



**FACULTY OF ARTS  
Department of English**

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**ENGLISH 436.04:  
Long Short Stories & the Novella  
Winter 2023  
Wednesdays, 17:00 to 19:45  
SS 1153/Seminar**

<b>Instructor</b>	Professor Aritha van Herk
<b>Email:</b>	vanherk@ucalgary.ca
<b>Web Page:</b>	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Available for ZOOM or in-person consultations, by appointment or 15:00 – 16:00, Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Office: SS 1132

E-mail: [vanherk@ucalgary.ca](mailto:vanherk@ucalgary.ca)

I check e-mail regularly, usually within 48 hours; however, do not expect me to reply to a query within minutes.

Office hours: 15:00 – 16:00, Tuesday/Wednesday

Twitter: @validmavericitycalgary

Homepage: <http://english.ucalgary.ca/profiles/aritha-van-herk>

**Course description:** A close examination and discussion of the student's own work, with emphasis on development of technique.

“Long Short Stories and the Novel” is a course in Creative Writing for students at an intermediate level. The focus is on writing longer works of fiction (long short stories or novella-length pieces), emphasizing well-developed ideas and subtle language, with the goal of enhancing sustained creative effect. The class is conducted as a workshop of the whole, along with analyses and targeted lectures. The course requires that students write steadily, read their colleagues’ writing with care, write brief critiques of their colleagues’ work, and come to class with constructive criticism, prepared to discuss this writing. Students are expected to read and write a great deal and should be prepared for intensive and focussed work. Class participation is required. Students will make writing to be discussed available in advance so that their colleagues can read that material and come to class prepared to discuss it with precision and editorial insight.

Students are expected to submit writing that is polished and well developed. Students are also expected to read their colleagues' writing with care, to write brief critical responses to their colleagues' work, and to come to class with constructive criticism, prepared to discuss each piece of writing under consideration (see **Assignment Policies** for guidelines). This requires steady and thoughtful work in preparing for class and requires as well focused attention on an ongoing basis.

Students are required, throughout the term, to write and submit about 50 pages of creative prose, to workshop approximately 10-15 pages twice in the term, and to complete a final revised and developed portfolio to be submitted to Professor van Herk as their pièce de resistance at the end of the course. All work should be carefully constructed, showing evidence of re-writing and revision. Final pages should total 45-50, but that is a rough guide. The primary expectation is that by the end of the course, students will produce polished and effective work.

Students are required to do one brief (5 minute) in-class presentation on *process*, prompted by the texts assigned to the class. This in-class presentation will approach a particular problem of fiction from a writerly perspective.

Students are expected to contribute to a class creative reading list of various texts that serve as exemplars.

A schedule of workshopping will be administered for sign-up on the first day of class: students are expected to workshop a section of their writing at least twice per term.

### **Course learning outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Read texts with creative and critical discernment;
2. Write persuasive and original prose;
3. Write precisely, succinctly, creatively, and grammatically;
4. Engage in meaningful critique about writing with their peers.

### **Texts and readings required:**

Benjamin Dreyer, *Dreyer's English*.

Giardini and Giardini, ed. *Startle and Illuminate: Carol Shields on Writing*.

### **Learning technology:**

While not required, it will be useful for students to have access to a laptop computer in class. The D2L site for this course contains required readings and other relevant class resources and materials (see [D2L.ucalgary.ca](http://D2L.ucalgary.ca)), and students should expect to rely on D2L to prepare for class.

**Assessments and Evaluation:**

Writing workshopped during the term	50%
Final portfolio	20%
Class participation	10%
Critical acumen, critiques	10%
In-class presentation	10%
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TOTAL	100%

All work is graded by Professor van Herk.

There is **NO** Registrar-scheduled Final Examination in this course.

A student must complete **ALL** work to pass this course.

All workshopped writing is edited and graded by Professor van Herk. **As the student being workshopped, you must post your story on D2L at least one week in advance to give peers an opportunity to read, think about, and formulate inquiries/critiques.**

There will be no assignments given for extra credit.

As per Calendar Section E.3, attendance is included in your participation grade:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-3.html>

Students are expected to attend regularly and to be fully present and engaged in class activities and discussions. Of course, ill students are asked not to attend, but must ensure that the required critical work is completed, and Professor van Herk informed.

See detailed “Guidelines for In-Class Discussion” below.

Critical acumen, and critiques: You are required to post on D2L a brief and courteous critique comprising questions, comments, and inquiries, for each of your peer’s work. See detailed “Guidelines for Critiques” below.

In-class presentation on writing process: You may create a Powerpoint slide show, but please do not simply put quotes on the slides and then read them aloud. Your presentation should amplify our focus on writerly process. Deploy your creativity to make this presentation go beyond a casual report, engage with the process question you identified, demonstrating your creative and critical discernment.

## Grading and Evaluation:

Students will be graded on their writing, on their critiques, on their in-class presentation, and on class participation. Critical acumen (including literary range and historical awareness) is evaluated as part of all those areas. Assigning grades for creative work is difficult, but this is an academic course, and must fulfill academic requirements. Your final grade will consist of an evaluation of all the work you complete. All work is graded (using the letter system) and returned to you.

Following is a description of how Professor van Herk derives grades for Creative Writing.

A-/A/A+ (4): Consistently exceptional work

The work is moving toward publishable level. Use of language is concise and precise; figures of speech are imaginative and original; the content is interesting, the approach is fresh, and the form chosen the best possible, every element of fiction engaged with sophistication and elegance. **A+ is a grade earned only in very rare instances, by work that is absolutely stellar.**

B range (3): Consistently good work

The work is good, above average, but could use more refinement or development, and usually more revision. It shows at least in part a heightened use of language, several striking aspects of imagery or story, and an interesting perspective or point of view. Word choice and description are generally exact and thoughtful.

C range (2): Consistently average work

The work is satisfactory, but relies on ordinary use of language, and is not formally innovative. The writing is competent and shows promise, but would benefit from more work and greater focus. Images or plot are sound but may verge on the clichéd and predictable. Vocabulary is adequate but may be limited.

D (1): Minimal pass

The work shows some effort but is carelessly constructed and may have grammatical problems. Use of language is undistinguished and clichéd; ideas are ordinary.

F: No Credit

Work shows no effort; no work has been done at all.

The University of Calgary's official four-point Undergraduate Grading System, as described in the Calendar (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-2.html>), will be used in this course.

A+/A (4.0); A- (3.7); B+ (3.3); B (3.0); B- (2.7); C+ (2.3); C (2.0); C- (1.7); D+ (1.3); D (1.0); F (0)

Students must reach the minimum percentage threshold for the grade range to receive that letter grade. For example, to receive an A-, a student must have surpassed the minimum threshold of 80.00% in the course."

Although the A+ is solely an honorific that entails no additional points in the 4-point system, I will employ this mark to distinguish superlative work that exceeds expectations in style, correctness, intellectual depth and breadth, sophistication, and originality.

**Please do not contact me to request an adjustment to your final grade unless (1) you suspect I have made an error, or (2) you are planning to formally appeal your results.**

### **Classroom Policy on Electronic Devices, Email, and Internet Use:**

You are welcome to use electronic devices in class. However, please use them appropriately: checking social media, sending personal messages, and other online communication unrelated to class distracts you and those around you. Cell phones should be stowed in a pocket/bag during class, unless you are expecting a death-defying call. Should I happen to observe you using a device in a way that contravenes this policy, I will politely remind you of its tenets.

We will be in a wireless-access classroom. You may take notes and work on a laptop in class. If the context is relevant, we may use the Internet to search for a particular item of information together. You are to use this as a tool to accompany the context of what we are learning and discussing. You are NOT to surf the net, text message your friends, play games, or do assignments for a different class.

Please check D2L and email regularly for updates, assignment instructions, and other course-related information. Email is the best way to contact me. Although I do my best to respond promptly, please allow up to 48 hours for a response. I will not summarize class discussion or lectures through email— if you miss class, please gather any missing information from D2L and your fellow students. Email is not a substitute for attending class.

### **Submission of Work:**

Work to be critiqued is to be sent to Professor van Herk via e-mail, in doc form, so she can check it, pdf it, and post it on D2L. Please, if at all possible, provide Professor van Herk with a hard copy of each workshop submission. You must submit these to me, in class, one week before they are to be discussed. There is **NO** office support to collect assignments.

Please submit both a hard copy and a virtual copy of your Final Portfolio to Professor van Herk by the Due Date in the Class Schedule.

### **Conduct:**

Students, employees, and academic staff are also expected to demonstrate behaviour in class that promotes and maintains a positive and productive learning environment. As members of the University community, students, employees, and academic staff are expected to demonstrate conduct consistent with the University of Calgary Calendar, the Code of Conduct and Non-Academic Misconduct policy and procedures, which can be found at:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

## **Food, Drink, Health:**

Because this is an evening course and a long class, it is understandable that students might feel hungry. Students may drink coffee or water or juice in class, but I would request no consumption of food. Eating in a class this small is distracting and intrusive. However, we do have a fifteen-minute break in the middle of the class, so if you have low blood sugar and need to consume something, please do so in the break.

Although masks are not required, those who choose to wear masks are most welcome to do so. Our classroom is small and less well-ventilated than is optimal, so I would appreciate the gesture.

## **How to do well in this course:**

1. You will have difficulty passing this course if you do not attend, if you do not write regularly, and if you do not read your colleagues' work with care and diligence.
2. If you are to make good progress, it is essential that you set aside time for writing every day. Students who work steadily throughout the term perform better than students who binge-write. **However, if you are ill or are experiencing other difficulties, do let me know so that appropriate consideration can be given to your circumstances.**
3. Writing must be double-spaced and must use a clear font so that the text can be read easily, either in hard copy or on-line. Students are responsible for supplying electronic copies of their work so that it can be posted on D2L. Please give the instructor ONE hard copy of writing to be critiqued.
4. This is a course in literary writing, not a course in how to get published or what is trendy (see guidelines on genre writing). We are more concerned with exceptional writing than we are with its marketing.
5. The schedule for this class, as the attached outline makes clear, sometimes varies. A class may be cancelled or moved, but it will always be replaced, if not by a class, then by a literary event. Please let me know if this flexibility creates difficulties for you. Use the schedule to plan and to make effective use of your time.
6. Students often labour under the misguided notion that they do not wish to be "influenced" and that reading outside material or participating in the literary life of the community is not relevant. In fact, literary events provide students with invaluable inspiration and experience.
7. Class participation (discussion) is expected, part of the graded component of this course.
8. Students will determine their own deadlines in this course but should plan to be workshopped twice over the course of the class, once in Jan/Feb and once in March/April.

9. The work we scrutinize in the class deserves your full attention. However, it does not deserve the attention of your cousins, roommates, or friends. Please keep your colleagues' work confidential, and treat it with respect, as you would wish your writing to be treated. Also, do not discuss your colleagues or their work on social media, in any platform.

10. Work is to be discussed in class with intelligence, using literary terminology. See Guidelines for in-class discussion.

11. If you are having difficulties of any kind, or if you have questions, please feel free to contact me. If you cannot make an appointment during my regular office hours, I am happy to arrange another time. Do not hesitate to inform me of potential difficulties because I will do all I can to help you solve them.

### **Guidelines for in-class discussion:**

From the language that holds sway in conversation and our abbreviated texting language, a nuanced vocabulary may seem archaic, but is increasingly desirable. The current reliance on "thing," "you know," and "like" are markers of a lazy tongue. In this class, we will focus on improving your eloquence and wit by moving beyond such limited vernacular. This class will seek to help you overcome speech disfluencies, which consist of various breaks, irregularities or non-lexical vocables that occur within the flow of speech. These include *false starts*, i.e. words and sentences that are cut off mid-utterance; and fillers, i.e. grunts or non-lexical utterances such as "huh," "uh", "erm", "um", "well", "so", "like", and "you know." Please take notes on our discussions of oral fixatives and vocabulary dependencies and add your favourites to a list as the year progresses.

The "I LIKE" syndrome: In terms of evaluative positions and their critical expression, your personal tastes are a less useful benchmark to apply than objective appreciation. When reading any text, the questions you must confront are not whether you "liked" the material, but whether it is convincing, effective, and interestingly developed, with reference to literary elements. If you determine that some aspect of the work works well, explain what and why. And if you find some aspect of the work that does not work well, explain what and why. Abusive or personal comments will not be tolerated.

Learning is about confronting uncomfortable ideas. At some point during this class, we are likely to discuss sensitive material, material that will challenge your thinking or upset your expectations. These challenges are about enhancing your clarity and capacity for critical thinking. However, if any issues arise that make you uncomfortable, please do meet with me.

### **Guidelines for Critiques:**

Please deploy the same care and attention for the critiques that you post in response to your colleagues' stories. Students are expected to read and comment on others' work with courteous objectivity. As part of your critical acumen, you are required to post a brief paragraph in response to all work discussed in class. These written critiques are due BEFORE the evening of class discussion; your reading should thus not be a re-hash of what is said in class, but your own carefully thought-out questions about the work you have read. Your post should include the name of the piece being analyzed, the author's name, your name, and the date. These posts are public to the class.

Critiques should focus on what strikes you, the reader, as the most intriguing element of the writing you have read. They should cover two aspects: what works well and what does not work well, and why. Critiques should avoid general or self-evident comments, or spurious praise. "I liked this piece," is not useful or constructive. Critiques should NEVER be personal or in any way derogatory—such comments are considered academic misconduct. Students must address the work under scrutiny and NOT the writer who has created the material. Nor should critiques consist of hollow praise.

Constructive criticism analyzes both the merits and the flaws of a creative work, the point being to help the writer improve the work. It is a cruel fact that every piece of writing in this class is a work in progress; not one of you will be at a level where you produce perfect or publishable pieces. And every thinking writer must learn to edit and critique his or her work. The more critically a writer can read, the better a self-critic and consequently the better a writer they will become. Receiving constructive criticism from careful readers enables every writer to improve and is one of the most useful aspects of this course. As well, in-class discussion of material enables every student to develop their critical ability as well as their writing. Learning to be a discerning reader is an important step in becoming a better writer and is a skill that translates from this class into your other courses and your daily life. Critiques will be marked for usefulness, consistency, consideration, skill, literary knowledge, critical acumen, and creativity. They are part of each student's final grade.

### **Making Material Available:**

Please send your writing to Professor van Herk in a doc. e-mail attachment one week in advance of its workshopping. She will post it to D2L. Post your critiques of your colleagues' work in the appropriate thread by the beginning of class.

### **Academic Integrity:**

This course, like all courses at the University of Calgary, holds students to high standards of honest and responsible scholarship. Please consult the [Academic Integrity website](#) for a detailed description of university policies, which will be enforced in this course. Cases of suspected academic misconduct will be referred to the Associate Dean of Arts for a ruling.



**Plagiarism** is a type of academic misconduct. Plagiarism occurs when a student presents the ideas, expression of ideas, or work of another person as their own. Another equally serious form of plagiarism occurs when a student submits something they have written themselves for credit in two or more courses without first securing written permission from all those course instructors. Consequences for plagiarism include failure on the assignment, failure in the course, and possible suspension or expulsion from the university. Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense.

**Deferral of term work and final examinations:**

Should you require an extension for completion of term papers or assignments beyond the deadline of five days after the end of lectures, an [Application of Deferment of Term Work](#) must be completed. It is the student's responsibility to initiate this process with the instructor. The University also has regulations governing the [deferral of final examinations](#).

**Grade appeals:**

To pursue a Reassessment of Graded Term Work or a Reappraisal of an Academic Assessment, Consult the [University Calendar](#) and request advice from the English Department at [engl@ucalgary.ca](mailto:engl@ucalgary.ca). Please note that mere dissatisfaction with a grade is not sufficient grounds for an appeal.

**[English Department Website:](#)**

For more information about courses, programs, policies, events, and contacts in the Department of English.

**Scribe and Muse Club for English Students:**

The [Scribe and Muse Reading and Writing Club](#) fosters and champions reading and writing through community service, leadership, and engagement. Our email address is [smecuofc@gmail.com](mailto:smecuofc@gmail.com).

**Writing support:**

[The Student Success Centre](#) offers both online and workshop writing support for U of C students.

**[Academic regulations and schedules](#)**

**Student Academic Accommodations:**

The Student Accessibility Services website is available [here](#). University accommodation policies can be found at the following links:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6-1.html>

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6.html>

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6-2.html>

**Program Advising and Student Information Resources** is done through the Faculty of Arts Students' Centre. Office location: SS102; phone: 403-220-3580; email: [ascarts@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ascarts@ucalgary.ca)  
Website: <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate>

### **Instructor's Intellectual Property**

Course materials created by instructors, including presentations, posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments, and exams, remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

### **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy**

Student information will be collected in accordance with usual classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty and student colleagues. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary.

### **Sexual violence policy:**

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/sexual-violence-policy.pdf>

### **Other important information:**

- [Wellness and Mental Health Resources](#)
- [Student Success](#)
- [Student Ombuds Office](#)
- [Student Union \(SU\) Information](#)
- [Graduate Students' Association \(GSA\) Information](#)
- [Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points](#)
- [Safewalk](#)

### **Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI):**

Please participate in [USRI Surveys](#) toward the end of the course. The feedback they provide helps us to evaluate teaching, enhance student learning, and guide students as they select courses.