

WRITING 2211G 650: FUNDAMENTALS OF CREATIVE WRITING – DISTANCE STUDIES**PROFESSOR:** Tom Cull**EMAIL:** tcull3@uwo.ca**OFFICE HOURS:** By email/appointment**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES****DESCRIPTION**

Students will explore the fundamentals of creative writing and challenge their creativity through the writing of fiction/literary non-fiction, and poetry. In a workshop setting, students will share their work and provide critical feedback on the work of their peers. Use of basic elements such as image, dialogue, character, voice, plot, theme, and setting will be discussed. Students will consider technique, inspiration, influence, revision, and process through reading, writing, and workshop participation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- identify the fundamental elements of creative writing (plot, character, dialogue, etc.);
- analyze published fiction, poetry, and drama;
- write in three genres;
- provide classmates with critical feedback;
- incorporate class feedback into revisions.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Custom Course Pack available at [The Book Store At Western](#)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Method of Evaluation	Grade Value	Due Date
Poem	20%	Unit 3 – Final Draft
Creative Nonfiction	20%	Unit 4 – Group Workshop Unit 6 – Final Draft
Workshop Responses	10%	Ongoing
Revision Assignment with Revision Notes	40%	Units 7-10 – Full Class Workshop Unit 12 – Final Draft
Ongoing discussions	10%	Ongoing
	100%	

Due Dates for Assignments: All Assignments must be submitted by midnight on the Friday of the week that they are due.

Due Dates for Workshops: All drafts of creative works must be posted in the workshop forums by 9:00 a.m. on Monday of the week that the workshop is taking place. Students will have a full week to offer feedback on each other's assignments. That feedback must be posted by the following Monday at 9:00 a.m.

Due Dates for Weekly discussions: This course is entirely online and asynchronous, so you will be required to participate in weekly OWL discussion forums. These mandatory class discussions are based on the weekly readings and function as the equivalent of class attendance. You will have one week to post your response to the weekly discussion. For example, in week one, you have until the beginning of week two (the following Monday at 9:00 am) to submit your post to the forum discussion on OWL.

ASSIGNMENT FORMAT

All assignments must be word-processed in a 12-point font; single space your poetry and double space your prose. The title of your assignment, your name, the course, and my name must appear in the top right-hand corner. Please include page numbers, and submit assignments to OWL as Doc files only.

SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments are due on the date specified on the schedule. **Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day unless I have granted you an extension.** You must talk to your instructor about extensions *ahead* of the due date; they are not automatic, nor will they be granted retroactively.

In this course, you will submit the final version of all written assignments electronically (***Doc files only***), through OWL, to Turnitin.com. No hard copies are required. Do not fax or email assignments; do not drop off assignments anywhere on campus. Also, be aware that you are responsible for keeping copies of all assignments submitted.

STATEMENT ON EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity and wisdom that students bring to this class be valued and acknowledged as a strength and a benefit to all. My hope is that together, we can build a community of care and responsibility towards one another that, in turn, fosters creativity and engagement.

Important note: Given the sensitive and challenging nature of the material discussed in class, it is imperative that there be an atmosphere of trust and responsibility in the classroom. I will attempt to foster an environment in which each class member is able to hear and respect each other. It is critical that each class member show respect for all worldviews expressed in class. It is expected that some of the material in this course may evoke strong emotions; please be respectful of others' emotions and be mindful of your own. While our intention may not be to cause discomfort or offense, the impact of what happens throughout the course is not to be ignored and is something that I consider to be very important and deserving of attention.

I am always open to listening to students' experiences, and I want to work with students to find acceptable ways to process and address issues that may arise. If for any reason you do not feel comfortable discussing an issue directly with me, I encourage you to seek out another, more comfortable avenue to address the issue such as your academic advisor, or a faculty member.

I have included contact information for Writing Studies Program Director, Dr. Kathleen Fraser:

kfraser@uwo.ca

and Jamie Johnston, Undergraduate Program Director, Writing Studies: jjohns6@uwo.ca

NOTE: the use of racist or any language that works against the values of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion will not be tolerated. Before posting, please review all your discussion comments to ensure that they are respectful and appropriate.

OFFICE HOURS/E-MAIL POLICY

This term, I will not be holding in-person office hours. Instead, I will be answering course questions and offering additional clarification/help through email. I respond to e-mails within 24 hours. If you have not heard from me in 48 hours, please resend your message. I do not check e-mail on the weekend.

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, which can be found here: 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.

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>.”

Note: In this course you will be required to submit an electronic copy of the final version of each of your essays to turnitin.com through your section’s OWL HomePage.

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 2101F/G, 2125F/G (or the former 2121F/G), 2111F/G, or 2131F/G, or b) a final grade of 70 or more in one of Writing 1000F/G, 1030F/G, 1031F/G, or c) Special Permission of the department.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION AND CONSIDERATION

Note: the official Western Accommodation Policy appears below. This is in effect but may be modified temporarily by the university during the academic year as conditions change.

Senate language requires all requests for accommodation for a grade component of 10% or more to go to academic counselling. That same section, however, allows for (and encourages) instructors to deal directly with accommodation requests for grade components less than 10%. Here’s the relevant Senate language:

“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 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), instructors may not collect medical documentation.”

Medical Accommodation

“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

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

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/>

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.

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

WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE

UNITS	UNIT FOCUS	READINGS
<p>UNIT 1 Jan 9th</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions: Introductions. Why Write? • Assignment: Image Poem • Writing Exercise #1: Images 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Online Readings</u>: Online Etiquette and Importance of Images, Poetry Assignment, Discussion Assignment, Syllabus, Introduction to Instructor, Information for Students in a Writing Course • <u>Course Pack</u>: “The Impact of Images” and “Using the Sound of Language” by Stephen Minot
<p>UNIT 2 Jan 16</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion: Simile & Metaphor • Writing Exercise #2: Simile & Metaphor • Workshop: Image Poem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Online Readings</u>: Figurative Language, “Teach Us to Number Our Days” by Rita Dove, Peer Workshop Assignment • <u>Course Pack</u>: “Verse That Is Free” and “Diction, Tone, and Voice” by Mary Oliver; selected poems from contemporary Canadian poets (Julie Bruck, Gary Soto, Steven Heighton, Tolu Olorunoba, Terese Mason Pierre, Liz Howard, Tony Hoagland).
<p>UNIT 3 Jan 23</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Image Poem Due (20%) • Assignment: Creative Nonfiction • Discussion: Creative Nonfiction (Compare & Contrast) • Writing Exercise #3: Bad Behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Online Readings</u>: “The Art of Nonfiction,” interview with Joan Didion in <i>The Paris Review</i>; “David Sedaris and His Defenders,” in <i>Slate Magazine</i> by Jack Shafter, Creative Nonfiction Assignment • <u>Course Pack</u>: "Writing Short Creative Nonfiction" by David

		Starkey from <i>Creative Writing: Four Genres in Brief</i>
UNIT 4 Jan 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop: Creative Nonfiction • Discussion: “A Mind Spread Out on the Ground” • Writing Exercise #4: Character Study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Online Readings</u>: Workshop Etiquette, Peer Workshop Assignment • <u>Course Pack</u>: ; “A Mind Spread Out on the Ground” by Alicia Elliott
UNIT 5 Feb 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion: Narrative Explorations & “Simple Recipes” • Writing Exercise #5: Brainstorming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Online Readings</u>: Listen to some podcasts from The Moth, This American Life, and Unfictional • <u>Course Pack</u>: “Simple Recipes” by Madeleine Thien
UNIT 6 Feb 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative Nonfiction Assignment Due (20%) • Assignment: Short Story Workshop • Discussion: “Hills Like White Elephants” • Writing Exercise #6: Conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Online Readings</u>: Short Story Workshop Assignment, Revision Assignment, Explore <i>The New Yorker</i> Podcasts, Dialogue, Subtext • <u>Course Pack</u>: “Hills Like White Elephants” by Ernst Hemingway, “Introduction,” <i>Fiction: A Longman Pocket Anthology</i>, Edited by R.S. Gwynn
Feb 18-26	READING WEEK	READING WEEK
UNIT 7 Feb 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Workshop: Short Story Draft • Discussion: “The Lottery” and “Break All the Way Down” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Online Readings</u>: “Waiting for Adnan” by Hajera Khaja (Joyland.com) • <u>Course Pack</u>: “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson; “Types of Prose in Fiction” and “Choosing a Point of View” by Jack Hodgins, “Tension” by Heather Sellers from <i>The Practice of Creative Writing</i>
UNIT 8 March 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Workshop: Short Story Draft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Online Readings</u>: Explore the online journal Joyland: A Hub for Short Fiction
UNIT 9 March 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Workshop: Short Story Draft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Online Readings</u>: Explore the online journal Drunken Boat
UNIT10 March 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Workshop: Short Story Draft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Online Readings</u>: Explore the online journal Electric Literature
UNIT 11 March 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision Strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Course Pack Readings</u>: “Mermaid in the Jar” by Sheila Heti • <u>Course Pack</u>: “Revision” by Heather Sellers from <i>The Practice of Creative Writing</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision Assignment Due 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Online Readings</u>: Writing

UNIT 12 April 3-10	(40%) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion: Self Assessment• Writing Resources	Resources, What Editors Want <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Course Pack</u>: “Publication” by Heather Sellers from <i>The Practice of Creative Writing</i>
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