

**Writing 2218G:
To Make a Long Story Short
(Introduction to Short Fiction)
Winter 2026
Section 001**

Course Descriptions and Objectives:

The course is a mixture of lecture and workshop modes. Lectures will address the various aspects of the short story, and students will workshop their own and others short stories. Students will develop not only fiction writing ability, but also critical reading skills by reading and discussing published short stories and the stories of their peers at the same time that they write two of their own stories. Based on professional models, instructor guidance and class discussion, students will produce two stories of 1500-3000 words in length. Although this course contains lecture elements, it is, at base, a discussion, reading and workshop course, and as a result students must be prepared to participate in the workshop process: peer evaluation, editing, drafting, discussion topics, etc. In a writing workshop, one learns to write for others besides oneself—to respect one's readers, their time and insights. For this reason, attendance is mandatory.

Learning Outcomes:

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

1. identify the fundamental elements of the short story;
2. generate ideas for and produce finished pieces of short fiction;
3. analyze and respond critically to published writing and the work of their peers;
4. identify and correct errors in composition, grammar, and mechanics; and
5. incorporate feedback into revisions.

Required Textbooks:

- *After Realism: 24 Stories for the 21st Century*, ed. André Forget. Vehicule Press, 2022.
 - \$22.95. This is required for the course, and you will need it for the Technique Talk assignment.
- *Best Canadian Stories 2025*, ed. Steven W. Beattie, Biblioasis, 2024.
 - \$23.95. This is required for the course, and you will need it for the Technique Talk assignment.

Assignments:

Story 1:

Draft (10%):

Due the class after the class in which it is workshopped

Final (35%):

Due week 7

Story 2:

Draft (10%):

Due the class after the class in which it is workshopped

Final (45%):

Due Last Day of Class

Technique Talk:

Value (0%)

Course Schedule:

Week 1 (January 9):

Topic: Introduction/What is the short story?

Week 2 (January 16):

Topic: Beginnings and Exposition/Action

Readings:

- Paola Ferrante, “The Underside of a Wing” (pg. 91)
- Camilla Grudova, “Madame Flora’s” (pg. 99)
- Rudapriya Rahthore “Girls Who Come in Threes” (pg. 247)
- Ryan Avanzado, “Tita Esme’s Room” (pg. 39)
- Carleigh Baker, “Baby Boomer” (pg. 55)
- Tom Thor Buchanan, “Jamaica” (pg. 63)

Activity: Idea Workshopping Story 1

Week 3 (January 23):

Topic: Endings

Readings:

- Christine Vadnais, “Creature” (pg. 329)
- David Huebert, “Chemical Valley” (pg. 115)
- Julie Mannell, “Today is Cool” (pg. 170)
- Michael LaPointe, “The Stunt” (pg. 152)
- Review the stories from Week 2

Activity: Workshopping Story 1 (1st half of the class)

Note: if your story is workshopped this week, the draft is due in class in Week 4

Week 4 (January 30):

Topic: Structure

Readings:

- Jessica Johns, “Good Bones” (pg. 140)
- Nabon Ruthnum, “Eight Saints and Demons” (pg. 270)
- John Elizabeth Stinzi, “Going Toward Gadd” (pg. 287)
- Sofia Mostaghimi, “Roxane and Julieta” (pg. 192)
- Paola Ferrante, “The Underside of a Wing” (pg. 91)
- Eliza Robertson, “The Aquanauts” (pg. 257)

Activity: Workshopping Story 1 (2nd half of the class)

Note: if your story is workshopped this week, the draft is due in class in Week 5

****Note: if your story was workshopped in Week 3, the draft is due in class this week****

Week 5 (February 6):

Topic: Setting

Readings:

- Christine Vadnais, “Creature” (pg. 329)
- David Huebert, “Chemical Valley” (pg. 115)
- Camilla Grudova, “Madame Flora’s” (pg. 99)
- Fawn Parker, “Wunder Horse II” (pg. 219)

Activity: Technique Talks

****Note: if your story was workshopped in Week 4, the draft is due in class this week****

Week 6 (February 13):

Topic: Voice/Narrator

Readings:

- Paige Cooper, “Record of Working” (pg. 69)
- Julie Mannell, “Today is Cool” (pg. 170)
- Gavin Thompson, “Beelzebub’s Kiss” (pg. 309)

Activity: Editing Story 1 and Technique Talks

****READING BREAK****

Week 7 (February 27):

Topic: Character

Readings:

- Camilla Grudova, “Madame Flora’s” (pg. 99)
- Jessica Johns, “Good Bones” (pg. 140)
- Tea Mutonji, “Property of Neal” (pg. 207)

Activity: Idea Workshopping Story 2 and Technique Talks

****Story 1 Final Draft Due in class****

Week 8 (March 6):

Topic: Dialogue

Readings:

- David Huebert, “Chemical Valley” (pg. 115)
- Cason Sharpe, “California Underwater” (pg. 282)
- Michael LaPointe, “The Stunt” (pg. 152)
- Sofia Mostaghimi, “Roxane and Julieta” (pg. 192)

Activity: Workshopping Story 2 (1st half of the class) and Technique Talks

Note: if your story is workshopped this week, the draft is due in class in Week 9

Week 9 (March 13):

Topic: Rhythm/Sound

Readings:

- Julie Mannell, “Today is Cool” (pg. 170)
- Paola Ferrante, “The Underside of a Wing” (pg. 91)
- Tea Mutoji, “Property of Neal” (pg. 207)
- Jessica Johns. “Good Bones” (pg. 140)

Activity: Workshop Story 2 (2nd half of class) and Technique Talks

Note: if your story is workshopped this week, the draft is due in class in Week 10

****Note: if your story was workshopped in Week 8, the draft is due in class this week****

Week 10 (March 20):

Topic: Diction

Readings:

- Jean Marc Ah-Sen, “Swiddenworld: Selected Correspondence with Tabitha Gotlieb-Ryder” (pg. 19)
- Paige Cooper, “Record of Working” (pg. 69)
- David Huebert, “Chemical Valley” (pg. 115)
- Julie Mannell, “Today is Cool” (pg. 170)
- Tea Mutoji, “Property of Neal” (pg. 207)

Activity: Technique Talks

****Note: if your story was workshopped in Week 9, the draft is due in class this week****

Week 11 (March 27):

Topic: Beginnings/Structure/Endings revisited

Readings:

- Instructor will indicate what stories to review before class

Activity: Edit Story 2 and Technique Talks

****Story 2 due April 9****