



**FACULTY OF ARTS
Department of English**

COURSE OUTLINE

**ENGL 265: Introductory Creative Writing
Winter 2022**

Instructor	Dr. Suzette Mayr
Email:	smayr@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
Office Hours:	Via Zoom Thursdays, 1:30-2:30 pm, or by appointment https://ucalgary.zoom.us/j/92942387121 Meeting ID: 929 4238 7121 Passcode: 685579

Tuesdays, 15:30 – 16:45: Synchronous classes via Zoom (in D2L). Students are expected to attend – the material discussed in Tuesday lectures will apply to the seminars on Thursdays.

Thursdays, 15:30 – 16:45: Seminars in person (or via Zoom depending on UCalgary pandemic protocols). Students are expected to attend.

Special Note:

Student participation in Discord or any other backchannelling servers, apps or venues is NOT permitted in this class. Discord leads to the spreading of incorrect information (often resulting in lower grades), and/or class obstruction. If you have questions about the course or assignments, please consult your seminar instructor or the course instructor or post a question in the FAQ section of the course D2L site.

Seminar Instructors (Thursdays):

Each student has been assigned to a seminar where, in a smaller group, they will engage with the work of writing and workshopping under the guidance of a seminar instructor/Teaching Assistant.

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Email Policy:

I am happy to reply to short, specific questions via email and will answer as promptly as possible (depending on the time in the semester it takes me approximately 2-3 days to respond to a given email). However, I cannot guarantee that you will have a reply within a specific amount of time, and I

encourage you to contact your seminar instructor/Teaching Assistant with any immediate questions. If you have detailed questions on the course material it is more appropriate to see me during Zoom office hours, or make an appointment to meet via Zoom.

Use and abuse of electronic devices in class:

Laptops and mobile devices are 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 other learners during class time. You are not to take screen shots, google unrelated sources, play games, engage in social media, text message friends, or do assignments for a different class, etc. I reiterate: Discord or any other backchannelling servers, apps or venues are NOT permitted in this class. Students are responsible for being aware of the University's [Internet and email use policy](#). Violation of the policy can lead to serious academic penalties and consequences.

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.

Tuesday's large Zoom lectures will introduce students to key considerations for effective writing craft, as well as some discussion of examples from the texts. Thursday's smaller 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 Tuesday lectures.

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.

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. Be aware that this class is not easy – the requirements are strenuous: the amount of time you spend on an assignment does not equal higher grades, and flippant work that does not adhere to the principles discussed in this course will be penalized.

Course learning outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will have:

- practiced writing craft in at least two of the three Creative Writing genres 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 plays;
- 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 handouts and texts.

Texts and readings:

- *Pressure Cooker Love Bomb* (book) by Sharanpal Ruprai– available from the UCalgary bookstore
- Handouts posted to the course D2L site
- A comprehensive dictionary and thesaurus are recommended

Learning technology requirements:

Students will need to have access to a laptop computer or smartphone in class time. There is a D2L site for this course which contains required readings and other relevant class resources and materials (see d2l.ucalgary.ca). In order to successfully engage in their learning experiences at the University of Calgary, students taking online, remote and blended 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;
- 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.

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 refer to student feedback and seminar instructor/Teaching Assistant feedback from workshops in your Process Statements for Assignments #1, #2, #3 and reflect on that feedback.

All submissions must be typed, and when posted in Word to Dropbox, must be double-spaced (except poetry: 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	20%
Includes regular, timely posting to seminar discussion board of creative writing for seminar workshop (10%); workshop attendance and active workshop participation and response to other students' work Thursdays in-person or during Thursday Zoom seminars (10%)	
In-class Reading Quizzes	10%
Assignment #1: 8-10-Minute Play assignment due to TA via Dropbox on D2L Due Friday, Feb. 18	20%

This assignment can be an expansion of a piece that has been workshopped, but this is not required.

A play with a complete story arc that takes 8-10 minutes on stage, ie, 8-10 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 Tuesday classes or Thursday seminars

Assignment #2: Poetry OR Fiction assignment due to TA via Dropbox on D2L 20%
Due Friday, March 18

This assignment can be an expansion of a piece that has been workshopped, but this is not required. 8 pages of polished poetry + 350-word Process Statement incorporating student/Teaching Assistant feedback and/or creative writing principle discussed in class or seminar, **OR** 7-8 pages of polished fiction + 350-word process statement incorporating student feedback and/or creative writing principle discussed in Tuesday classes or Thursday seminars

Assignment #3: NEW work in genre of your choice due to Dr. Mayr via Dropbox on D2L 30%
Due Thursday, April 14 (11:59 pm)

Note: this assignment CANNOT be an expansion or rewrite of a piece that has been workshopped or already submitted.

7-8 pages fiction + 350-word process statement incorporating student/Teaching Assistant feedback and/or creative writing principle discussed in class or seminar **OR**

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

8-10-page play + 350-word process statement incorporating student/Teaching Assistant feedback and/or creative writing principle discussed in Tuesday classes or Thursday seminars

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 by students and Teaching Assistant 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. Process Statements in Assignments #1 or #2 that are missing discussion of feedback given in your seminars by students or the seminar instructor and/or principles discussed in the larger Tuesday lecture will automatically lose 10% of the grade for that assignment.**

There is no final exam in this course.

There are no extra credit assignments in this course.

Participation:

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 above.

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’ posted 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 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 so as to improve their writing, which should be evident in the final Assignment #3 submitted to Dr. Mayr.

Workshop submission length:

300-350 words (fiction) / 1-2 pages playwriting / 2 pages poetry in 12-pt font. Do not wait until late in the semester to choose to post your work for workshopping on the seminar discussion board – **it is not the seminar instructor/Teaching Assistant’s responsibility if you have waited too long to choose a date for posting material and there is no longer time in the seminars to workshop your work.**

The workshop format does not imply group work, but all-class participation under the seminar leader’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 (January-April), students are not permitted to post creative writing that contains 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).

If in doubt regarding language use in a Creative Writing piece, please discuss this with your seminar instructor prior to posting your piece, or opt for the “radio edit” version of your text.

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.

Guidelines for submission of work in seminars:

Under the direction of each seminar leader, students will determine when they are to post their writing to the seminar discussion board for workshopping. Approximately five students will post their work per week for workshopping the following week. Late penalties will apply.

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.

Late Assignments:

Assignments submitted after the deadline without express clearance from the instructor or seminar instructor/Teaching Assistant will be penalized with the loss of a third of a grade (an A- to B+) for each calendar 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 percentage and letter grade (and corresponding 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	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

The interpretation of the undergraduate university grading system can be found at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-1-1.html>

Students must reach the minimum percentage threshold for the grade range to receive that letter grade (e.g., to receive an A- a student will have surpassed the minimum threshold of 80.00% in the course).

A+: Outstanding work

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 original and is treated in a fresh, new way, and the form chosen is the most suitable possible. Writing in this range employs every element of fiction, poetry, or drama 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 (if applicable), and an original 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 (if applicable) 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 predictable or overly familiar.

F: No credit

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

Rubrics

Playwriting

	Excellent (A)		Good (B)		Satisfactory (C+)		Unsatisfactory (D)		Absent (F)	N/A
Beginning										
Middle										
End										
Conflict / Struggle / Something at Stake										
Character										
Rising Action / Escalation										
Dialogue / Language										
Stage-ability/Live stage do-ability (eg: a cast of 10 or more? Too many scene changes? An elaborate car chase or a horse										

parade? Then it is not "stageable.")										
Originality										

Fiction

	Excellent (A)		Good (B)		Satisfactory (C+)		Unsatisfactory (D)		Absent (F)	N/A
Beginning										
Middle (atmosphere, narrative development, momentum, something at stake)										
End										
Character / Characterization										
Structure and format (narrator, literary form, etc.)										
Language (eg: sentence flow, distinct character speech patterns, imagery, metaphors, vs. clichéd, banal, bland, etc.)										
Originality										

Poetry

	Excellent (A)		Good (B)		Satisfactory (C+)		Unsatisfactory (D)		Not considered (F)	N/A
Form / Technical elements (eg: if you're using rhyme, there needs to be a good reason to; if you're using left justification, there needs to be a good reason to; if you're capitalizing the first letter of every line, there needs to be a good reason to)										
Language (eg: diction, syntax, imagery, metaphor, voice, avoidance of clichés)										
Originality										

Rubric for Process Statement

Process Statements in Assignments #1, #2, or #3 that are missing discussion of feedback given in your seminars by students/Teaching Assistant and/or principles discussed in the larger Tuesday lecture will automatically lose 10% of the grade for that assignment.

Be sure to properly reference external information sources using the MLA style guide:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_style_introduction.html

A+: Outstanding Work

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: Excellent Work

The statement's thesis is clearly stated and obvious; ideas are original and focused; all main points are clearly stated and supported with specific examples; ideas are organized logically and flow easily; if applicable, research draws from reputable sources and uses the sources appropriately; writing has either minimal or no spelling and grammatical errors; "Works Cited" page (if applicable) is correctly formatted and in good order. This paper goes above and beyond the regular requirements for the assignment.

B range: Good Work

The essay topic is clear, and the essay has a definite thesis; ideas may show some glimmers of originality; specific examples are used to support the main arguments; spelling and grammatical errors are at a minimum; the research sources (if used) are for the most part reputable; perhaps some sections could be more clearly stated but clarity overall is not a problem; formatting errors at a minimum.

C range: Satisfactory Work

The essay's thesis is not as clear as it could be or is incomplete; ideas are not necessarily original but are still competent; essay needs work with recurring spelling and grammatical errors; occasional muddled logic; some points not clearly supported by evidence; contains other errors that perhaps get in the way of keeping the central argument as tight as it could be; too many formatting errors are distracting for the reader.

D range: Minimal Pass

Language is often unclear because of grammatical errors; thesis unclear or muddled or missing; topic wanders into unrelated or extremely tangential territory; research sources questionable or nonexistent; ideas are unsupported or unfocused; flow between ideas hard to discern; sloppy formatting.

F: Unsatisfactory

Writing has no cohesion and ideas are scattered or unclear; main topic hard to discern; no support for central arguments; major grammatical errors interfere with clarity.

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>

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.

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.