

ENG 267 Creative Writing: Fiction

Spring 2011

Instructor: Joe Quattro
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Course Goals

This course is a fiction workshop with the intent of helping you improve your technique with imaginative writing and skillful revision. In the process, you will learn to better understand your strengths and weaknesses as a fiction reader and writer. Through exercises and discussion, you will explore various ways of inventing stories, from very short fiction to longer stories, and build your confidence in editing. The skills and techniques you learn will extend beyond this class to other writing you want to pursue inside and outside of college.

Students will submit copies of their writing for full-class discussions. As a class, we will examine style, structure, language and voice and how they apply to the writer's intentions. This course gives students the opportunity to explore their fiction reading and writing skills and to develop how they relate to individual goals and needs as a writer. In this class, our purpose is to create a community of writers who can learn from and help each other.

Required Texts

Micro Fiction, an anthology of Really Short Stories, edited by Jerome Stern, Norton, 1996, \$12.95.

The Story and Its Writer, compact edition, edited by Ann Charters, Bedford/St. Martin's, \$75.00.

Optional Texts

The Art of Fiction: Notes on Craft for Young Writers, John Gardner, Vintage Books, 1991.

Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft, Janet Burroway

Grading

Your final letter grade will be calculated from the following point system.

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| 3 Micro-fiction stories | 30 |
| 1 Short Story | 30 |
| Reading Responses/Participation | 20 |
| 2 Reading Presentations | 20 |
| Total possible | 100 |

Grading Criteria

A.(90-100) Excellent. Writing is of consistently outstanding quality, addressing a complex topic and successfully handling the interaction among audience, content, organization, voice, and style.

B (80-90)Good. Writing is of good quality, addressing a topic and managed the interaction among audience, content, organization, voice, and style.

C(70-80) Adequate. Writing is of satisfactory quality, addressing the assignment, topic and the elements that comprise an average essay.

D (60-70) Weak. Writing is of poor quality. The various elements employed to create an essay are lacking in sufficient usage.

F (below 60) Failing. Writing does not respond to the assignment or is not submitted on time.

The Final Portfolio

Your portfolio represents a culmination of your course work and it needs to include the following items to receive a grade of completion:

- Three revised Micro-Fiction stories, 1-4 pages, and the previous drafts
- One Short Story about 10 pages, and the previous drafts
- A cover letter explaining your intentions with your fiction writing in this course. What goals did you set for yourself? Did you accomplish them? What have you learned this semester? Have your writing skills improved? How have your reading skills changed during the course? Think of this as a letter to me where you reflect on your fiction writing and reading throughout the semester and beyond. Two pages minimum. The Rollins Academic Honor Code needs to be written and signed at the end of the letter.

*I suggest you use a two pocket folder to hold your materials. You can organize and present each item how you want, but remember I need to have easy access to everything. Please do not punch holes in the pages or attach them to a binder.

Assignments

Assignments must be turned in by their due date. For workshops, this means essays must be turned in the class before we workshop them, so classmates have the week to read material

before critiquing it. Late work will receive a lowered grade, and in some circumstances, it will not be graded for course credit. Do not miss your workshop date.

Presentation

Each student is required to present two readings from our textbooks. A schedule will be assigned allowing you 10 minutes to introduce the author and the story. It is important to understand that you are expected to discuss the writing and techniques employed in the essay, not argue about the topic or content. This is an exercise in learning to read more deeply like a writer instead of a reader. Your presentation needs to include a handout with two or three quotes from interviews done with the author—quotes about writing that seem relevant to the story in some way, and the handout needs to include a couple of questions you have about the story. Your grade will be based on organization, thoroughness, integrity, and preparedness. Do not rely on Wikipedia for your information. Research beyond the text will be needed.

Participation

Class participation is a significant part of your final grade. I expect you to keep up with the readings and annotate texts. You must come to class prepared to contribute to the discussion—without the need to dominate it. Your comments and questions are meant to show your engagement in our course work. In this class, you have the opportunity to learn from professional writers and class peers and I expect you to advance the conversation throughout the semester.

Attendance

You are expected to attend scheduled classes. If you miss more than *four* class periods, *for any reason*, you will receive a lowered grade and possible failure for the course. Being tardy for class two times constitutes the equivalent of one absence. Please be aware, I do not appreciate excuses.

Academic Honesty

Membership in the student body of Rollins College carries with it an obligation, and requires a commitment, to act with honor in all things. The student commitment to uphold the values of honor - honesty, trust, respect, fairness, and responsibility - particularly manifests itself in two public aspects of student life. First, as part of the admission process to the College, students agree to commit themselves to the Honor Code. Then, as part of the matriculation process during Orientation, students sign a more detailed pledge to uphold the Honor Code and to conduct themselves honorably in all their activities, both academic and social, as a Rollins student. A student signature on the following pledge is a binding commitment by the student that lasts for his or her entire tenure at Rollins College:

The development of the virtues of Honor and Integrity are integral to a Rollins College education and to membership in the Rollins College community. Therefore, I, a student of Rollins College, pledge to show my commitment to these virtues by abstaining from any lying, cheating, or plagiarism in my academic endeavors and by behaving responsibly, respectfully and honorably in my social life and in my relationships with others.

This pledge is reinforced every time a student submits work for academic credit as his/her own. Students shall add to the paper, quiz, test, lab report, etc., the handwritten signed statement

“On my honor, I have not given, nor received, nor witnessed any unauthorized assistance on this work.”

Material submitted electronically should contain the pledge; submission implies signing the pledge.

Students with Disabilities

Rollins College is committed to equal access and does not discriminate unlawfully against persons with disabilities in its policies, procedures, programs or employment processes. The College recognizes its obligations under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 to provide an environment that does not discriminate against persons with disabilities.

If you are a person with a disability on this campus and anticipate needing any type of academic accommodations in order to participate in your classes, please make timely arrangements by disclosing this disability in writing to the Disability Services Office at (box 2613) - Thomas P. Johnson Student Resource Center, 1000 Holt Ave., Winter Park, FL, 32789. Appointments can be scheduled by calling 407-646-2354 or email: gridgeway@rollins.edu

Spring 2011 Schedule

Week 1 **Tuesday, Jan. 11**

Introductions

Syllabus and Schedule

Thursday, Jan. 13

Read: Micro-Fiction

“The Poet’s Husband”

In-class writing

Week 2 **Tuesday, Jan. 18**

Post: Revised story to Discussion Board

Read: Micro-Fiction

"Harmony" p 32

"You Can't See Dogs on the Radio" p 72

Thursday, Jan. 20

Read: Micro-Fiction

1 "Wanting to Fly" p 46

2 "Flu" p 76

Week 3 **Tuesday, Jan. 25**

Dialogue

Read: Micro-Fiction

"Hurray for Hollywood" p 86

"Wrong Chanel" p 30

Thursday, Jan. 27

Workshop:

1

2

3

Week 4 Tuesday, Feb. 1

Read: Micro Fiction

1 "Changing Channels" p 44

2 "Your Fears are Justified" p 36

3. "All This" p 66

Thursday, Feb. 3

Workshop:

1

2

3

Week 5 Tuesday, Feb. 8

The Good and Bad exercise

Read: Micro Fiction

1 "Eclipsed" p 48

2 "This is how I remember it" p 80

Thursday, Feb. 10

Workshop:

1

2

3

4

Week 6 Tuesday, Feb. 15

Read: Micro Fiction

1 "The Mayor..." p 96

2 "November" p 90

Thursday, Feb. 17

1

2

Bring 2 copies each of your two new short-short stories for workshop groups and

Post copies to Blackboard

Week 7 Tuesday, Feb. 22

Workshop groups and conferences

Thursday, Feb. 24

Workshop groups and conferences

Week 8 Tuesday, March 1

Writing longer short stories

Thursday, March 3

Read: The Story and It's Writer

1 Atwood, "Happy Endings"

2 Carver, "Catherdral"

3 Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants"

Week 9 Spring Break March 7-11

No classes

Week 10 Tuesday, March 15

Read: The Story and Its Writer

1 Cheever, "The Swimmer"

2 Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily"

3 Jackson, "The Lottery"

Thursday, March 17

Short Story Workshop:

1

2

Week 11 Tuesday, March 22

Post to Blackboard: Dialogue story

Read: The Story and Its Writer

1 Kincaid, "Girl"

2 Moore, "How to Become a Writer"

Thursday, March 24

Short Story Workshop:

1

2

Week 12 Tuesday, March 29

Read: The Story and Its Writer

1 O'Connor, "A Good Man is Hard to Find"

2 Lahiri, "Interpreter of Maladies"

Thursday, March 31

Short Story Workshop:

1

2

3

Week 13 Tuesday, April 5

Read: The Story and Its Writer

1 Paley, "Mother"

2 Poe, "Tell-Tale Heart"

Thursday, April 7

Short Story Workshop:

1

2

3

Week 14 Tuesday April 12

Short Story Workshop:

1

2

3

Thursday, April 14

Work on revisions and rewriting

Week 15 Tuesday, April 19 and Thursday April 21

Editing and small workshops in class

Tuesday, April 26

No Class

Final portfolios (see syllabus) are due to my office by noon.

Also submit online for class publication (See Discussion Board for forums)