



**FACULTY OF ARTS
Department of English**

COURSE OUTLINE

ENGLISH 336.02: Introduction to Creative Writing Practice: Fiction

Fall 2022

Mondays & Wednesdays, 2:00-3:15pm, SA 129

Instructor	Paul Meunier (he/him)
Email:	pnmeunie@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
Office Hours:	Mondays: 3:30-4:30pm Location: Social Sciences (SS) 1034 *Other meeting times available by appointment, including by Zoom

Land acknowledgement:

The University of Calgary is located on the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, which includes the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprising the Siksiká, Piikáni, and Káínai First Nations), as well as the Tsúüt'ínà First Nation, and the Stoney Nakoda (including the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations). The City of Calgary is also home to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III.

Course description:

This course is an introduction to the elements of creative writing as the basis of an artistic practice. We will focus primarily on the art of fiction, with particular emphasis on prose writing and the short story as form. This class will be conducted as an in-person creative writing workshop. Students are expected to read and write a great deal, to analyze published fiction by established authors, and to regularly contribute critiques of other students' work with constructive, informed, and intelligent criticism.

There are no prerequisites for this course. This course may not be repeated for credit, and credit for English 366 will not be permitted.

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, available on D2L:

Scheduled for Monday lectures:

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|--|-----------------|
| Sep 12: Lamott, Anne. "Shitty First Drafts." | – Short essay |
| Sep 19: Hemingway, Ernest. "Hills Like White Elephants." | – Short story |
| Sep 26: (in-class) Davis, Lydia. "Passing Wind" and "Oral History (with Hiccups)." | – Short stories |
| Oct 3: Oates, Joyce Carol. "Thanksgiving." | – Short story |

Oct 10: Observed holiday, no classes

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|--|---------------|
| Oct 17: Monkman, Kent. <i>Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience</i> . | – Art & prose |
| Oct 24: (in-class) Kincaid, Jamaica. "Girl." | – Prose poem |
| Oct 31: Shelley, Mary. <i>Transformation</i> . | – Short story |

Reading Week: no classes Nov 6-13

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|---|---------------|
| Nov 14: Munro, Alice. "Runaway." | – Short story |
| Nov 21: (in-class) Nichol, bp. <i>Organ Music</i> . | – Prose poem |
| Nov 28: Valente, Catherynne. <i>Silently and Very Fast</i> . "One: The Imitation Game." | – Novella |
| Dec 5: last week of classes, no additional reading | |

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).

Assessments and Evaluation:

Personal Introductions (PASS/FAIL, 5/5% or 0/5%) – Sunday, Sep 18, 11:59pm on D2L

English 336 is a creative writing course and active participation is an important part of our weekly classes. Under ENGL 336 >Discussions >Personal Intro, introduce yourself to the rest of the class. Your post should be between 250-300 words. Introductions must include:

- **An image.** Doesn't have to be of yourself. It could be of a pet, a favourite cartoon character, an avatar, your favourite flower – whatever best represents you. Make it small, no more than 2X2.
- **Your name** (can be just your first/preferred name) and preferred pronouns. Please note that D2L will display your name as it appears for the University of Calgary Registrar.
- **A brief description of why you are taking ENGL 336**, and if the answer is "required for my degree," then also explain why a creative writing course is of interest to you.

- **A brief statement of your learning goals**, and how you can support the participatory classroom.

Participation (10%) – randomized attendance grades

As outlined, English 336 is a creative writing course and active participation is an important part of our weekly classes. Attendance will be taken at random, ten (10) times throughout the semester for a total of 10%. Absenteeism, without pre-approved permission granted by the Instructor for reasonable absence, will result in a loss of 1% per missed class.

Creative Writing Workshops (10%) – Fridays (class schedule TBD), 11:59pm on D2L

Each student must sign up for one (1) “workshop,” scheduled on a Wednesday “workshop day,” where you will submit a piece of creative writing for peer feedback from students and the Instructor during class. Following the class where you’ve received peer feedback, the assignment will be graded and emailed to you along with the Instructor’s comments.

- Submissions must be 2-4 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman, font size 12. Time is valuable, and ENGL 336 requires a great deal of reading and writing. *Do not overwrite.*
- Clearly state your name, date of submission, and course title at the top of page 1.
- Please include page numbers to help students and the Instructor refer to specific pages when providing verbal feedback, during the critique.
- A student schedule will be developed at the beginning of the course.
- Your submission must be posted to D2L by Friday, 11:59pm, the week before your scheduled critique. This will provide enough time for other classmates to read the forthcoming creative writing submissions scheduled for the upcoming Wednesday.

Revised Exercise (20%) – Friday, Oct 7, 11:59pm on D2L

Choosing one (1) of the in-class writing prompts from either Sep 12, 14, 19, 26, or Oct 3, students must edit, revise, and expand one writing exercise you previously attempted in class to demonstrate applied learnings from course lectures and workshop conversations.

- The exercise (creative component) must be 2-4 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman, font size 12.
- Clearly state your name, date of submission, and course title at the top of page 1.
- Clearly state the exercise chosen from one of the five (5) dates listed above.
- Additionally, students must include a 1 page Process Statement, double-spaced, which articulates how the piece has evolved, what learnings have been applied, and any further details the student wishes to highlight in reflection of the editing process.
- This Process Statement is not included as part of the 2-4 pages of creative writing.
- It is logical that some writing exercises can begin as seeds of inspiration, more scattered than coherent. As such, the writing prompt must be identified, but early draft versions are not required for comparison.

Close Reading Paper (25%) – Friday, Nov 18, 11:59pm on D2L

Students must write a 750-1000 word essay (3-4 pages, double-spaced) that engages with one of the assigned readings in class, with a detailed analysis of textual themes, applied evidence (quoting from the source material), and analytical exploration of the creative ideas at play.

This assignment must include:

- A brief introduction of the assigned text being discussed, with a clear summary as to why this text is being featured for close reading analysis;
- Important themes that arise from a close reading of the text;
- Three (3) literary devices at work in the text, and how they illuminate ideas under consideration;
- Evidence by way of textual examples, quoted directly from the source material; and
- A Works Cited page (bibliography), formatted in MLA 9.
- The essay body must be 3-4 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman, font size 12.
- The Works Cited should be included on page 5.
- Clearly state your name, date of submission, and course title at the top of page 1. No title page is necessary.
- While bpNichol's *Organ Music* and Catherynne Valente's *Silently and Very Fast* are scheduled to be read after November 18, students who are interested in these texts may read ahead and write about anything on the course reading list.

Final - Short Story (30%) – Sunday, Dec 11, 11:59pm on D2L

Students must write a 750-1250 short story (3-5 pages, double-spaced). Additionally, students must include a 1 page Process Statement, double-spaced, which articulates how course learnings have been applied to ideas operating within the text.

Some Strictures

To keep students focused on mastering the basic skills of fiction, some strictures apply. For the duration of the course (Sep-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 (e.g. schizophrenia presented as an individual having several personalities);
- write graphic violence or graphic sex scenes (if you are unsure about this, contact the Instructor to preview your writing prior to posting it for the rest of the class to read.)

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 TV 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 during critiques 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 (e.g. 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.**

Late Assignments

Creative Writing "Workshop" assignments will not receive credit if submitted after the assigned due date(s). For the Revised Exercise, Close Reading Essay, and Final Short Story, assignments submitted after the deadline will be penalized with the loss of a third of a grade (e.g. 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.

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. 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

In calculating final grades, students must have surpassed the minimum grade threshold to qualify for any letter grade — that is, grades will never be rounded up into the nearest grade category even if very close to that minimum threshold.

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

Grading Criteria for Creative Writing (Workshops, Revised Exercise, Final Short Story)

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.

Grade Rubric for Creative Writing (Workshops, Revised Exercise, Final Short Story)

	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						

A separate Grade Rubric for the Close Reading Essay will be provided on D2L.

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.