appropriate Department or course specific instructions provided on the course outline. In arranging accommodation, instructors will use good judgment and ensure fair treatment for all students. Instructors must indicate on the course outline how they will be dealing with work worth less than 10% of the total course grade. In particular, instructors must indicate whether medical documentation will be required for absences, late assignments or essays, missed tests, laboratory experiments or tutorials, etc. Where medical documentation is required, such documentation must be submitted by the student directly to the appropriate Faculty Academic Counselling/Dean's office, who will make the determination whether accommodation is warranted. Given the University's Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy ([https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/general/privacy.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/general/privacy.pdf)), **instructors may not collect medical documentation.**”

## **Medical Accommodation Policy:**

“The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. The University further recognizes that medical situations are deeply personal and respects the need for privacy and confidentiality in

these matters. However, in order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet their academic responsibilities.

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the appropriate Dean's office (the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration/home Faculty) together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. These documents will be retained in the student's file and will be held in confidence in accordance with the University's Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy. Once the petition and supporting documents have been received and assessed, appropriate academic accommodation shall be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the student's instructor(s). Academic accommodation may include extension of deadlines, waiver of attendance requirements for classes/labs/tutorials, arranging Special Exams or Incompletes, re-weighting course requirements, or granting late withdrawals without academic penalty. Academic accommodation shall be granted only where the documentation indicates that the onset, duration, and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete their academic responsibilities. (Note – it will not be sufficient to provide documentation indicating simply that the student “was seen for a medical reason” or “was ill.”)

Whenever possible, students who require academic accommodation should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and their Academic Counselling office in a timely manner.”

### **Documentation from Family Physicians/Nurse Practitioners and Walk-In Clinics**

A Western Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is required where a student is seeking academic accommodation. This documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial consultation with the physician/nurse practitioner or walk-in clinic. An SMC can be downloaded at [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf).

### **Documentation from Student Health Services**

At the time of illness, students should make an appointment with a physician/nurse practitioner at Student Health Services. During this appointment, request a Student Medical Certificate from the Physician/Nurse Practitioner.

### **Documentation from Hospital Urgent Care Centres or Emergency Departments**

Students should request that an SMC be filled out. Students may bring this form with them, or request alternative Emergency Department documentation. Documentation should be secured at the time of the initial visit to the Emergency Department. Where it is not possible for a student to have an SMC completed by the attending physician, the student must request documentation sufficient to demonstrate that their ability to meet their academic responsibilities was seriously affected.”

**Please note** that individual instructors **will not under any circumstances** accept or read medical documentation directly offered by a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds or for related 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 or Undergraduate office of a student’s home Faculty.

**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:  
[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation\\_disabilities.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf)

**Students who are in emotional/mental distress** should refer to MentalHealth@Western: (<https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519-661-3030 (during class hours) or 519-433-2023 after class hours and on weekends.

### **Religious Accommodation**

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays and should give reasonable notice in writing (email), 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](#).

### **Other Student 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/>

Academic Support and Engagement <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

## **Intellectual Property and Copyright:**

All instructor-written materials (e.g. PowerPoints, lecture notes, oral lectures) for this course are created solely for students’ personal use within the course, and remain the instructor’s intellectual property. Further reproduction, fixation, distribution, transmission, dissemination, communication, or any other uses, without securing the consent of the copyright owner (the course instructor) may be an infringement of copyright. You may not distribute, email, or otherwise communicate these materials to any other person. These limitations extend to recording, photographing, or sharing lectures (online or in-person) and lecture material without permission. Posting the instructor’s content from this course to online course sharing sites like OneClass or Course Hero without permission is both an infringement of intellectual property law and a violation of academic integrity guidelines. The instructor will pass these cases on to the Western University Ombudsperson or their Department Chair as appropriate.

## Course Schedule:

### Week 1 (September 12 and 14):

**Speaker:** Dan K. Woo

**Book:** *Taobao*: <https://bookstore.wolsakandwynn.ca/products/taobao-stories>

#### Topics:

- Intro, policies, etc.
- Strategies for overcoming writer's block
- Cliché and the importance of reading
- Promotion and crafting a public profile

#### Readings:

- A Few Things You Should Know about Creative Writing (page 1)
- A Few Words about Revision (page 9)
- Chapter 1:
  - Writing Poetry (page 14)
  - Getting started writing poetry (page 72)
  - Kick-Starts: Beginning your poems (page 73)
- Interview with Dan K. Woo: <https://open-book.ca/News/You-Will-Start-Writing-Again-When-You-re-Ready-Dan-K.-Woo-Shares-His-Inspiring-Writing-Journey>

**Weekly Draft:** Write an occasional poem

Suggestions:

- Write a poem for the anniversary of an official institution—a school, a company, a town or city, a club, etc.
- Write a poem for the beginning of the school year
- Write a poem for a pop-culture event, such as the release of an album, a celebrity's birthday, the premier or finale of a show. Try to have fun with the poem.

### Week 2 (September 19 and 21):

**Speaker:** Neal Shannacappo

**Book:** *Through the Eyes of Asunder*: <https://www.kegedonce.com/books/poetry/through-the-eyes-of-asunder/>

#### Readings:

- Chapter 1:
  - The elements of poetry (page 18)

- The short poem: Three models (page 19)
- Lines and stanzas (page 22)
- Meter and rhythm (page 29)
- The music of poetry (page 36)
- Poetic forms:
  - Sonnet (page 53)
  - Sestina (page 61)
  - Haiku (page 65)
  - Ghazal (page 68)
- Interview with Neal Shannacappo: <https://open-book.ca/index.php/News/June-Writer-in-Residence-NShannacappo-on-Rhythm-Flow-and-Writing-More-than-1500-Poems>

**Weekly Draft:** Write a formal poem—that is, a poem that follows a clear, predetermined structure. It can be as simple as a poem in rhyming couplets or as complex as a Sestina. If you pick a short form, such as a Haiku, try to write a handful of them.

Suggestions:

- Write a classic love poem (try to avoid cliché)
- Write a poem about a surprising, unpoetic subject (cheeseburgers, a night out in London, the freshman 15, etc.)
- Write a poem about a powerful emotional experience. Try to use the structure of a formal poem to process and contain the emotion.

### **Week 3 (September 26 and 28):**

**Speaker:** Erica McKeen

**Book:** *Tear*: <https://invisiblepublishing.com/product/tear/>

**Readings:**

- Chapter 1:
  - Images, symbols, and figurative language (page 40)
  - Diction, syntax, and the language of poetry (page 48)
  - Poetic forms:
    - Prose poem (page 69)
- Interview with Erica McKeen: <https://massyarts.com/event/massy-interviews-erica-mckeen/>

**Weekly Draft:** Write a poem that uses images, symbols and figurative language, rather than direct statements, to convey a powerful emotion. For example, instead of writing “I was depressed,” use these poetic devices to show your reader that you were depressed.

Suggestions:

- Write a poem about a basic, universal emotional experience, such as anger, sadness, happiness. Try to write a poem in which the reader will recognize themselves and their experience.
- Write a poem about an emotional experience that is unique to you. Use the above poetic devices to help the reader understand and share your unique experience.



- Write a poem that uses images, symbols and figurative language, and that pushes the boundaries of poetry—that is, write a poem that creates an experience for the reader, but that does not necessarily make literal sense.

### Week 4 (October 3 and 5):

\*\*\*Polished Draft due in class on Wednesday, October 5\*\*\*

#### Speakers:

- January Rogers (Writer-in Residence): <https://www.uwo.ca/english/people/writer-in-res.html>
- Matthew Dawkins (Student Writer in Residence): <https://www.uwo.ca/english/people/student-in-res.html>

#### Readings:

- Chapter 2:
  - Writing the Short-Short Story (page 102)
  - The elements of fiction (page 104)
  - The short-short story: Three models (page 105) (read all three stories)
  - Structure and design (page 114)
- Getting started writing the short-short story (page 149)
- Kick-Starts: Beginning your story (page 150)
- Interview with January Rogers: <https://blackcoffeepoet.com/2010/10/20/interview-with-mohawk-poet-janet-marie-rogers/>

**Weekly Draft:** Write a short-short story that is focused on a single event. This is in some ways the simplest kind of story to write, but it is deceptively simple. It takes real craft to make something resonant and powerful out of a single event. Focus on what happens, who is involved, and why it is meaningful.

Suggestions:

- Write a story about a character who makes a surprising or disturbing discovery.
- Write a story about a character attending an important event (a wedding, a funeral, a graduation).
- Write a story in which a character's everyday routine is suddenly and dramatically altered.

### Week 5 (October 12):

**Speaker:** Marianne Apostolides

**Book:** *I Can't Get You Out of My Mind*: <https://bookhugpress.ca/shop/author/marianne-apostolides/i-cant-get-you-out-of-my-mind-by-marianne-apostolides/>

### Readings:

- Chapter 2:
  - Creating characters (page 122)
  - Writing dialogue (page 130)
  - Setting the scene (page 135)
  - Deciding on point of view, developing tone and style (page 140)
- Interview with Marianne Apostolides:  
<https://coloradoreview.colostate.edu/2018/01/interview-with-marianne-apostolides/>

**Weekly Draft:** Write a short-short story about two people meeting. They could know each other; they could not. They might speak; they might not. It's up to you.

Suggestions:

- Write a story about two old friends who see each other after many years but don't talk to each other.
- Write a story about two people who don't like each other meeting and talking.
- Write a story in which two characters who would not normally interact are forced to engage with each other.

### Week 6 (October 17 and 19):

**Speaker:** Chantal Gibson

**Book:** *with/holding*: <https://caitlin-press.com/our-books/with-holding/>

### Readings:

- Chapter 3:
  - Writing Creative Nonfiction (page 181)
  - The elements of creative nonfiction (page 185)
  - Short creative nonfiction: Three models (186) (read all three pieces)
  - Organizing creative nonfiction (page 196)
  - Getting started writing short creative nonfiction (page 222)
  - Kick-Starts: Beginning your creative nonfiction (page 222)
- Chantal Gibson interview: <https://roommagazine.com/excited-about-everything-chantal-gibson/>

**Weekly Draft:** Write about a time when you were uncomfortable. Explore why you were uncomfortable, what this experience said about you, what you learned from it, and, most importantly, why it is significant for other people—what your reader can learn from and take away from it.

Suggestions:

- Write a short creative nonfiction piece about trying something new, something that were unsure of.
- Write a short creative nonfiction piece about a time when you were the odd person out, when you did not fit in or belong.

- Write a short creative nonfiction piece about discovering something that changed your perspective in an important way and that made familiar things new, different, strange, etc.

### **Week 7 (October 24 and 26):**

**\*\*Midterm Test on Wednesday, October 27\*\***

#### **Readings:**

- No Readings this week. If you have the time, read a few of the poems, stories, personal essays and plays in your textbook.

**Weekly Draft:** Write a handful of 1 sentence stories. Have some fun with this, try to be clever, witty, shocking, surprising. On the one hand, try to see how much you can pack into one sentence. On the other hand, try to see how little you need to make a story.

Suggestions:

- No suggestions this week because they would be longer than most of the stories you are going to write.

**\*\*Fall Reading Break\*\***

### **Week 8 (November 7 and 9):**

**Speaker:** A.G. Pasquella

**Book:** *Welcome to the Weird America:* <https://www.wolsakandwynn.ca/authors-all/ag-pasquella>

#### **Readings:**

- Chapter 3
  - Telling the truth (page 201)
  - Creative nonfiction as narrative (page 206)
  - The poetry of creative nonfiction (page 211)
  - Writing yourself into creative nonfiction (page 215)
  - Ethics and edicts (page 218)
- A.G. Pasquella interview: <https://open-book.ca/News/A.G.-Pasquella-Shows-Readers-the-City-s-Dark-Side-in-His-Compulsively-Readable-Toronto-Crime-Novels>

**Weekly Draft:** Write a short creative nonfiction pieces about a time when you were not completely in the right. Try to explore and grapple with your own culpability, and, also, try to explore the situation and how you looked to the other people involved in the situation. Don't be afraid of writing about a situation that is ethically complex, that has a lot of grey in it. It is this kind of complexity and wrestling with it that makes a lot of creative nonfiction interesting.

Suggestions:

- Write a short creative nonfiction piece about a disagreement you had where you were in the wrong.
- Write a short creative nonfiction piece about a time when you hurt someone else.
- Write a short creative nonfiction piece about a misunderstanding.

## **Week 9 (November 14 and 16):**

**Speaker:** Angela Misri

**Book:** *ValHamster*: <https://www.angelamisri.com/product-page/copy-of-trip-of-the-dead>

### **Readings:**

- Chapter 4
  - Writing the Ten-Minute Play (page 247)
  - The elements of play writing (page 252)
  - The ten-minute play: Three models (page 253) (read all three plays)
  - Structuring the ten-minute play (page 274)
  - Getting started writing the ten-minute play (page 308)
  - Kick-starts: Beginning your play (page 309)
- Playscript Format: A Model (page 311)
- Angela Misri interview: <https://www.angelamisri.com/post/interview-with-cbc-s-shelagh-rogers>

**Weekly Draft:** Write a short play in which two characters are arguing. They can resolve the argument or not. It's up to you. Try to make the argument as realistic as possible. Try to make the characters talk like and respond like real people. Note: this is deceptively difficult thing to do, and you should expect to find it challenging. Don't worry if your draft seems a bit stilted and awkward in places.

#### Suggestions:

- Write a short play about a couple having an argument. It can be an argument about a minor thing, such as cleaning the house, or a major thing, such as the future of their relationship.
- Write a short play about two characters arguing about an accident. They can argue about what happened, who is at fault, etc.
- Write a short play about two characters arguing about who is at fault for something that happened a long time ago. They could be a couple who divorced a decade ago, siblings who hurt each other during childhood, friends who fell out over something, etc.

## **Week 10 (November 21 and 23):**

**Speaker:** Lillian Allen

**Book:** *Make the World New*: <https://www.wlupress.wlu.ca/Books/M/Make-the-World-New>

**Readings:**

- Chapter 4
  - Creating believable characters (page 280)
  - Writing convincing dialogue (page 285)
  - Crafting a theme (page 294)
  - Onstage: The elements of production (page 298)
- Lillian Allen interview: <https://roommagazine.com/interview-with-rooms-2022-poetry-contest-judge-lillian-allen/>

**Weekly Draft:** Write a short play that is grounded in character. Try to teach the audience as much as possible about the characters in the play in the short time that you have. Try to do this without resorting to characters simply telling the audience about themselves.

Suggestions:

- Write a short play in which two people have dinner.
- Write a short play in which two people share a car ride.
- Write a short play in which the characters sit in a waiting room (this is a classic scenario that you can find in several quite famous plays).

**Week 11 (November 28 and 30):**

**Speaker:** Daniel Scott Tysdal

**Book:** *Wave Forms and Doom Scrolls*: <https://bookstore.wolsakandwynn.ca/products/wave-forms-and-doom-scrolls>

**Readings:**

- A Few Words about Getting Your Work Published and Produced (page 346)
- A Few Words about Hybrid Creative Writing (page 356)
- Daniel Scott Tysdal interview: <https://open-book.ca/News/Daniel-Scott-Tysdal-Examines-the-Darkness-Strangeness-Flickering-Hope-of-Life-in-the-21st-Century-in-His-Spectacular-Debut-Story-Collection>

**Weekly Draft:** Instead of writing something new this week, focus on revising the four pieces that you will submit for the Creative Writing Portfolio.

**Week 12 (December 5 and 7):**

**\*\*\*Creative Writing Portfolio due in class on Wednesday, December 7\*\*\***

**Readings:**

- A Few Words of Farewell (page 364)