

Creating Short Stories

Sahalie Hashim, PhD

Email: Sahalie.Hashim@utdallas.edu

Office hours: Blackboard Collaborate, by appointment

CRWT 3307.551

100% Online Format

Summer I, 2020

Course Description

All written art forms present their challenges, but perhaps none more so than the short story. The short story requires a conciseness of language, but a fullness of character, a brevity of form, and a completeness of plot. Writers of short stories are asked to capture the essence of life, analyze the unknowable, and portray the depth of human experience in remarkably few pages. The inherent contradictions and challenges of this form have doubtlessly contributed to the lasting appeal of the short story. In this class, students will read well-renowned short stories and analyze the fictional techniques and personal reflections of published authors. Students will produce short stories of their own and submit them for the critical evaluation of their peers. This course asks students to read a lot, and write a lot, in acknowledgment that this is the work required to materially understand and capture the essence of a good short story. Experimentation and creativity are strongly encouraged. Class participation is required.

Course Goals

After completing this course, a student will:

- Be familiar with the narrative movement and structure of a literary short story
- Possess a deeper understanding of literary techniques
- Be able to adequately incorporate literary techniques into their own creative writing
- Be able to critically examine and edit their peer's writing and their own writing with an eye toward publication
- Deepen their understanding of the fundamentals of workshop etiquette

Required Texts

1. *This syllabus* is designed to keep you organized and on track. If you lose it, you can print a new one from the "Syllabus" tab in eLearning.
2. *The Art of the Short Story*
by Dana Gioia & R. S. Gwynn
ISBN: 978-0321363633

3. Any additional required reading not included in the class textbook will be uploaded as a PDF to eLearning.

Guidelines

- ***Class Participation & Preparation:*** As a fast-paced, 5-week online class, it is imperative that you stay organized and engaged with this course. This means turning in assignments on time and actively participating in all online discussions. A robust discussion of class readings and workshop responses will challenge how you think about and analyze professional writing, as well as help you deepen and improve your own fiction output. As such, all students are required to engage critically and thoughtfully with each other's work *and* respond to the questions and comments posted to reading and workshop discussion board threads. Insightful collaboration will support the production of quality work from yourself and your peers and should always be the goal of your contribution to class discussions.
- ***Microsoft Word:*** All written assignments should be submitted as a Microsoft Word document (.doc or .docx). If you do not have access to MS Word, OpenOffice.org is a word-compatible program that may be downloaded for free.
- ***eLearning:*** As an online class it goes without saying that eLearning is the essential forum for all class material and assignments. As such, it is essential that you login to eLearning *daily* to ensure you are staying active and engaged with this course.
- ***Late Work Policy:*** All assignments must be completed on time. Any assignment turned in after the deadline will receive a -10% deduction from the assignment point total for each day it is late (2 days late= -20%). I do not provide feedback on late work.
- ***MLA Formatting:*** All creative work should follow MLA formatting for headers, assignment information, page numbers, and (when appropriate) spacing.
- ***Reaching Me:*** Please, feel free to make an appointment with me if you have any doubts or questions about classwork. **All correspondence should occur through my UTD e-mail: Sahalie.Hashim@utdallas.edu.** Give me at least a day to reply.

Assignments

- ***Reading Response Sheets & Discussion Threads:*** Every Friday you will be responsible for responding critically to assigned class reading. While at first glance Friday reading may seem daunting, please notice that aside from the short stories themselves, much of the assigned reading averages 2-4 pages in length. Along with submitting a short reading response sheet, students will be asked to

post and respond to the related reading discussion thread. Keep in mind that discussion board threads should be treated like classroom discussion, meaning that quality responses are imperative to cultivating thoughtful consideration of the effective writing techniques and forms utilized by published authors.

- **Workshop Submissions:** You will turn in two fiction pieces for workshop during the Summer I semester. All writing turned in for workshop must be polished and ready for a critical, literary discussion of its merits and weaknesses. Submissions MUST be double-spaced, complete short stories of fiction; not a chapter from your novel, or the first section of your memoir. Genre fiction is permissible as long as it attempts to thoughtfully examine elements of society: gender, politics, religion, socioeconomic hierarchies, ontology, etc. Please Note: **I will stop reading** after the page limit, so challenge yourself to work within the parameters of the assignment.
- **Workshop/Responses:** Each week, 7-8 students will submit a complete short story for workshop consideration. Peers should provide individual workshop responses to all workshop authors in the form of a typed paragraph (minimum of 200 words) that gives the author both a general reaction to their story, and addresses specific fiction techniques that were effective, as well as specific fiction techniques that were either absent, but needed, or fell short of their full potential.
- **Final Story Submission with Reflection and Critical Analysis:** All students are required to turn in a polished, edited version of **one** of their workshop stories as a final project and submit it for publication consideration to an online or print literary journal. In addition, as part of this final project, students are also required to submit a reflection and critical analysis of their short story to eLearning.

Outside Sources of Help

- **eLearning:** eLearning is designed to help you stay organized. All assignments will be submitted through eLearning. Along with academic assistance, due date reminders, calendar alerts, and handouts, eLearning also allows you to communicate with your peers, giving you a broader support network for any questions or doubts you may have about this course.
- **Your instructor:** I am more than happy to speak with you. Please e-mail me to set up an eLearning Collaborate meeting.
- **Your Peers:** Communicating with peers can alleviate stress and support your learning experience. Don't be afraid to reach out and ask each other for help. eLearning Messages is a great tool to use to connect with other peers in this course.

- **Student Counseling Center:** The Student Counseling Center at UTD is open remotely. For counseling services call 972-883-8255, or visit them online at utdallas.edu/counseling/

Schedule

W- May 27 th	<p><u>Required Reading:</u> Class Syllabus (eLearning)</p> <p>DUE by Midnight: 1 Post on the introduction thread – introduce yourself and explain something that you learned about the course from the syllabus. Then post “welcome” responses to 2 other peer introductions.</p>
F- May 29 th	<p><u>Required Reading:</u> <i>On the short story:</i> “The Art of the Short Story” (p. 3-7) <i>On Plot:</i> “Plot” (p. 849-854), Welty, “The Plot of the Short Story” (p. 829-830) <i>Short Stories:</i> Faulkner, “A Rose for Emily” (p. 238-245), Fitzgerald, “Babylon Revisited” (p. 247-262), Hemmingway, “A Clean Well-Lighted Place” (p. 372-375)</p> <p>DUE by Midnight: Reading Response Sheet- 5/29, 1 Thread Post and 1 Response Post</p>
M- June 1 st	<p>Due by NOON: Group One 3-5-page short story workshop submission</p>
W- June 3 rd	<p>DUE by Midnight: Workshop Responses to Group One stories</p>
F- June 5 th	<p><u>Required Reading:</u> <i>On the short story:</i> Gordimer, “How the Short Story Differs from the Novel” (p. 345-346) <i>On Character / POV:</i> “Characterization” (p. 854-857), “Point of View” (p. 857-858) <i>Short Stories:</i> Carver, “Cathedral” (p. 77-87), Kincaid, “Girl” (eLearning PDF), Tan, “Two Kinds” (eLearning PDF), Boyle, “Greasy Lake” (eLearning PDF)</p> <p>DUE by Midnight: Reading Response Sheet- 6/5, 1 Thread Post and 1 Response Post</p>
M- June 8 th	<p>DUE by Noon: Group Two 3-5-page short story workshop submission</p>

W- June 10th	DUE by Midnight: Workshop Responses to Group Two stories
F- June 12th	<p><u>Required Reading:</u> <i>On the short story:</i> Munro, "How I Write Short Stories" (p. 661-662) <i>On Setting / Dialogue:</i> "Setting" (p. 859-860), LaPlante "You Talking to Me?" (eLearning PDF) <i>Short Stories:</i> Silko, "The Man to Send Rain Clouds" (p. 739-742), Diaz, "How to Date a Browngirl, Blackgirl, Whitegirl, or Halfie" (eLearning PDF), Lahir, "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine" (eLearning PDF), Murakami, "Landscape with Flatiron" (eLearning PDF)</p> <p>DUE by Midnight: Reading Response Sheet- 6/12, 1 Thread Post and 1 Response Post</p>
M- June 15th	DUE by Noon: Group One 5-7-page short story workshop submission
W- June 17th	DUE by Midnight: Workshop Responses to Group One stories
F- June 19th	<p><u>Required Reading:</u> <i>On the short story:</i> Wharton, "The Subject of Short Stories" (p. 841-842) <i>On Theme, Writing Style:</i> "Theme," (p. 860-861), "Style," (861-862), Flaubert, "The Labor of Style," (p. 286-287) <i>Short Stories:</i> Borges, "The Garden of Forking Paths," (p. 55-62), Cheever, "The Swimmer," (p. 123-131), Jackson, "The Lottery," (p. 390-396)</p> <p>DUE by Midnight: Reading Response Sheet- 6/19, 1 Thread Post and 1 Response Post</p>
M- June 22nd	DUE by Noon: Group Two 5-7-page short story workshop submission
W- June 24th	DUE by Midnight: Workshop Responses to Group Two stories
F- June 26th	<p><u>Required Reading:</u> <i>On the short story:</i> Cheever, "Why I Write Short Stories" (p. 131-132)</p>

	<p><i>On Editing:</i> Burroway, "Play it Again, Sam" (eLearning PDF), Lamott, "Shitty First Drafts," (eLearning PDF) <i>On Publishing:</i> Bayne, "What to Expect When You're Submitting" (eLearning PDF)</p> <p>DUE by Midnight: Reading Response Sheet- 6/26, 1 Thread Post and 1 Response Post</p>
M- June 29th	Free day to work on your Editing and Writing!
W- July 1st	DUE by Midnight: Polished Workshop Story edited with Reflection, Critical Analysis, & Lit. Mag Submission Receipt

Grading

Discussion Thread Participation:.....	10%
Reading Response Sheets:.....	10%
Workshop Responses:.....	20%
Workshop Submissions:.....	30%
Final Story, Reflection, & Critical Analysis:.....	30%

Letter Grades*

A.....	93% - 100%
A-	90% - 92%
B+	87% - 89%
B	83% - 86%
B-	80% - 82%
C+	77% - 79%
C	73% - 76%
C-	70% - 72%
D+	67% - 69%
D	60% - 66%
F	0% - 59%

*I will make use of the +/- system as stipulated by the current *University of Texas at Dallas Undergraduate Catalogue*.

Academic Integrity

Students in CRWT 3307 are expected to maintain a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. It is critically important you produce original creative written work. Please consult the following websites addressing academic integrity as well as what constitutes cheating at UTD:

- <http://www.utdallas.edu/deanofstudents/integrity/>
- <http://www.utdallas.edu/deanofstudents/dishonesty/>
- <http://www.utdallas.edu/deanofstudents/bigfour/>

Ask your instructor should you become concerned that you are possibly committing an act of scholastic dishonesty. UTD will hold you accountable regardless of whether or not you intended to plagiarize. CRWT 3307 students suspected of plagiarism or any other act of scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary proceedings. Should the Judicial Affairs Officer find a student responsible, he or she will typically receive a “0” on the assignment in question.

This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:

“As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”

Disabilities Statement

Disabilities: I will make any reasonable accommodations for students with limitations due to disabilities, including learning disabilities. Please contact me during the first two weeks of the semester to discuss any special needs you might have. You will need a Letter of Accommodation issued by Student AccessAbility in the Office of Student Affairs. If you do not have one, you will need to contact the OSA in the Administration Building, Room 2.224 within the first two weeks of classes. The OSA can also be reached in the following ways:

Web: <http://utdallas.edu/studentaccess/>

Phone: (972) 883-2098

Fax: (972) 883-6561

E-Mail: studentaccess@utdallas.edu

I have read and understood the policies for CRWT 3307.551. I agree to comply with the policies for the Summer I 2020 semester. I realize that failure to comply with these policies will result in a reduced grade for the course.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name (print): _____

UTD e-mail address: _____