



**FACULTY OF ARTS
Department Of English**

COURSE OUTLINE

ENGL 265: Introductory Creative Writing

Fall 2022

Tues/Thurs 3:30-4:45 p.m.

In-Person

EEEL 161

Instructor	Dr. Joshua Whitehead
Email:	joshua.whitehead@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
Office Hours:	Wednesday, 11:30-12:30 p.m. or by appointment SS1031

Tuesdays, 3:30-4:45 p.m.: Lecture (EEEL 161)

Thursdays, 3:30-4:45 p.m.: Workshop (TBD)

Seminar Instructors (Thursdays):

TBD

Each student has been assigned to a seminar where, in a smaller group, they will engage with the work of writing and workshoping under the guidance and instruction of their seminar instructor.

Email Policy:

I am happy to reply to short, specific questions via email and will answer as promptly as possible (dependent upon time, these replies can take up to 2-3 business days to respond to a given email). However, I cannot guarantee that you will have a reply within a specific amount of time, thus, for anything pressing or of importance I encourage you to contact your seminar instructor with any immediate questions. If you have detailed questions on the course material, I highly recommend you visit me during my office hour or e-mail to book an appointment.

Course description:

This course provides instruction in basic elements of technique and craft crucial to Creative Writing, emphasizing the centrality of reading and revision to literary work. Students will be introduced to the basic tools and elements of literary writing by focusing on unconventional texts and learning modalities that highlight apocalypse, grief, Indigeneity, diaspora, and interrogating the world politically through narration. Here we will focus on topics such as: writing from the body, relationality, mourning, popular culture as setting, and the division (or lack thereof) of personal/political writing.

We will focus on three forms: the novel (of which you will focus on short story), poetry, and creative non-fiction. Tuesdays will focus on the primary texts, exercises in close reading, and exemplary passages for us to use as waypoints in your writing for this class. Thursdays will focus on the discussion of you and your peers' writing in a workshop model alongside your seminar instructors. All students are expected to engage in productive, meaningful discussion about writing assignments, applying the ideas learned from initial lectures within their seminars. 20% of your grade accounts for the quality of your contribution to the experience of the workshop through your preparation, attendance, and discussion over the course of the term. As writers, either new or emerging, we are consistently in community and collaboration together—it is imperative that we maintain an ethics of care, reciprocity, fierce listening, and graceful engagement with one another both in lecture and seminar.

Your work will be discussed in seminar workshops in a critical but constructive way that enables you and your peers to revise and improve your writing—meaning, should you want to receive an A in this regard, you need to do much more than simply announce what you “enjoyed” about the piece, but rather, give concrete examples by citing your peers' texts and noting where/how it may need improvement or could be fleshed out further if that writer may have rushed or oversaw a key element that *you* see as a writer. Your workshop models are intended to show you two key components of writing: one, that writing is not a solitary act, in fact it's quite communal; and two, editing and revision are the real backbones to strong writing.

Although this course does not count toward an embedded Certificate in Creative Writing designation (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/creative-writing-certificate.html>) 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.

There are no prerequisites to take this course.

Course learning outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will have:

- practiced writing craft in at least two of the three Creative Writing forms covered in the course
- begun to develop their own Creative Writing practice
- begun to develop their own individual “voice” in Creative Writing
- learned the rudiments of where to “find” story or poetry or non-fiction
- developed a concrete understanding of how image, metaphor, and narrative (if applicable) may work in these three forms
- begun to develop critical tools with which to analyze Creative Writing
- been introduced to a diverse roster of authors focusing on BIPOC writers

Texts and readings:

McCarthy, Cormac. *The Road*. Vintage Books, 2006.

Vuong, Ocean. *Time is a Mother*. Penguin Press, 2022.

Caetano, Cody. *Half-Bads in White Regalia*. Hamish Hamilton, 2022.

Learning technology requirements:

Students are welcome to bring laptops, recorders, and/or any other accessibility technologies they may require to class. The use of electronics for recreation, texting, gaming, and/or streaming services is prohibited—these distract your peers around you as well as disrupt the flow of the

class. Students caught will be asked to leave class if this becomes a pattern. We all need to strive to create a supportive and collective ecosystem of a class for the learning benefit of all. There is a D2L site for this course which contains class resources, information, and materials (see d2L.ucalgary.ca).

Assessments and Evaluation:

Participation/Critical Acumen (20%):

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 below.

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 assignments in progress and to receive oral peer feedback on at least two creative writing works from September to December.

To receive an A in this section: participation is essential to ensuring a successful workshop—this means that all students must come to the seminar having read assigned texts and your peers' work prior. Further, you must come to workshop prepared with feedback, notes, and/or revisionary comments for those being workshopped. You are expected to come prepared with constructive, informed, and intelligent criticism every week.

All assigned readings are mandatory for this course. Students must submit between 2-3 (3 is ideal but not always possible) workshop submissions over the term, responding in their Process Statements to general feedback from comments by classmates in seminars and/or class instruction to improve their writing, which should be evident in the final assignment submitted to Dr. Whitehead.

Your grade will be broken down into two sections: 10% being allocated to activity and attendance within both workshop and lecture (attendance will be taken) and 10% being allocated to feedback/responses as noted by your seminar instructor and in your Process Statements.

Workshop Submission Length:

300-350 words (fiction and non-fiction) and 2 pages of poetry. All creative writing works must be in 12-pt font, double spaced (for fiction and non-fiction), have your name and student number on every page (using a footer), as well as have pages numbered (top right header). Do not wait until late in the semester to choose to sign up for a workshopping slot (done with your seminar instructors) –it is not the seminar instructor's responsibility if you have waited too long to choose a date for workshopping your material. If there is no longer time in the seminars to workshop your creative writing, a 0 will be allocated which will effect your participation grade. The workshop does not imply group work (although that may be done in lectures) but rather all-class participation under your seminar instructor's direction.

Process Statements

This is a short essay of roughly 350 words where you as a writer discuss your creative and editorial processes. You might want to talk about what tools you used from either lecture or seminar sections of our class; how your seminar instructor or your peers' helped you revise and strengthen your piece through workshops; and as an overall exegesis or "artist's statement" noting where you found the central idea for your creative writing assignment (albeit inspired from a primary text, a witnessed or experienced act in life, etc.). Overall, you are not to provide synopsis or plot of your creative writing assignments, as we will have already read it by this point, but use this space to explain the process, literary and stylistic tools used, and noting your editorial process. As with an essay submitted in a standard English class, you will be graded on the quality of the writing and grammar, the clarity of your ideas, and the essay's coherence and logical flow. All process statements must be in 12-point font, double spaced, include your name and student number, include a Works Cited for any and all primary sources used (including class texts), as well as be paginated.

In-Class Reading Quizzes (10%):

See reading schedule for dates—prioritize being here for these dates. All quizzes will be done in the lecture portions of our class. Should you need to miss the date a quiz is scheduled, let Dr. Whitehead know ASAP before the class to schedule a time to take the quiz. Secondary quizzes will not be given out should you miss without notice.

Assignment 1 (20%): Fiction

This assignment should be an expansion of a piece that has been workshopped, but this is not required if you have not yet been workshopped. You are to submit a short story with a complete story arc in the range of 7-8 pages of polished fiction. You must also include a 350-word process statement that details how you incorporated feedback from either your peers in workshop, your seminar instructor, and/or Dr. Whitehead.

Assignment 2 (20%): Poetry or Non-Fiction

This assignment should be an expansion of a piece that has been workshopped. You are to submit non-fiction with a complete story arc in the range of 7-8 pages of polished writing **or** 7-8 pages of polished poetry. You must also include a 350-word process statement that details how you incorporated feedback from either your peers in workshop, your seminar instructor, and/or Dr. Whitehead.

Final Assignment (30%): New Work in Form of Choice

This assignment **cannot** be an expansion or rewrite of a piece that has already been submitted for either assignment 1 or 2. You are, however, free to use other writing(s) that you may have workshopped and not submitted for assignment.

7-8 pages of polished fiction in the form of a short story

7-8 pages of polished non-fiction
7-8 pages of poetry

Again, you must submit a 350-word process statement that details how you incorporated feedback from either your peers in workshop, your seminar instructor, and/or Dr. Whitehead.

Important Facts to Keep in Mind:

If you are taking this course because **you believe that it will be easy, you will be disappointed**. This class requires steady and ongoing work, handing in writing assignments during the term, in-person attendance at both lectures and workshops, and serious focus.

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

Students do not sit and write in class; we are not in high school. While prompts or ideas may emerge in class, all writing will be done outside of class with what you idealize as your “stronger” writing brought to your workshops for revision and improvement.

Forms of writing not accepted: fantasy, fanfiction, science fiction, love letters, journal entries, and/or body horror.

Writing that contains the use of murder and/or rape of a character as instigation or as plot device will not be accepted.

Writing that contains violence for the sake of violence (grotesque depictions of violence, gratuitous violence, “insanity” or cliché forms of mania, particularly pertaining to women, and/or sexual assault included)

Writing that contains racial epithets, slurs, and/or derogatory language is also not accepted—should this be an important factor for something such as historical writing or personal writing as a queer and/or BIPOC person, there are ways to work around the use of these via inference and world building.

To keep you focussed on mastering the basic skills of fiction, poetry, and non-fiction, as well as building your lexicon and avoiding the overreliance on overdetermined words, students are not permitted to use the following words (one percentage grade will be deducted for every instance these words occur in an assignment): abyss, beauty, dawn, death, future, heart, hope, muse, mystery, soul, truth, “thought” as a noun, “dream as a noun,” and/or “thing”. We are trying to help you focus in on language and develop a nuanced and direct vocabulary that addresses, head-on, the emotions, feelings, dialogues, and/or scenes you are trying to craft with verisimilitude. This form of direct writing will aid you in all forms of writing, essayistic and academic included.

The point of these limitations is to help you avoid clichéd writing, to be direct with your thoughts (i.e. using “thing” as a stand in for a noun or verb will not work here), and to focus on

the mundane and minute (as in small) as far more interesting than the grand and exuberant. In my experience, smallness and the personal are often the most universally applicable and interesting in writing. Most of the above list reflects plots based on recycled, well-worn television and movie plots that are not indicative of writing as an original form.

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 that is 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>

Policy on use of electronic devices:

Include information on the use of internet, laptops and devices during course meetings and exams. If you do not stipulate otherwise, it will be assumed that computers and calculators cannot be used during exams.

For example:

The use of laptop and mobile devices in class is acceptable when used in a manner appropriate to the course and classroom activities. Please refrain from accessing websites and resources that may be distracting to you or for other learners during class time. Students are responsible for being aware of the University's [Internet and email use policy](#). Electronic devices are not permitted during the Final Examination.

Grading System:

Explanation of how you arrive at final grades: whether you use the 4-point system entirely or a combination of percentages and letter grades. If, the latter, please note that the department has now standardized the percentage conversion scale.

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

Clarify the following:

- Provide details of other scoring systems for individual assignments such as exams, tests or quizzes if letter grades and/or percentages are not used in the first instance.
- Although the A+ is solely an honorific that entails no additional points in the four-point system, the course instructor will employ this mark to distinguish superlative work that far exceeds expectations in style, correctness, intellectual depth and breadth, sophistication, and originality.

- The interpretation of the undergraduate university grading system can be found at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-1-1.html>
 - Or, for graduate courses: please refer to the Graduate Grading System at the following link: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/grad/current/gs-h-1.html>
- There is no D- grade.

Notes to instructors:

- You cannot change your grading system after the course outline has been approved;
- All of the graded assessments and their weightings must be recorded and submitted to the department in your final gradebook at the end of term;
- In borderline cases, rounding up or down for final grades can happen at the instructor's discretion; however, it is a good idea either to clarify this to students, or to provide a grading system that makes borderline situations clear.

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. 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.

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
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 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 [delete section if not applicable]

- If a student is interested in undertaking an assignment that will involve collecting information from members of the public, they should speak with the course instructor and consult the CFREB Ethics (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/researchers/ethics-compliance/cfreb>) before beginning the assignment.
- If students are going to be used as research subjects or expected to conduct research (such as interviews), a statement about this expectation must be included. Please note that if you plan to have students conduct research for class, you must get ethics approval for the course.

Sexual violence policy:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Sexual-and-Gender-Based-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.