

ENGLISH 130 SECTION 2  
TTH 10:30-11:45  
Spring 2015

FICTION WRITING WORKSHOP  
SH 413  
ALWAYS BE ON TIME!!!!

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FO 218 T 9:00-10:00

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This is a workshop class. You will spend a majority of in-class time workshopping short stories written by you and your classmates. In addition, you will read a number of published American short stories written between the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and the present. We will spend some time discussing these stories, and I will give occasional, unannounced reading quizzes on stories assigned from the only required text in the course. All reading assignments are included on the schedule at the end of this syllabus. I've also included partial explanations of your required fiction-writing and fiction-critiquing assignments. All of your written work for this workshop class will be included in an end-of-the-semester Portfolio. You will write two complete stories and revise both. Each story should be at least eight double-spaced pages in length. The final drafts of the two stories combined must constitute at least 20 pages of revised fiction. The first story you write will be told in the first-person. The second story will be told in the third-person. We will discuss these two kinds of story-telling at length in class. Point-of-view, voice, and style are as important as plot, character, and setting in the making of a successful story. Final drafts of all stories should be nearly error-free, as they would be if you were sending a story or stories to an agent or to a publication. Professional readers have no interest in stories containing grammatical and technical mistakes. This workshop class should be fun, but it also needs to be rigorous. In order to improve as a writer, each of you needs to be open to suggestions and useful criticism, both from fellow students and from me. Of course suggestions and criticism should always be expressed in a helpful and courteous way. We are all involved in this workshop class in order to improve our fiction writing and to help others improve theirs.

**PREREQUISITES:** Passage of the WST; upper-division standing

**STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH & COMPARATIVE LITERATURE:**

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, rhetoric, or film.
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches in British, American, and World Literature.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, context, and nature of the subject.
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively.
5. Students will demonstrate the ability to articulate relations among culture, history & texts.

DEPARTMENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES COVERED ARE LISTED NEXT TO ASSIGNMENTS

**ASSESSMENT:** All student writing shall be assessed for grammar, clarity, conciseness, and coherence. In accordance with the approved assessment plan, the course coordinator/department chair will summarize the assessment result for English 130 sections according to the standard procedure.

**REQUIRED TEXT:**

THE OXFORD BOOK OF AMERICAN SHORT STORIES, 2<sup>ND</sup> EDITION. Ed. Joyce Carol Oates. Oxford University Press, 2013. [Be absolutely certain you buy the 2<sup>nd</sup> EDITION!!!!]

**IMPORTANT: BRING THIS BOOK TO EVERY CLASS!!!!**

**WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:** Writing assignments include two short stories of at least eight double-spaced pages in length each and at least twenty double-spaced pages total. Rough drafts of each story will be workshopped in class; the writer must provide a copy to each class member a week before the workshop session. I will provide each student with a worksheet to fill out for each story workshopped. Both stories workshopped must be rewritten in fully revised draft. The end-of-semester Portfolio will include both stories in both forms: workshopped rough draft and fully revised draft. The Portfolio will also include worksheets filled out by class members and by me for the rough drafts of the two stories. Remember, the first story must be written in the first person, the second story in the third person. All stories workshopped must be original work written for this class and for no other class. In addition, there will be occasional unannounced in-class quizzes on assigned reading. These won't be in the Portfolio.

**GRADING:**

Occasional unannounced in-class quizzes on required reading assignments	20%
Rough Draft of First Story (first-person)	see Portfolio
Rough Draft of Second Story (third-person)	see Portfolio
Portfolio (drafts and especially full revisions of first and second story)	80%

**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND ASSIGNMENTS [ALL READINGS FROM REQUIRED TEXT]:**

**JANUARY**

- TH 22 DISCUSSION & LECTURE: Class Syllabus (handout); Workshop Story Evaluation Worksheet (handout); First-person Stories (handout); Reading & Writing in this class; Signup for dates when first-person stories will be workshopped in very initial workshop sessions  
 READING: Poe. "The Tell-Tale Heart"
- T 27 DISCUSSION & LECTURE: The first-person story. Types of first-person; Voice; Style; Discussion of assigned readings; additional workshop signups  
 READING: Stowe. "The Ghost in the Mill"  
 Gilman. "The Yellow Wallpaper"
- TH 29 DISCUSSION & LECTURE: The first-person story. The relationship of first-person voice and style to plot, character, and setting; discussion of assigned first-person readings  
 FIRST-PERSON STORIES TO BE WORKSHOPPED ON 3 FEBRUARY DISTRIBUTED.  
 READING: Lovecraft. "The Rats in the Wall"  
 Welty. "Where Is the Voice Coming From?"

**FEBRUARY**

- T 3 FIRST WORKSHOP SESSION: FIRST-PERSON STORIES  
 FIRST-PERSON STORIES TO BE WORKSHOPPED ON 5 AND 10 FEBRUARY DISTRIBUTED  
 READING: Malamud. "My Son the Murderer"
- TH 5 SECOND WORKSHOP SESSION: FIRST-PERSON STORIES  
 FIRST-PERSON STORIES TO BE WORKSHOPPED ON 12 FEBRUARY DISTRIBUTED  
 READING: Baldwin. "Sonny's Blues"
- T 10 THIRD WORKSHOP SESSION: FIRST-PERSON STORIES  
 FIRST-PERSON STORIES TO BE WORKSHOPPED ON 17 FEBRUARY DISTRIBUTED  
 READING: Barthelme. "The School"
- TH 12 FOURTH WORKSHOP SESSION: FIRST-PERSON STORIES  
 FIRST-STORIES TO BE WORKSHOPPED ON 19 FEBRUARY DISTRIBUTED  
 READING: Roth. "Defender of the Faith"

- T 17 FIFTH WORKSHOP SESSION: FIRST-PERSON STORIES  
FIRST-PERSON STORIES TO BE WORKSHOPPED ON 24 FEBRUARY DISTRIBUTED  
READING: Erdrich. "Fleur"
- TH 19 SIXTH WORKSHOP SESSION: FIRST-PERSON STORIES  
FIRST-PERSON STORIES TO BE WORKSHOPPED ON 36 FEBRUARY DISTRIBUTED  
READING: Jin. "Children as Enemies"
- T 24 SEVENTH WORKSHOP SESSION: FIRST-PERSON STORIES  
FIRST-PERSON STORIES TO BE WORKSHOPPED ON 3 MARCH DISTRIBUTED  
READING: Lahiri. "Hell-Heaven"
- TH 26 EIGHTH WORKSHOP SESSION: FIRST-PERSON STORIES  
STORIES TO BE WORKSHOPPED ON 5 MARCH DISTRIBUTED  
READING: Diaz. "Edison, New Jersey" [This is the final first-person story I will assign.]
- MARCH
- T 3 NINTH WORKSHOP SESSION: FIRST-PERSON STORIES  
FIRST-PERSON STORIES TO BE WORKSHOPPED ON 10 MARCH DISTRIBUTED  
READING: [This is the first third-person story I will assign.] Irving. "Rip van Winkle"
- TH 5 TENTH WORKSHOP SESSION: FIRST-PERSON STORIES  
FIRST-PERSON STORIES TO BE WORKSHOPPED ON 12 MARCH DISTRIBUTED  
READING: Hawthorne. "The Wives of the Dead"
- T 10 ELEVENTH WORKSHOP SESSION: FIRST-PERSON STORIES  
THIRD-PERSON STORIES TO BE WORKSHOPPED ON 23 OCTOBER DISTRIBUTED  
READING: Jewett. "A White Heron"
- TH 12 TWELVTH & FINAL WORKSHOP SESSION ON FIRST-PERSON STORIES  
THIRD-PERSON STORIES TO BE WORKSHOPPED ON 19 MARCH DISTRIBUTED  
READING: Chopin. "The Storm"
- T 17 DISCUSSION & LECTURE: Types of third-person narration; Voice; Style; Relationship of third-person voice and style to plot, character, and setting; discussion of third-person readings  
READING: Freeman. "Old Woman Magoon"  
Chesnutt. "The Sheriff's Children"
- TH 19 FIRST WORKSHOP SESSION: THIRD-PERSON STORIES  
THIRD-PERSON STORIES TO BE WORKSHOPPED ON 2 APRIL DISTRIBUTED  
READING: Wharton. "A Journey"
- NO CLASSES ON T 24, TH26, AND T 31 MARCH
- APRIL
- TH 2 SECOND WORKSHOP SESSION: THIRD-PERSON STORIES  
THIRD-PERSON STORIES TO BE WORKSHOPPED ON 7 AND 9 APRIL DISTRIBUTED  
READING: London. "In a Far Country"
- T 7 THIRD WORKSHOP SESSION: THIRD-PERSON STORIES  
THIRD-PERSON STORIES TO BE WORKSHOPPED ON 14 APRIL DISTRIBUTED  
READING: Fitzgerald. "An Alcoholic Case"
- TH 9 FOURTH WORKSHOP SESSION: THIRD-PERSON STORIES  
READING: Hemingway. "Hills Like White Elephants"  
THIRD-PERSON STORIES TO BE WORKSHOPPED ON 16 APRIL DISTRIBUTED
- T 14 FIFTH WORKSHOP SESSION: THIRD-PERSON STORIES  
THIRD-PERSON STORIES TO BE WORKSHOPPED ON 21 APRIL DISTRIBUTED  
READING: Cheever. "The Country Husband"

- TH 16 SIXTH WORKSHOP SESSION: THIRD-PERSON STORIES  
THIRD-PERSON STORIES TO BE WORKSHOPPED ON 23 APRIL DISTRIBUTED  
READING: O'Connor. "A Late Encounter with the Enemy"
- T 21 SEVENTH WORKSHOP SESSION: THIRD-PERSON STORIES  
THIRD-PERSON STORIES TO BE WORKSHOPPED ON 28 APRIL DISTRIBUTED  
READING: Carver. "Are These Actual Miles?"
- TH 23 EIGHTH WORKSHOP SESSION: THIRD-PERSON STORIES  
READING: Richard Ford. "Under the Radar"  
THIRD-PERSON STORIES TO BE WORKSHOPPED ON 30 APRIL DISTRIBUTED
- T 28 NINTH WORKSHOP SESSION: THIRD-PERSON STORIES  
THIRD-PERSON STORIES TO BE WORKSHOPPED ON 5 MAY DISTRIBUTED  
READING: Tobias Wolff. "Hunters in the Snow"
- TH 30 TENTH WORKSHOP SESSION: THIRD-PERSON STORIES  
THIRD-PERSON STORIES TO BE WORKSHOPPED ON 7 MAY DISTRIBUTED  
READING: Boyle. "Filthy with Things"
- MAY
- T 5 ELEVENTH WORKSHOP SESSION: THIRD-PERSON STORIES  
READING: Amy Hempel. "Today Will Be a Quiet Day"
- TH 7 TWELFTH & FINAL WORKSHOP SESSION ON THIRD-PERSON STORIES  
READING: Moore. "How to Become a Writer"
- T 12 LAST DAY OF CLASS  
PROTFOLIOS ARE DUE IN CLASS ON THIS DAY; THEY MUST BE TURNED IN ON TIME.

YOU MAY PICK UP YOUR PORTFOLIOS AT THE BEGINNING OF FALL SEMESTER—YOU SHOULD MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH ME (BY EMAIL) BEFORE DOING SO—OR YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO MAKE INDIVIDUAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH ME TO RECEIVE YOUR PORTFOLIO BACK EARLIER.

READ TO WRITE. WRITE TO READ.

AUTHOR: \_\_\_\_\_ Story Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Who is (or who are) the point-of-view character(s) in this story? [This assumes the existence of a point-of-view character(s)]
  
2. Do you believe the author's decision regarding the point-of-view character(s) was the best decision? Why or why not?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. How would you characterize the tone and attitude of the narrative voice? Do you believe the tone and attitude of the narrative voice are appropriate to this particular story?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. How successful is the depiction of plot/action? How might the action and therefore the tension of the story be improved?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. How successful is the depiction of character and the interaction of characters? How might characterization be improved?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. How successful is the description/depiction of place/location? How might description of place/location be improved?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. What do you think are the strongest aspects of this story?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. What do you think is the most important way to improve this story?

Author:

STORY NAME:

Evaluator:

1. Who is (or who are) the character(s) who is/are telling/narrating this story?
2. Do you believe the author's decision regarding the narrator(s) of the story was the best decision? Why or why not?
3. How would you characterize the tone and attitude of the narrator(s)? Do you believe the tone and attitude of the narrator conveys and fits with her or his actions and personality?
4. How successful is the depiction of plot/action? How might the action and therefore the tension of the story be improved?
5. How successful is the depiction of character and the interaction of characters? How might characterization be improved?
6. How successful is the description/depiction of place/location? How might description of place/location be improved?
7. What do you think are the strongest aspects of this story?
8. What do you think is the most important way to improve this story?