

## LAPS/EN 3610 6.0: INTERMEDIATE PROSE WORKSHOP: FICTION (FALL 2019-20)

### TERM, TIME AND LOCATION

Fall/Winter 2019-20

Thurs. 11:30-2:30

ACE 010

### COURSE DIRECTORS

FALL CD: Jennifer Duncan  
OFFICE: TBA  
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OFFICE HOURS: Thurs. 9:30-11:30 by appointment only (arrange by email)

### EXPANDED COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this intermediate prose workshop, emerging writers will deepen and enliven their engagement with reading, writing and critiquing fiction through a combination of lecture, exercises, assignments and critiques. We will explore the qualities, characteristics and techniques of fictionality and narrativity through a focus on the study and practice of the art of short fiction with an emphasis on the creative process and on new possibilities of form. The purpose of this course is to give students a community of practice in which to further develop their body of knowledge and stretch their literary muscles. Students are expected to experiment with and analyze the traditions and techniques of short fiction and to deepen and polish their work while developing a mature and thoughtful appreciation for different approaches to literary writing. The main premise of this course is that stories are transformative and it is hoped that students will approach this experience with openness, humility, ability to work through the frustration of a challenge and willingness to take risks so that they may transform themselves into artists of the written word. As these classes are like theatre or visual art studios in which much of the coursework happens in activities performed in-class, **attendance, preparedness and full participation are crucial** for the writing studios to fulfill their purpose and for students to complete required coursework. Participation in critiques is an essential component of the course.

### COURSE TEXTS:

Course Kit

Students will be expected to photocopy their works for the class critiques as these are the main course texts.

### EVALUATION FOR FALL TERM:

- 10% Participation (including discussing readings, critiquing student work, performing in-class exercises, etc.)
- 10% Evocative Object Story
- 10% Form=Content Story
- 20% Portfolio (including one revised short story and two revised microfictions)

### **Participation:**

This includes completing assigned readings, contributing to class discussions on lecture topics and readings; writing in-class and at home exercises; engaging in the critique process by submitting work and giving both written and verbal constructive feedback on peers' work. **PARTICIPATION IS CRUCIAL TO MEETING COURSE REQUIREMENTS. One missed**

class per term is considered reasonable. Several participation marks will be deducted for each additional absence unless proper documentation is provided. Chronic and egregious tardiness and unpreparedness will also severely affect the participation grade.

Cellphones and all other devices must be turned off during class. Computers may be used for taking notes but ONLY for such purpose. Any other computer/device use is strictly prohibited.

Students are responsible for collecting work distributed during an absence and must come to class prepared to discuss the work. Students are responsible for contacting peers to find out what they have missed in class. It is not the responsibility of the instructor to inform students of what they have missed due to their absence.

#### **Class Readings:**

Readings are mandatory and must be done in advance of class. Notes should be taken when reading as material to assist with class discussions.

#### **Workshop Pieces:**

Students will be required to submit two workshop pieces this term. All workshop pieces **MUST** be distributed to the whole class in hard copy the week before they are to be critiqued. Email distribution is only to accommodate illness (which must be documented). If the author is absent for their scheduled critique then discussion as a class is forfeited. Students must provide constructive written feedback on peer workshop pieces **before** the scheduled critique (and must sign their comments). If students report that a class member is making inappropriate comments on their work, then that student will have a mandatory office meeting with the instructor and if the issue is not resolved, there will be penalties in the participation grade.

#### **Portfolio:**

The portfolio should present one completed, revised and polished short story and two microfictions for a total of 15 pages. Portfolios should be presented professionally, with a Title Page, Table of Contents, and pagination. Prose is double-spaced. Pieces should be separated (not jammed together or overlapping on the same page).

#### **Regarding Due Dates:**

The penalty for work submitted beyond the assigned due date is a deduction of one full grade per week or part thereof. Students must complete ALL course requirements in order to receive a passing grade. Submitted work must be properly labelled with assignment or exercise number and name, individual title, and student's name. Prose is to be double-spaced, poetry single-spaced.

ANY USE OF ANOTHER PERSON'S WORK, WHETHER IT IS IN PRINT OR ELECTRONIC FORM, WITHOUT PROPER CITATION CONSTITUTES PLAGIARISM AND WILL LEAD TO CHARGES OF A BREACH OF ACADEMIC HONESTY. Please see the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty at:

<http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/legislation/senate/acadhone.htm>

#### Grading, Assignment Submission, Lateness Penalties, and Missed Tests

*Grading:* The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ = 7, C+ = 5, etc.).

(For a full description of York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar.

EN3610 Intermediate Prose Workshop  
**FALL TERM SYLLABUS**

- Sept. 5** Introduction to the Course  
Microfiction: In-class writing exercises; ***Postcard Microfiction***  
Readings (in class): examples of postcard fiction; Ernest Hemingway "A Very Short Story"; Dan Rhodes "from Anthropology"
- Sept. 12** Micro Fiction and Voice  
In-class writing and close reading exercises; ***Voice Microfiction***  
Readings (in class): Louise Bennett "Anansi an Ticks"; Jayne Anne Phillips "Blind Girls"; Bharati Mukherjee "Courtly Vision"  
Reading: Steven Heighon "Given to Inspiration"
- Sept. 19** Evocative Objects  
In-class writing exercises; ***Object Microfiction***  
Due: bring an evocative object to class  
Reading: Carol Shields "A Scarf"; Cynthia Ozick "The Shawl"; Dionne Brand "One Down"
- Sept.26** The Telling Detail  
In-class writing exercises  
**Due: Assignment #1: Evocative Object Short Story** (double-spaced copies)
- Oct. 3** Critique Group A
- Oct. 10** Critique Group B
- Oct. 17** **READING WEEK (no class)**
- Oct. 24** Form=Content  
In-class writing exercises  
Readings: Margaret Atwood "Happy Endings"; Thomas King "A Coyote Columbus Story"; Kenneth Bernard "Preparations"; Gregory Burnham "Subtotals"; Clarice Lispector "The Fifth Story"; Steven Heighon "Noughts and Crosses"
- Oct. 31** Showing, Telling, Time and Structure  
In-class writing exercises  
**Due: Assignment #2: Form=Content Story** (double-spaced copies)
- Nov. 14** Critique Group A
- Nov. 21** Critique Group B
- Nov. 28** Portfolio Preparation
- Dec. 2** **Due: Portfolio**

## **GUIDELINES FOR CRITIQUE**

1. We will always begin with positive statements about what IS working before discussing what might not be working.
2. We will strive to find cultural referents that relate to the work, placing it within existing literary traditions and theoretical contexts.
3. We will view the piece by understanding what the piece is intending to be, not by imposing our own aesthetic on it.
4. We will not make personal comments about the writer. Our comments will be restricted to the piece itself.
5. We will not just say something isn't working. We will explain WHY we don't think it is working and WHAT the specific problems are.
6. We will trust each other to produce the most constructive feedback, giving it with thoughtful compassion and receiving it with an open mind.
7. We will share our personal reactions to the work as a way of understanding differences in aesthetics, world views, etc, without making value judgements. We will be respectful of differences even as we disagree.
8. We will celebrate mistakes that teach us as well as clear successes.
9. We are committed to building trust with each other so that we can authentically and spontaneously express ourselves.
10. We will begin every class with a circle and check-in.