

FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
COURSE OUTLINE

ENGLISH English 265.01
COURSE TITLE: Introductory Creative Writing
T/R 8-9:15 am – Tuesdays, MFH 164

FALL 2019

Instructor: Suzette Mayr
Office: SS 1048 (or SS 1148 outside of formal office hours)
E-mail: smayr@ucalgary.ca
Office hours: Tuesdays, 9:45-11:30 am, or by appointment
Homepage/course website: english.ucalgary.ca/profiles/suzette-mayr

Seminar Instructors (Thursdays):

Ben Blyth (benjamin.blyth@ucalgary.ca)
Colin Gibbings (colin.gibbings@ucalgary.ca)
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Email Policy:

I am happy to reply to short, specific questions via email and will answer as promptly as possible (usually it takes me approximately one week to respond to a given email). However, I cannot guarantee that you will have a reply within a specific amount of time. If you have detailed questions on the course material it is more appropriate to see me during office hours, or make an appointment to see me personally in my office.

Use and Abuse of Electronic Devices in Class:

Laptops are permitted for class use, but please refrain from engaging with social media or other non-class related activities during class time.

Course description:

This course will provide instruction in the rudiments of craft for drama, fiction, and poetry, emphasizing the centrality of reading and revision to literary composition. The overall course objective is to provide the opportunity for students to discover the extent of their interest in writing in these literary genres.

Instruction in the larger Tuesday lecture will cover the rudiments of craft for each of the genres, include discussion centered on published texts and the techniques that make these texts effective. The Thursday seminar component will be conducted according to the seminar/workshop model for individual analysis and discussion of student writing.

Although this course does not count toward an embedded Certificate in Creative Writing (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/creative-writing-certificate.html>) designation on a student's transcript, the class should result in a much stronger portfolio for use in a student's application to intermediate and advanced creative writing classes.

By the end of this course students will have:

- practiced writing craft in at least two of the three Creative Writing genres;
- begun to develop their own Creative Writing practice;
- developed a concrete understanding of how image, metaphor, and narrative (if applicable) may work in these three genres;

- begun to develop critical tools with which to analyze Creative Writing;
- been introduced to a number of significant Creative Writers through the course texts.

Students do not need to have written anything creative prior to taking this course. The course aims to encourage and support everyone from the casual journal writer who may never have discussed writing in a public way, to the budding poet or emerging novelist.

Texts and readings:

Available at the U of C Bookstore:

Ruprai, Sharanpal. *Pressure Cooker Love Bomb* (book)

Available via D2L:

Anonymous. “Septic”

Anonymous. “Sometimes I Wait Hopefully in the Road”

Lammott, Anne. “Shitty First Drafts”

Martini, Clem. “A Case Study”

Dipietro, Joe. “Executive Dance”

Halvorson, Kristina. “Now We’re Really Getting Somewhere”

Oates, Joyce Carol. “Thanksgiving”

O’Brien, Tim. “The Things They Carried”

King, Thomas. “Totem”

Kincaid, Jamaica. “Girl”

Johnston, Bret Anthony. “Don’t Write What You Know”

A comprehensive dictionary and thesaurus are recommended

Assignments and Evaluation:

Readings will be assigned for most classes and these must have been read BEFORE we discuss them in class. Keep all drafts of all exercises and assignments in this course. Revision and rewriting are an important part of the Creative Writing process. Additionally, it is good practice for tracking your own progress as a writer, and you are required to attach all student feedback from workshops to Assignments #1 and #2, and reflect on that feedback.

All submissions must be typed, double-spaced (poetry can be single-spaced), with 1-inch margins and in legible 12-point font. Ensure that your name is on your submission and that the pages are numbered in sequence.

The specific apportioning of grades for the class is as follows:

Participation (includes submission of material for seminar workshop, workshop attendance, active workshop participation) 15%

In-class Reading Quizzes 5%

Assignment #1: 10-Minute Play assignment due to TA via D2L

A play with a complete story arc that takes 7-10 minutes on stage, ie, 7-10 script pages (including stage directions) + additional page describing the Dramatis Personae + 350-word process statement incorporating student feedback and/or creative writing principle discussed in class or seminar **due Monday, Oct. 21** 20%

Assignment #2: Poetry OR Fiction assignment due to TA via D2L

6 pages of polished poetry + 350-word **process statement** incorporating student

feedback and/or creative writing principle discussed in class or seminar OR

5-6 pages of polished fiction + 350-word process statement incorporating student feedback and/or creative writing principle discussed in class or seminar

due Monday, Nov. 18

20%

Assignment #3: Genre of your choice due to Dr. Mayr via D2L

New work in drama OR fiction OR poetry:

5-6 pages fiction + 350-word process statement incorporating student feedback and/or creative writing principle discussed in class or seminar OR

6 pages poetry + + 350-word process statement incorporating student feedback and/or creative writing principle discussed in class or seminar OR

7-10-minute play + + 350-word process statement incorporating student feedback and/or creative writing principle discussed in class or seminar

due Monday, Dec. 09

40%

A process statement is a short essay in which you as a writer discuss where you found the central idea or premise for the creative piece, and how you've incorporated principles (or a principle) and/or feedback discussed in your seminars and/or the larger Tuesday lecture into the creative piece. As with an essay submitted in a standard English Literature class, you will be graded on the quality of the writing and grammar, the clarity of the ideas (eg: has it been clearly stated how a given principle has been incorporated into the creative piece?), and the essay's general coherence and logical flow. **An assignment lacking a process statement will automatically lose 20% of the grade for that assignment. Assignments #1 or #2 missing copies of seminar students' feedback will automatically lose 10% of the grade for that assignment.**

There is no final exam in this course. Students do not have to complete all assignments to receive a passing grade in this course but it is strongly advised.

Participation in the Writing Workshop (Seminar Groups):

Seminars are structured as workshops, intended to provide feedback to students on their workshop submissions. The workshop is a chance to enhance not only your writing skills, but also your reading and editing abilities. The workshops will require students to submit and discuss written exercises and assignments, and to receive oral peer feedback on at least two works of creative writing during seminar. Participation is essential to ensure a successful workshop – this means that all students must come to the seminar having read assigned texts if required, having read their peers' texts if required, and prepared to provide thoughtful responses to their peers' work.

All assigned readings are mandatory for the course. Students must submit between 2-3 (3 is ideal) workshop submissions over the term, responding in their process statements to general feedback from comments by classmates in seminars and/or class instruction so as to improve their writing, which should be evident in the final Assignment #3 submitted to Dr. Mayr.

Workshop submission length:

1-2 pages double-spaced (poems need not be double spaced), in Times New Roman 12-pt font. Your full name should be in the top right-hand corner. 5 students/week will have a chance to workshop, so do not wait until late in the semester to bring your work in – **it is not the TA's responsibility if you have waited too long to bring in material and there is no longer time in the seminars to workshop your work.**

Participation is worth 15% of the total course grade. There are four components to participation:

- 1) Bringing in at least two pieces of work during the semester to workshop in the seminar – these works must be in different genres, and each genre should line up with the genre currently being taught in the Tuesday classes (eg: if playwriting is being taught in the large Tuesday classes between Sept. 16-Oct. 01, then workshop submissions roughly contemporaneous with the Tuesday classes between Sept. 16-Oct. 01 should also involve playwriting) – worth 50% of the participation grade;
- 2) Commenting ALOUD and ON PAPER during workshop time on other students' work;
- 3) Participating in an active and engaged manner in any writing or reading exercises during the seminar;
- 4) Regular attendance.

The workshop format does not imply group work, but all-class participation under the seminar instructor's direction. Students are expected to read and engage with published works as well as their classmates' writing, and to come to class prepared to discuss this writing with constructive, informed, and intelligent criticism.

Some Strictures

To keep students focused on mastering the basic skills of fiction, poetry, and drama, some strictures apply. For the duration of the course (Sept.-Dec.), students are not permitted to submit writing assignments that contain any of the following words – **one percentage grade will be deducted for every instance when these words occur in an assignment:**

abyss, beauty, dawn, death, future, God, god, heart, hope, humanity, life, love, mind, muse, mystery, pain, peace, soul, time, truth, war, world, “thought” as a noun, “dream” as a noun

In this course you are also forbidden to:

- kill off a character;
- write fan fiction (the goal of the course is to help you become such a great writer other people will want to write fan fiction about *your* fiction);
- use the murder and/or rape of a character as the instigation for a story or play or poem;
- write procedural police or detective dramas or narratives;
- have a character be “insane” or develop “insanity” in a clichéd or generic manner with clichéd characteristics (eg: schizophrenia presented as an individual having several personalities);
- write graphic violence or graphic sex scenes (if you are unsure about this, have your seminar instructor preview your assignment prior to handing it in).

The idea behind these strictures is to allow you to focus on where story is found in everyday life – your everyday life and the lives of people around you. Most of the above list reflects plots based on recycled, well-worn television and movie plots and not on the true basis of original writing.

Special Note:

In this class there is no such thing as writer's block and this excuse will not be accepted. If you are to make good progress, it is essential that you set aside time for writing every day because waiting for inspiration will only lead to trouble and lack of discipline.

Guidelines for submission of work in seminars:

At the end of each seminar, five students in the seminar will volunteer to have a piece of writing workshopped the following week. Students who have volunteered to have their work workshopped will bring 10-15 printed copies of 1-2 pages of their work (if financial barriers make printing the work difficult for you, please make an arrangement with your seminar's TA ahead of time). Each student who brings work will read their work aloud to the seminar group or can request that the TA read the material out loud. Other students will mark their comments on the distributed copies and the TA will lead a 12-minute discussion of the work at hand. At the end of the 12 minutes, the submission (the handout each reader put his/her/their name on) IS RETURNED TO HER/HIM/THEM. The submitter keeps the annotated/flash-edited copies they handed out and then attaches them to their next project when it gets handed in.

FOR EXAMPLE: when you hand in your 7-10-minute play, you will also hand in ALL of the commented-on hand-outs you've amassed up until the due-date. Part of your mark in your Process Statements will be determined by how you responded to the suggestions you received from the seminar, and principles learned in the larger Tuesday lecture.

Late Assignments:

Assignments submitted after the deadline will be penalized with the loss of a third of a grade (an A- to B+) for each business day [not class] that the assignment is overdue. No assignments will be accepted two weeks past the assignment deadline without the prior consent of the instructor.

Grading system:

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

90 + %	A+	4.0
85 – 89 %	A	4.0
80 – 84 %	A–	3.7
77 – 79 %	B+	3.3
74 – 76 %	B	3.0
70 – 73 %	B–	2.7
67 – 69 %	C+	2.3
64 – 66 %	C	2.0
60 – 63 %	C–	1.7
55 – 59 %	D+	1.3
50 – 54 %	D	1.0
0 – 49 %	F	0

Please note that, according to the University Calendar (F.1), instructors may use their discretion when rounding upwards or downwards when the average of term work and exams is between two letter grades.

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

A range: Consistently exceptional work

The work is moving toward a publishable level. The use of language is concise and precise and original; figures of speech are imaginative and compelling; the content of the work is interesting and is treated in a fresh, new way, and the form chosen is the best possible. Writing in this range employs every element of fiction with sophistication and elegance.

B range: Consistently good work

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

C range: Consistently average work

The work is satisfactory, but relies on ordinary, even somewhat predictable use of language. Work in this range is formally not innovative, although the writing will be competent, even promising. The material will definitely need more work, more layering, more texture. Image and plot are sound but may verge on clichéd and predictable. Vocabulary is adequate but may be limited.

D range: Minimal pass

The work shows some effort but is carelessly constructed and may have grammatical problems or lack awareness of the mechanics of English. Use of language will be undistinguished and clichéd, ideas ordinary, even predictable.

F: No credit

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

Rubrics

Playwriting

	Absent (F)		Poor (D)		Satisfactory (C+)		Good (B)		Excellent (A)
Beginning									
Middle									
End									
Conflict / Struggle / Something at Stake									
Character									
Rising Action / Escalation									
Dialogue / Language									
Stage- ability/Live staging do- ability									

Fiction

	Absent (F)		Poor (D)		Satisfactory (C+)		Good (B)		Excellent (A)
Beginning									
Middle									
End									
Momentum/ Something at Stake									
Character / Characterization									
Language (eg: voice, clichés, discernible character speech patterns)									
Originality									

Poetry

	Not Considered (F)		Poor (D)		Satisfactory (C+)		Good (B)		Excellent (A)
Form / Technical elements (eg: if you're using rhyme, is there a good reason to?)									
Language (eg: diction, syntax, imagery, metaphor, voice, avoidance of clichés)									
Originality									

Plagiarism:

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possible suspension or expulsion from the university. Please refer to the following information and make sure you are familiar with the statement below on plagiarism.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-5.html>

Scribe and Muse Club for English Students:

The Scribe and Muse Reading and Writing Club (SMRWC) fosters and champions reading and writing through community service, leadership, and engagement. We strive to enhance the academic and social experience of undergraduate students by promoting academic excellence and interaction between students, faculty, and the community, through social, cultural, and academic events

<http://english.ucalgary.ca/scribe-and-muse-english-club>.

Our email address is smecuofc@gmail.com.

English Department Website:

For more information about courses, programs, policies, events and contacts in the Department of English, please go to our website at <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/english>. Please note that the course outlines posted on the English Department website constitute the official course outline for purposes of appeals. Students should verify any hard copies against this posted version. For courses which employ numerical grades, the official departmental percentage to letter grade conversion scale is also posted on the department website.

Writing support:

The Student Success Centre offers both online and workshop writing support for U of C students.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Library and Research Support:

Melanie Boyd, Librarian for English, offers research support to students, including strategies for finding articles, books, and other library materials. Contact: maboyd@ucalgary.ca.

Find The English Pages research guide here:

https://library.ucalgary.ca/sb.php?subject_id=52619

Follow the Department of English on Facebook & Twitter:

**Academic regulations and schedules:**

Consult the Calendar for course information, university and faculty regulations, dates, deadlines and schedules, student, faculty and university rights and responsibilities. The homepage for the University Calendar is <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/index.htm>

Grade appeals:

Consult the following University Calendar link and request advice from the English Department office, SS 1152. Please note that “mere dissatisfaction with a decision is not sufficient grounds for the appeal of a grade or other academic decision.”

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

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 form must be completed. The University also has regulations governing the deferral of final examinations. See Calendar:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

Student Accommodations:

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

The student accommodation policy can be found at: [ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy](http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy).

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

[ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy](http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy).

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available

at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip>

“Safewalk” Program:

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night: call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot pay booths.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk/>

Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources:

Have a question, but not sure where to start? The new Arts Students’ Centre (ASC) is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at SS102, call us at 403-220-3580 or email us at

ascarts@ucalgary.ca. You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at

<http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate> which has detailed information on common academic concerns.

For program planning and advice, contact the Student Success Centre (formerly the Undergraduate programs Office) at (403) 220-5881 or visit them in their new space on the 3rd Floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at (403) 210-ROCK [7625] or visit them at the MacKimmie Library Block.

Contact for Students Union Representatives for the Faculty of Arts:

arts1@su.ucalgary.ca, arts2@su.ucalgary.ca, arts3@su.ucalgary.ca, arts4@su.ucalgary.ca

Contact for Students Ombudsman’s Office: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/ombuds/role>

Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI):

"At the University of Calgary, feedback provided by students through the Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) survey provides valuable information to help with evaluating instruction, enhancing learning and teaching, and selecting courses (www.ucalgary.ca/usri). Your responses make a difference – please participate in USRI Surveys."

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is an extremely serious offence. Please read the following information carefully. The penalty routinely recommended by the English Department for documented plagiarism is failure of the course in which the offence occurred; academic probation is also routinely applied at the Faculty level. Suspension or expulsion can result from severe or repeated plagiarism.

The University Calendar states:

1. Plagiarism - Essentially plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Most commonly plagiarism exists when:
 - a) the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test),
 - b) parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author,
 - c) the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source, and/or,
 - d) a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted.

Plagiarism occurs when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement, or when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. Citing your sources in a bibliography is not enough, because a bibliography does not establish which parts of a student's work are taken from other sources. MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose. Advice on adequate documentation can be found at the following web sites:
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

Students who are absent from class assessments (tests, participation activities, or other assignments) should inform their instructors as soon as possible. Instructors may request that evidence in the form of documentation be provided. If the reason provided for the absence is acceptable, instructors may decide that any arrangements made can take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test. For information on possible forms of documentation, including statutory declarations, please see
<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STATEMENT ON PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT

According to the University Calendar; <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-2.html>
“The University of Calgary community has undertaken to be guided by the following statements of purpose and values: to promote free inquiry and debate, to act as a community of scholars, ..., to respect, appreciate, and encourage diversity, [and] to display care and concern for community”. The Department of English, like the university as a whole, is committed to a “positive and productive learning and working environment.” This environment is characterized by appreciation and encouragement of diversity and respect for the dignity of all persons: students, support staff, and faculty. The department will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour, such as threatening gestures, threatening or abusive verbal or written communication (including e-mails), or any conduct that “seriously disrupts the lawful education and related activities of students and/or university staff”. Any cases of such misconduct should be reported immediately to the department Head, who, depending on the nature and severity of the incident, may then take further appropriate action.