



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

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**ENGLISH 336: Introduction to Creative Writing Practice: Fiction**  
**Fall 2021**

**Class Schedule:** There will be 4 synchronous Zoom sessions throughout the term (**Sept. 09**, 2-3:15 pm; **Oct. 21**, 2-3:15 pm; **Nov. 18**, 2-3:15 pm; and **Dec. 09**, 2-3:15 pm), and each will be recorded. Otherwise, this class will take place online via Desire2Learn (D2L).

<b>Instructor</b>	Suzette Mayr (she/her/they/them)
<b>Email:</b>	smayr@ucalgary.ca
<b>Web Page:</b>	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Tuesdays, 3:30-4:30 pm via Zoom or by appointment Meeting ID: 961 2960 5329 Password: 716376
<b>Teaching Assistant (TA)</b>	Amy LeBlanc (she/her) ajleblan@ucalgary.ca Meetings by appointment

**Welcome to the University of Calgary**

On behalf of the University of Calgary Department of English, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta. The City of Calgary is also home to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III.

**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 3-4 days to respond to a given email). 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 via Zoom.

**Course description**

This course is an introduction to the art of fiction writing, with particular emphasis on the short prose form as the basis of an artistic practice. There are no pre-requisites for this course. This class will be conducted as an online creative writing workshop. Students are expected to read and write a great deal, to analyse published fiction by established authors, and to regularly post critiques of other students' work with constructive, informed, and intelligent criticism. In the first 1/2 of the course, students will:

- Post short, weekly **creative writing exercises** in groups of 4-6 students;
- Post weekly critiques of other groupmates' creative writing exercises;
- Post weekly analyses of published short fiction;
- Post weekly responses to one other student's analysis of a short fiction;
- Submit a rewrite of *one* of the above-noted creative writing exercises to Dr. Mayr via Dropbox.

In the second 1/2 of the course, students will:

- Post one, 3-5 page **short story** for a larger group to read and critique;
- Post weekly critiques of 4-6 other students' short stories;
- Post an analysis of Wayne Arthurson's novella *The Red Chesterfield*;
- Post a response to one other student's analysis of *The Red Chesterfield*;
- Submit a final short story to Dr. Mayr via Dropbox.

### **Course learning outcomes**

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

1. Identify elements of craft in fiction-writing, and be able to discuss and analyze what differentiates one writer's style and craft from another writer's;
2. Identify the elements that make up their own "voices" as writers;
3. Determine where to "find" story while embarking on their own creative writing practice;
4. Read fiction thoughtfully and critically from a writerly perspective;
5. Read fiction effectively from an editorial perspective, with a concentration on elements such as character, setting, language choice, and plot;
6. Write more clearly and effectively in general.

### **Texts and readings**

Arthurson, Wayne. *The Red Chesterfield* (novella) – available at the UCalgary bookstore

Kincaid, Jamaica. "Girl" (short story) – available on D2L

Malerba, Luigi. "Consuming the View" (short story) – available on D2L

Oates, Joyce Carol. "The Sky Blue Ball" (short story) – available on D2L

Walker, Alice. "The Flowers" (short story) – available on D2L

Woolf, Virginia. "Kew Gardens" (short story) – available on D2L

### **Learning technology requirements**

There is a D2L site for this course which contains required readings and other relevant class resources and materials (see [d2l.ucalgary.ca](http://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.

**Assignment #1: Discussion Board Posts (due date: Ongoing)**

**25%**

At the beginning of the course, please post an introduction of yourself to the class, and respond to one other student's introduction. Following that, in response to each published text and other students' posted stories or exercises, you must author one well-considered critique or analysis. Students may also post responses to other students' critiques, however, students cannot rebut a critique of *their own* work - they can only respond to a critique of *another student's* exercise or short story. This simulates the real world of publishing where writers rarely speak back to reviewers or critics. To ensure your written comments are respectful and relevant, please plan and re-read each comment carefully before posting it and remember that your audience will not have the benefit of social cues, tone of voice or body language. Consider composing your comments and posts in Word first. Racist, sexist, homophobic, or transphobic comments will not be tolerated in this class.

1. Introduce Yourself: 100-200 words (due Sept. 28, 11:59 pm, on D2L);
2. Respond to one other student introduction (due Oct. 05, 11:59 pm, on D2L);
2. Critiques: 100-250 words each, responding to other students' creative writing exercises and short stories throughout the semester;
3. Analyses: 200 words max each, responding to the following published fiction:
  - Malerba, Luigi. "Consuming the View" due Sept. 14, 11:59 pm
  - Walker, Alice. "The Flowers" due Sept. 21, 11:59 pm
  - Woolf, Virginia. "Kew Gardens" due Sept. 29, 11:59 pm
  - Kincaid, Jamaica. "Girl" due Oct. 06, 11:59 pm
  - Oates, Joyce Carol. "The Sky Blue Ball" due Oct. 12, 11:59 pm
  - Arthurson, Wayne. *The Red Chesterfield* due Oct. 19, 11:59 pm
4. Respond to one other student analysis of each published fiction:
  - Malerba, Luigi. "Consuming the View" due Sept. 21, 11:59 pm
  - Walker, Alice. "The Flowers" due Sept. 28, 11:59 pm
  - Woolf, Virginia. "Kew Gardens" due Oct. 05, 11:59 pm
  - Kincaid, Jamaica. "Girl" due Oct. 12, 11:59 pm
  - Oates, Joyce Carol. "The Sky Blue Ball" due Oct. 19, 11:59 pm
  - Arthurson, Wayne. *The Red Chesterfield* due Oct. 26, 11:59 pm

LATE POSTS WILL NOT RECEIVE CREDIT TOWARDS ASSIGNMENT #1: DISCUSSION BOARD POSTS.

**Assignment #2: 5 Fiction Exercises (each exercise 250 words max) 15%**

(due on D2L Sept. 14, 21, 28, Oct. 05, 12)

NB: THESE EXERCISES ARE PASS/FAIL. LATE EXERCISES WILL NOT RECEIVE CREDIT. STUDENTS IN THE CLASS ARE NOT OBLIGED TO GIVE FEEDBACK TO OTHER STUDENTS' LATE EXERCISES.

Because we are in unusual and challenging times with the Covid-19 pandemic, you can submit 4 of the 5 exercises and still receive full credit for this grade. Please double-space.

**Assignment #3: Best Exercise (250 words max) + Process Statement (250 words max) 15%**

(due Oct. 22, 11:59 pm, via Dropbox)

Your best fiction exercise (rewritten) + a process statement

Please double-space.

**Assignment #4: Short Story (500-750 words max) 20%**

(due/posted on D2L between Oct. 26-Nov. 30, depending on your group – a signup sheet will be posted later in the course so you can choose the date you will post your story)

Please double-space.

NB: STUDENTS IN THE CLASS ARE NOT OBLIGED TO GIVE FEEDBACK TO OTHER STUDENTS' LATE SHORT STORIES.

**Assignment #5: Final Short Story (750-900 words max) + Process Statement (250 words max)**

**25%**

(due via Dropbox, Dec. 10, 11:59 pm)

Please double-space.

**Some Strictures**

To keep students focused on mastering the basic skills of fiction, some strictures apply. For the duration of the course (Sept.-Dec.), students are 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 an exercise or story;
- 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, contact Dr. Mayr or Amy LeBlanc to preview your exercise or short story prior to posting it to the discussion board).

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.

**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 mentioned in discussion posts 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 exercise? Is there discussion of why a particular form was chosen for a piece of fiction? A voice for a particular character?), and the essay's general coherence and logical flow. **An assignment lacking a required process statement will automatically lose 20% of the grade for that assignment.**

### **Instructor Feedback**

Dr. Mayr will read all of the posts, and respond at least *once* to each student regarding their exercises in the first half of the course.

Amy LeBlanc as the Teaching Assistant for the course will read all of the critiques and responses, and may respond to you on a case-by-case basis.

### **Late Assignments**

The exercises that comprise Assignment #2 will not receive credit if submitted after the due date(s). Assignments #3, 4, and 5 submitted after the deadline will be penalized with the loss of a third of a grade (eg: an A- to B+) for each day that the assignment is overdue. No assignments will be accepted two weeks past the assignment deadline without the prior consent of the instructor. Late critiques or analyses posted about individual exercises or short stories or published works (Assignment #1) will not be considered or counted toward a grade when posted after the due date(s).

### **Additional Regulations**

There is **NO** final exam in this course. You do not have to submit every assignment in order to pass the course, but assignments that are not submitted will receive an F grade. There are no extra-credit assignments in this course.

### **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

The use of laptop and mobile devices in class is acceptable when used in a manner appropriate to the course and classroom activities during the synchronous Zoom sessions. 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](#).

### Grading System

Final grades are determined using a combination of percentages and letter grades:

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

Please note that, according to the University Calendar

(F.1) <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-1.html>, instructors may use their discretion when rounding upwards or downwards when the average of term work and exams is between two letter grades.

Please refer to the following grading criteria and rubrics for evaluation details.

### Grading Criteria for Creative Writing (Exercises and Short Stories)

#### A+: Outstanding work

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 exceeds expectations in style, correctness, intellectual depth and breadth, sophistication, and originality. This work has all of the characteristics of work described below in the A range, but exceeds this. The work is publishable in every way; mechanical and grammatical problems are nonexistent or at a minimum.

#### A range: Consistently excellent 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.

**Rubric for Creative Writing (Exercises and Short Stories)**

	Excellent (A)	Good (B)	Satisfactory (C+)	Unsatisfactory (D)	Absent (F)	N/A
Beginning						
Middle (atmosphere, narrative development, etc.)						
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									

**Rubric for Discussion Board Posts**

**Quality: Demonstrating critical thinking**

Your posts will be graded based on the degree of integration/use of the following approaches.

- Thoughtful, constructive, balanced critique of the work being discussed;
- Specificity rather than generalizations;
- Clear rationale for *why* a creative text being critiqued is working effectively or not;
- Avoid repeating peer-submitted ideas, but do acknowledge them;
- Build on the current discussion if applicable;
- Integrate concepts from the course or from former classes, and/or legitimate primary or secondary sources;
- Express a difference of opinion when it serves to explore all sides of an issue;
- Ask thought-provoking questions to foster new insights;
- Maintain a professional, respectful tone.

**Mechanics: Format and timing**

- Your posts should each be 200 words max in length when responding to published work; 100-250 words when providing feedback to other students’ exercises and between 100-350 words when providing feedback to other students’ short stories in the second ½ of the course;
- You are welcome to post responses and analyses beyond the requirement and engage in constructive, respectful discussions with other students on the discussion boards, but only your initial response will be graded;
- Consider composing your posts in Word first to perform a word count; do a spell-check and grammar-check; note your tone; and re-read your posts prior to publishing;
- 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](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_style_introduction.html)



<b>Discussion Post Criteria</b>	<b>Exceeds Expectations (A range)</b>	<b>Meets Expectations (B range)</b>	<b>Partially Meets Expectations (C range)</b>	<b>Does Not Meet Expectations (D-F range)</b>
Quality	Posts integrate/use all of the quality requirements	Posts integrate/use most of the quality requirements	Posts integrate/use some of the quality requirements	Posts have minimal integration/use of quality requirements

<b>Discussion Post Criteria</b>	<b>Exceeds Expectations (A range)</b>	<b>Meets Expectations (B range)</b>	<b>Partially Meets Expectations (C range)</b>	<b>Does Not Meet Expectations (D-F range)</b>
Mechanics	Posts integrate/use all of the quality requirements	Contributions comply with format and timeliness requirements	Contributions partially comply with format and timeliness requirements	Contributions do not comply with format and timeliness requirements

### **Rubric for Process Statement**

#### **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 unfocussed; 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.

### **Academic Integrity**

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

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

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

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

### **Grade appeals**

To pursue a Reassessment of Graded Term Work or a Reappraisal of an Academic Assessment,

Consult the [University Calendar](#) and request advice from the English Department at [engl@ucalgary.ca](mailto:engl@ucalgary.ca). Please note that mere dissatisfaction with a grade is not sufficient grounds for an appeal.

[English Department Website:](#)

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

**Scribe and Muse Club for English Students**

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

**Writing support**

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

[Academic regulations and schedules](#)

**Student Academic Accommodations**

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

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

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

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

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

**Instructor's Intellectual Property**

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

**Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy**

Student information will be collected in accordance with usual classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty and 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.