



**FACULTY OF ARTS**  
**Department Of English**

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**ENGL 265: Introductory Creative Writing**  
**Fall 2021**

**Class Scheduled (Tuesdays/Thursdays/15:30 – 16:45/online/synchronous)**

<b>Instructor</b>	Professor Aritha van Herk
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:vanherk@ucalgary.ca">vanherk@ucalgary.ca</a>
<b>Web Page:</b>	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
<b>Prof. Van Herk Office Hours:</b>	Available for video consultations. ZOOM Office hours Wednesdays, 15:00 to 16:30, OR by appointment. <a href="https://ucalgary.zoom.us/j/94097016412">https://ucalgary.zoom.us/j/94097016412</a> Meeting ID: 940 9701 6412 Passcode: <a href="#">408277</a>

Tuesdays, 15:30 – 16:45: Synchronous Classes by ZOOM, join through D2L

You are expected to attend, and if possible, to keep your camera on.

Thursdays, 15:30 – 16:45: Seminars by ZOOM, join through D2L

You are expected to attend, and if possible, to keep your camera on.

Each one of you has been assigned to a seminar where, in a smaller group, you will engage with the work of writing and workshoping.

**Seminar Leaders**

Dania Idriss – [didriss@ucalgary.ca](mailto:didriss@ucalgary.ca)

Marc Lynch – [mhlynch@ucalgary.ca](mailto:mhlynch@ucalgary.ca)

Jamie Michaels – [jamie.michaels@ucalgary.ca](mailto:jamie.michaels@ucalgary.ca)

Omar Ramadan – [omar.ramadan1@ucalgary.ca](mailto:omar.ramadan1@ucalgary.ca)

Shazia Ramji – [shaziahafiz.ramji@ucalgary.ca](mailto:shaziahafiz.ramji@ucalgary.ca)

Cristalle Smith – [cristalle.smith1@ucalgary.ca](mailto:cristalle.smith1@ucalgary.ca)

Leah van Dyk – [leah.vandyk@ucalgary.ca](mailto:leah.vandyk@ucalgary.ca)

**Course description:**

This course provides instruction in basic elements of technique and craft crucial to Creative Writing, emphasizing the centrality of research, reading, and revision to literary work.

Students will be introduced to the basic tools and elements of literary writing (**NOT** genre writing). The course is divided into four areas, covering research skills pertinent to Creative Writing, and work in prose, poetry, and another form (dialogue, drama, or narrative). Tuesday's ZOOM lectures will introduce students to different aspects of writing, key considerations for effective craft, as well as some discussion of examples from the text. Thursday's seminars will focus on discussion of student writing, conducted according to the workshop model. All students are expected to engage in productive, meaningful discussion about writing assignments, applying the ideas learned from initial lectures. 10% of your grade takes into account the quality of your contribution to the experience of the workshop through your preparation, attendance, and discussion over the course of the term.

There is no pre-requisite for this course. Students do not need to have written anything prior to taking this course. However, this course presumes that students are interested in writing, and will undertake to learn through practice. Dedicated creation and editorial revision, as well as close reading, are essential for success in this class. The textbook for this course offers a practical guide, providing background, basic knowledge, and an anthology of work useful as models for discussion.

**If you are taking this course because you believe that it will be easy, you will be disappointed.**

**If you are taking this course because you are interested in language and creativity, you will be intrigued.**

**This class requires steady and ongoing work, handing in writing assignments during the term, in-person attendance at synchronous classes, and serious focus.**

**Students do not sit and write in class; we are not in high school.**

**Students' work will be discussed in the seminar workshops in a critical but constructive way, enabling you to revise and improve your writing.**

This course takes place **ONLINE** via Desire2Learn (D2L) and Zoom. To best succeed, students are encouraged to complete their asynchronous assignments using the D2L learning environment and the required synchronous Zoom sessions. When unable to participate live due to a time difference or unforeseen circumstances, please inform the instructor in advance.

Participation/attendance is an important aspect of this course; you are graded on it.

This class will meet as a whole synchronously every Tuesday, 15:30 to 16:45.

Each of you has been assigned to a smaller group with a seminar leader; your seminars will meet synchronously every Thursday, 15:30 to 16:45.

#### **\*COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Upon successful completion of this course students will have:

- practiced writing in the genres of fiction, poetry, and narrative/dialogue/drama
- been given hands-on instruction in primary and secondary source research as inspiration for writing
- begun to develop individual and sustained writing practice
- developed increased understanding of language, image, description, dialogue and narrative
- begun to develop critical tools with which to analyze writing and key issues in the area of communication
- come to understand and demonstrate appropriate social conduct and knowledge of cross-cultural differences when working with peers in class contexts

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

Required: *Write Moves: A Creative Writing Guide and Anthology*, by Nancy Pagh.

The book is available from the bookstore, physically and virtually.

#### **Learning technology requirements:**

There is a D2L site for this course where the Course Outline, the Class Schedule, and other relevant class resources and materials will be posted (see [d2L.ucalgary.ca](http://d2L.ucalgary.ca)).

In order to successfully experience learning at the University of Calgary, students taking online courses are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security, and malware updates;
- A current and updated web browser;

- Webcam (built-in or external);
- Microphone and speaker (built-in or external), or headset with microphone;
- Current antivirus and/or firewall software enabled;
- Broadband internet connection.

Most current laptops will have a built-in webcam, speaker, and microphone.

### **Assessments and Evaluation: how you will be graded**

Workshop Participation and Overall Participation (based on timely submission of material for seminars, lecture and workshop attendance, discussion and critical acumen in seminars): 10%

Inspired by Research piece, any genre (4 pages) 15%

Prose writing (8 pages): 15%

Poetry writing: (8 pages) 15%

Choice of Narrative/Drama/Dialogue writing: (8 pages) 15%

Final portfolio of substantially revised and NEW work in different genres to be submitted to Professor van Herk (maximum 20 pages): 30%

### **TOTAL 100%**

**\*\*There is NO FINAL EXAM in this class. You are assessed on your writing and participation.**

**\*\*Students must complete ALL assignments to receive a passing grade.**

**One missing assignment will result in an F.**

- Detailed records on attendance and in-class work will be used in the calculation of your participation mark. Attendance is an aspect of participation. <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-3.html>
- Students are expected to attend class regularly and to be fully present and engaged in class activities and discussions. These are part of the participation grade, as outlined in the assessment components section above. If for reasons of illness or other unusual event students miss a class session, they should contact the instructor.
- **There is NO EXAM in this course. Students are graded on their writing, their workshopping, and their participation.**
- **Late Assignments or Absences:**
- Assignments submitted after the deadline in the course outline will be penalized with the loss of a third of a grade (for example, an A- to B+) for each business day (not class) that the assignment is overdue.
- **I am thoroughly sick of the word “thing” standing in for every object, event, emotion, or idea. Use of the word “thing” in your final portfolio will be penalized with the loss of a third of grade (for example, from an A- to a B+). One of the goals of this class: expand your vocabulary.**
- All term assignments are due to your seminar instructor via D2L
- Your final portfolio must be submitted as a doc or docx e-mail attachment to Professor van Herk ([vanherk@ucalgary.ca](mailto:vanherk@ucalgary.ca)) by the due date on the Class Schedule.
- It is your responsibility to keep backup copies of all assignments in case of technical glitch or loss.

### **Grading System:**

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

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)

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 your term writing, your performance in workshops,

your participation, and your final portfolio. All written assignments are graded (using the letter system) and returned to you.

Your attendance and engagement are part of your participation grade. You are expected to attend both lectures and seminars, and to use what you learn to enhance the quality of your writing.

Following is a detailed description of how Creative Writing is graded:

**A-/A/A+: 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 engaged with sophistication and elegance. A+ is a grade earned only in very rare instances, for work that is absolutely stellar.

**B+/B/B- range: 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+/C/C- range: 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 definitely needs 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 range: 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 or is flippant; no work has been done at all, or work is clichéd or derivative.

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 is between two letter grades.

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

**Conduct:**

As members of the University community, students, employees, and academic staff are expected to demonstrate behaviour that promotes and maintains a positive and productive learning environment. Academic conduct is outlined in the University of Calgary Calendar, and the Code of Conduct. Policy and procedures, including Non-Academic Misconduct, can be found at: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Academic or non-academic misconduct will NOT be tolerated. Every e-mail, every text that you send, every comment that you make (on ZOOM, on D2L, or in Chat) is public, not anonymous, and is part of your university record. Inappropriate comments of any nature will not be tolerated. Racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic or any other prejudicial comments will be dealt with appropriately.

**USE OF INTERNET AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES IN CLASS**

Laptops and mobile devices are of course necessary tools for this online course but must be used in a manner appropriate to formal course and classroom activities. Please refrain from accessing websites and resources that may be distracting to you or other learners during class time. You are not to take screen shots, surf the net, text

message your friends, play games, or do assignments for a different class. Cell phone notifications are to be turned off during class; please do not entertain us with dings and ring tones.

Students must be aware of the University's Internet and email use policy, which can be found at <https://ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-electronic-resources-and-information-policy>

## **GUIDELINES FOR ZOOM SESSIONS**

Zoom is a video conferencing program that allows us to meet at specific (meaning synchronous) times for a "live" video conference, so that we have the opportunity to connect with each other virtually and discuss relevant course topics as a learning community. To help ensure that Zoom sessions are private, do not share the Zoom link or password with others, or on any social media platforms. Zoom links and passwords are intended ONLY for students registered in the course. Zoom recordings and materials presented in Zoom, including any teaching materials, must not be shared, distributed or published without the instructor's permission.

The use of video conferencing programs relies on participants to act ethically and with integrity; in accordance with the principles of fairness, good faith, and respect (as per the Code of Conduct). When entering Zoom, you play a role in helping to maintain an effective, safe and respectful learning environment. Please be mindful of how your behaviour affects others and do show everyone courtesy and respect.

Participants are required to use names officially associated with their UCID (legal or preferred names listed in the Student Centre) when engaging in these activities. Instructors/moderators can remove those whose names do not appear on class rosters. Non-compliance may be investigated under relevant University of Calgary conduct policies (e.g. Student Non-Academic Misconduct Policy). If participants have difficulties complying with this requirement, they should email the instructor of the class explaining why, so the instructor may consider whether to grant an exception, and on what terms. Please always use your first and last names to avoid confusion in this large class.

For more information on how to get the most out of your zoom sessions visit:

<https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/guidelines-for-zoom/>.

If you are unable to attend a Zoom session, please contact your instructor (e.g., to review a session). Please be prepared, as best as you are able, to join class in a quiet space that will allow you to be fully present and engaged in Zoom sessions. Students should ideally turn on their webcam. The instructor may record online Zoom class sessions for the purposes of supporting student learning in this class – such as making the recording available for review of the session or for students who miss a session. Students will be advised before the instructor initiates a recording of a Zoom session. These recordings will be used to support student learning only and will not be shared or used for any other purpose.

### **Zoom protocol**

- Close ALL other programs not pertinent to the class, on your device.
- Make sure you have adequate headphones that allow you to speak and to hear the instructor.
- Attend Zoom sessions from a quiet place. Set up a Zoom background if there is activity going on behind you.
- Keep your microphone on mute unless it is your turn to speak.
- If enabled by the instructor, use the chat function to ask questions and participate during a session. You may NOT privately message classmates.
- Multiple classes in Zoom can be fatiguing given the demanding visual cues our brains try to process. The following tips can help manage Zoom fatigue:
  - o Choose "Speaker View" so you can focus your attention on one speaker
  - o If possible, attend Zoom classes in a quiet environment with minimal distractions
  - o If possible, take breaks from screens between Zoom sessions and practice Zoom well-being.

It is recommended that you follow these guidelines when attending Zoom sessions, but even with the best protections, inappropriate activity may occur. If an incident that affects your learning or ability to focus or participate takes place, talk to your course instructor immediately. Should you suspect your class has been disrupted by individuals outside of the class, or a security incident has occurred, you can report incidences to IT Security.

Contact the IT Support Center at 403.220.5555 or [itsupport@ucalgary.ca](mailto:itsupport@ucalgary.ca).

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

1. Class attendance is required. You will have difficulty passing if you do not attend synchronous sessions on ZOOM, if you do not write regularly, and if you do not read (for the seminars) 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. It is unwise to try to write three poems the night before they are due. Students who work steadily throughout the term perform better than students who binge-write. Special pleading (dry spells or broken fingers) is not countenanced: writing is a matter of discipline, not excuses. However, if you are ill or are experiencing other difficulties, do let us know so that appropriate accommodation can be made for your circumstances.
3. The work you submit to the seminars and the work you submit in your final portfolio must be double-spaced, with at least 1-inch margins, and must use a clear font so that it can be read easily. Ensure that your name and your student number is on every submission and that the pages are numbered in sequence. **All writing must be submitted online using D2L Dropbox.**
4. This course is an introduction to literary writing, not a course in how to get published or what is trendy. We are more concerned with writing than we are with its marketing.
5. Students are asked to resist handing in genre writing, meaning fan fiction, crime, zombie, fantasy, horror, romance, science fiction, or inspirational writing. This is a course in literary writing. Replicating the conventions of popular forms will not stretch your literary muscles. The Department of English offers a course in genre writing where you can engage with those challenges.
6. Follow the separate Class Schedule for this class. Please use it to plan and to make effective use of your time.
7. Class participation (discussion) in the seminars is part of the graded component of this course.
8. The work that is circulated in your seminar deserves your full attention. However, it does NOT deserve the attention of your cousins, roommates, or friends. You **MUST** keep your colleagues' work confidential, and treat it with respect, as you would wish your own writing to be treated. Commenting on your colleagues or their work on social media is ethical misconduct and will be treated as such.
9. Work is to be discussed in seminars with intelligence, using literary terminology. See Guidelines for in-class discussion below.
10. If you are having difficulties of any kind, or if you have questions, please feel free to e-mail Professor van Herk or your seminar leader.
11. Professor van Herk holds a ZOOM office hour, but you can arrange for a meeting at another time. Do not hesitate to inform Professor van Herk or your seminar leader of potential difficulties, because we may be able to help you solve them.

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

Students will be marked for the quality of their engagement with the class, receiving merit for the insightfulness of their observations and the thoughtfulness of their contributions. The seminars provide an opportunity for students to offer responses and to pose critical questions. Students are marked not only upon the quality of their creative work, but also upon their ability to incorporate commentary into their practice so as to improve their writing throughout the term.

From the language that holds sway in daily conversation and from our abbreviated virtual 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. A key objective of this class is a focus on improving your eloquence by moving beyond such limited vernacular. Please take notes on our discussions of oral fixatives and try to enhance your eloquence in both oral and written form.

In terms of evaluative positions and their critical expression, your personal tastes are a less useful benchmark than objective appreciation. When reading any text, the questions you must confront are not whether or not you “liked” the material, but whether it is convincing, effective, and interestingly developed within the writing. If you determine that some aspect of the writing works well, explain what and why. And if you find some aspect of the story 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 encounter sensitive material, material that will challenge your thinking or upset your expectations. These challenges are about enhancing your clarity and capacity for critical thinking. They are part of an intellectual education.

#### **Guidelines for submission of work in seminars**

Your small-group seminar is structured as a workshop and is intended to provide feedback to students from seminar leaders and peers. Material to be workshopped should be posted one week in advance of the seminar so that students in the workshop have time to read the work of their peers for commentary. All work must be posted online so as to be available to the other participants in the seminar.

All assigned readings by your seminar leader are mandatory for the course. Students must complete ALL assignments over the term, responding to feedback from comments by classmates so as to improve their writing, which should be evident in the final portfolio submission of work to Professor van Herk.

Assignments are due by the start of class on the due date.

#### **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.

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 work that 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 the portfolio or assignments beyond the deadline of five days after the end of lectures, an Application for Deferment of Term Work must be completed. It is the student's responsibility to initiate this process with the instructor.

**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 presentations, 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 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 teaching assistants. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary.

**Research Ethics**

To ensure your university success, this course includes instruction in primary and tertiary research, with particular relevance to Creative Writing. While the exercises involving this work are required and part of your evaluation, you may **optionally** agree to take part in a study to gather information about the effectiveness of this module. The title of the study is ***"Integrating Libraries, Archives and Special Collections into a Large Online Introductory Creative Writing Course."*** This study had been approved by University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (REB21-1182).



**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 evaluate teaching, enhance student learning, and guide students as they select courses.