ENG 2323.001 Creative Writing: Fiction
Syllabus – Fall 2011

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Office Location: MB 2.306E
Office Phone: 458-7884
Office Hours: T 3:15-4:15, W 4:45-5:45, and by appointment

Required Texts

-- Please prepare a paper folder for your Final Portfolio (details on page 4).

Course Description
This course introduces the craft of fiction writing to students with or without previous fiction-writing experience. It provides ample opportunities for fiction writing, to be guided by weekly readings and exercises, as well as for revising and sharing writings through constructive comments from the instructor and class participants.

Learning Objectives
This course facilitates students to
1. develop skills and competence in fiction writing and revision;
2. obtain a sound understanding of elements and terminology of fiction;
3. apply the elements and terminology in fiction writing and reading; and
4. acquire skills in fiction editing and critiquing.

UTSA Academic Honor Code
A. Preamble
The University of Texas at San Antonio community of past, present and future students, faculty, staff, and administrators share a commitment to integrity and the ethical pursuit of knowledge. We honor the traditions of our university by conducting ourselves with a steadfast duty to honor, courage, and virtue in all matters both public and private. By choosing integrity and responsibility, we promote personal growth, success, and lifelong learning for the advancement of ourselves, our university, and our community.

B. Honor Pledge
In support of the ideals of integrity, the students of the University of Texas at San Antonio pledge: “As a UTSA Roadrunner I live with honor and integrity.”

C. Shared responsibility
The University of Texas at San Antonio community shares the responsibility and commitment to integrity and the ethical pursuit of knowledge and adheres to the UTSA Honor Code.

The Road Runner Creed
“The University of Texas at San Antonio is a community of scholars, where integrity, excellence, inclusiveness, respect, collaboration, and innovation are fostered.

“As a Roadrunner, I will:
• Uphold the highest standards of academic and personal integrity by practicing and expecting fair and ethical conduct;
Respect and accept individual differences, recognizing the inherent dignity of each person;

- Contribute to campus life and the larger community through my active engagement; and

- Support the fearless exploration of dreams and ideas in the advancement of ingenuity, creativity, and discovery.

“Guided by these principles now and forever, I am a Roadrunner!”

Class Policy

1. **Scholastic Integrity**: Scholastic integrity is of utmost importance in the academic community. Everyone does his/her own work to achieve educational and personal developments. No plagiarism, collusion, or other forms of scholastic dishonesty will be tolerated in this course. Students are required to read and observe UTSA policy of scholastic dishonesty at [http://www.utsa.edu/infoguide/appendices/b.html#sd](http://www.utsa.edu/infoguide/appendices/b.html#sd).

2. **Classroom Civility**: Be a considerate class participant. Arrive on time. **Turn off all electronic devices before class begins**, including mobile phones, PDAs, laptops, and others. As the class requires all students’ constant and active engagement, please refrain from using laptops, iPads, etc. **Bring your own textbooks and handouts**. Be attentive and participate in class.

   In written and spoken commentary/critique of peer work, the aim is to provide constructive and useful comments and suggestions for the writer to improve his/her writing. Students are expected to express views in a civil manner and to respect the points of view of others. Helpful tips on civil discourse can be found at [http://utsa.edu/osja/documents/pdfs/CivilDiscourse.pdf](http://utsa.edu/osja/documents/pdfs/CivilDiscourse.pdf).

   UTSA students share the obligation to maintain a classroom environment conducive to effective learning. Disruptive and inappropriate behavior in the classroom may lead, at a minimum, to a request to leave class. Such behavior also violates the **Student Code of Conduct** and may result in disciplinary action. (Adapted from UTSA Student Judicial Affairs)

3. **Absence Policy**: 2% will be deducted from the 10% attendance grade for each absence, except medical emergencies and mandatory attendances at University functions, both requiring submission of official documentation. A **0% attendance grade will automatically result in a Fail for the course**.

   Please notify me of foreseeable absences beforehand and emergencies asap via email or on Blackboard.

   Occasional late arrivals in class can be excused; however, habitual tardiness will lead to a deduction in the attendance grade. Each repeated failure in bringing texts/handouts/assignments will be treated as an absence.

4. **Late Policy for Assignments**: All assignments are expected to be turned in on time. Since many of the assignments will be used in class activities, it is important that you complete them and bring them to the class when they are due. **Any late submissions will result in the deduction of a grade given to that particular assignment for each calendar day**. If you experience difficulties in meeting deadlines, talk to me asap.

5. **Format of Written Assignments**: Unless otherwise specified, type all take-home written assignments using an easy-to-read font type and size, such as Arial, pt. 11, Calibri pt.12, or Times New Roman pt. 12. Double-space throughout and leave a one-inch margin on all sides. Put your last name and page number on the right side of the header. **All written assignments should at least reach the minimum page limit. Failing to do so will lead to grade deduction.**
6. **Services for Disabilities:** This course provides accommodation for students with disabilities who are registered with the Office of Disability Services and have received an accommodation letter from the Office. Information about UTSA Disability Services is available at [http://www.utsa.edu/disability/students.htm](http://www.utsa.edu/disability/students.htm).

**Grading Policy**

1. **Attendance** (10%)
2. **Class Participation** (10%)
3. **Weekly Writing Exercises** (12%)
4. **Weekly Responses for Assigned Readings** (10%)
5. **Written Commentaries/Critiques for Peer Work** (15%)
6. **In-class Writings** (10%)
7. **Mid-Term Assignment** (5%)
8. **1st & 2nd Drafts of Short Story** (8%)
9. **Final Portfolio** (20%)

Total 100%

1. **Attendance (10%):** See pg. 2 for absence policy.
2. **Class Participation (10%):** In every class, I expect you to contribute to constructive discussion while respecting other people’s views. Always read the texts to be discussed and come prepared, participate actively in all class activities, and provide helpful comments/critiques for fellow class participants. Grades for possible pop quizzes will also be incorporated.
3. **Weekly Writing Exercises (12%):** Unless specified in the Course Outline, choose one of the two exercises in the *Making of a Story* chapter assigned for the week. Complete all tasks in the exercise. Have your Short Story in mind when working on these exercises – it’s very likely that your story will come to you through the ideas generated in the exercises. Type your exercises and bring a hard copy to class. Be prepared to share your exercises in class for peer review.
4. **Weekly Responses for Assigned Readings (10%):** A 1- to 2-page informal but thoughtful response to the readings to be covered that week. You could write about the techniques and skills you learned from the readings, or the stories assigned for the week, or both. Connect the responses to your ongoing weekly writings and story drafts, such as how a specific aspect or technique you observe from the readings help you in your own creative writing. Include any questions you may have. Type your responses and bring a hard copy to class. Be prepared to talk about your ideas and questions in class.
5. **Written Commentaries/Critiques for Peer Work (15%):** These include in-class peer reviews and more detailed critiques for Short Story Drafts 1 & 2. See further instructions on Blackboard.
6. **In-class Writings (10%):** Short pieces written individually or in groups. Again, be prepared to share for discussion and/or peer review.
7. **Mid-Term Assignment (5%):** Complete Ex. 1 in Ch. 6 of *Making of a Story*. Further instructions will be given on Blackboard.
8. **1st & 2nd Drafts of Short Story (8%):** The 1st Draft, 4-20 pages in length, does not need to be a complete story but must show attentively-crafted fiction writing. I will give you feedback at the personal conference. The 2nd Draft, 8-20 pages long, is expected to be a substantial expansion of the 1st Draft, to have the initial shape of a complete story, and to demonstrate attention to fiction elements and other details. The 2nd Draft will be peer-critiqued in class. More instructions will be provided in class and on Blackboard.
9. **Final Portfolio (20%)**: The portfolio includes: (a) the 3rd Draft of your Short Story (10-20 pages, your best work incorporating suggestions from the instructor and fellow students as appropriate), (b) all previous Short Story Drafts and relevant writing exercises, (c) a 1-page response for attending a literary event, and (d) a 3- to 5-page reflective essay on your growth as a fiction writer in this course. Put items (a) through (d) in a paper folder.

### Final Grade Distribution

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### Course Outline *(subject to changes)*

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<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
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<th>Week 2</th>
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| **8/31** | **Overview** | Syllabus, including all hyperlinked documents. *Making of a Story* Ch. 1 (whole chapter). | - Writing Exercise 1  
- Reading Response 1 |

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<th>Week 3</th>
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| **9/7** | Writing as Discovery | *Making of a Story* Ch. 2 (whole chapter). *Making of a Story* Glossary (pgs. 643-646). | - Writing Exercise 2  
- Reading Response 2 |

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| **9/14** | The Details | *Making of a Story* Ch. 3 (whole chapter). *Narrative Design*, “Depth Charge.” | - Writing Exercise 3  
- Reading Response 3 |

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<th>Week 5</th>
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| **9/21** | Story Shape | *Making of a Story* Ch. 4 (pgs. 152-177). *Narrative Design*, “Signs of Life.” | - Writing Exercise 4  
- Reading Response 4 |

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<th>Week 6</th>
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| **9/28** | Point of View | *Making of a Story* Ch. 6 (whole chapter). *Making of a Story* Ch. 7 (whole chapter). | - Writing Exercise 5  
(choose from Ch. 7)  
- Reading Response 5 |
## Week 7
10/5 | Show & Tell | *Making of a Story* Ch. 5 (pgs. 204-226, 245-257). *Narrative Design*, “Daisy’s Valentine.” | - Mid-Term Assignment  
- Reading Response 6

## Week 8
10/12 | Dialogue | *Making of a Story* Ch. 8 (pgs. 341-357). *Narrative Design*, “Hear That Long Train Moan.” | - Writing Exercise 6  
- Reading Response 7

## Week 9
10/19 | Plot | *Making of a Story* Ch. 9 (whole chapter). *Narrative Design*, “Oh, Man Alive.” | - Writing Exercise 7  
- Reading Response 8

## Week 10
10/26 | Character | *Making of a Story* Ch. 10 (pgs. 418-452). *Narrative Design*, “Lizzie, Annie, and Rosie’s Rescue of Me with Blue Cake.” | - Short Story – 1st Draft

## Week 11
11/2 | Personal Conferences | *Making of a Story* Ch. 12 (whole chapter). | - Writing Exercise 8  
- Reading Response 9

## Week 12
- Reading Response 10

## Week 13
11/16 | In-class Critique | *Making of a Story* Ch. 11 (pgs. 465-474). Drafts by fellow class participants (Group A, 7 students). | - Short Story – 2nd Draft (Group B)  
- Written Critiques for Group A Drafts

## Week 14
11/23 | In-class Critique | *Making of a Story* Ch. 11 (pgs. 479-506). Drafts by fellow class participants (Group B, 7 students). | - Short Story – 2nd Draft (Group C)  
- Written Critiques for Group B Drafts

## Week 15
11/30 | In-class Critique | *Narrative Design*, “The Child Downstairs.” Drafts by fellow class participants (Group C, 7 students). | - Written Critiques for Group C Drafts

## Week 16
12/7 | Rounding up | *Narrative Design*, “The Sky is Gray.” *Narrative Design*, “Little Red.” | - Final Portfolio

**FINAL EXAM**
December 16 (Friday), 1:30-4:00 p.m.