

FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ENGLISH 265-01

FALL 2013

COURSE TITLE: Introductory Creative Writing

Instructor: Prof. Suzette Mayr

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E-mail: smayr@ucalgary.ca

Office hours: Mondays 5-6 pm, or by appointment

Homepage/course website: <http://english.ucalgary.ca/profiles/suzette-mayr>

Tutorial Instructors:

Dawn Bryan (dmbryan@ucalgary.ca)

Brian Jansen (bdjansen@ucalgary.ca)

Rod Moody-Corbett (rjmoodyc@ucalgary.ca)

Heather Osborne (heather.k.osborne@gmail.com)

Email and Electronic Submissions Policy:

I am happy to reply to short, specific questions via email and will answer as promptly as possible (usually it takes me approximately one week to respond to a given email). However, I cannot guarantee that you will have a reply within a specific amount of time. 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 in my office.

Electronic submission of assignments is NOT permitted unless other specific arrangements have been made with your instructor.

Course Description:

This course will provide instruction in the rudiments of craft for poetry, drama, and fiction, emphasizing the centrality of reading and revision to literary composition. The overall course objective is to provide the opportunity for students to discover the extent of their interest in writing in these literary genres.

Instruction in the larger Monday lecture will cover the rudiments of craft for each of the genres, include discussion centered on published texts and the techniques that make these texts effective. The Thursday tutorial component of this course will be conducted according to the seminar/workshop model for analysis and discussion of student writing, particularly the assigned exercises. It should be noted that, because these smaller groups are still quite large, they cannot function as regular workshops, discussing each individual student's work in detail more than once. They will, however, give students who are considering continuing on with Creative Writing courses a sense of how Creative Writing workshops operate in higher level courses.

Although this course does not count toward a Creative Writing "Concentration" designation on a student's transcript, the class should result in a much stronger portfolio for use in a student's application to intermediate and advanced writing classes.

By the end of this course students will:

- have practiced writing craft in at least two of three Creative Writing genres;
- have begun to develop their own Creative Writing practice;
- have a concrete understanding of how image, metaphor, and narrative may work in these three genres;
- have begun to develop the critical tools with which to analyze Creative Writing;
- have been introduced to a number of significant creative writers through the course text.

Students do not need to have written anything prior to taking this course. The course aims to encourage and support everyone from the casual journal writer who may never have discussed writing in a public way, to the budding poet or emerging playwright.

Texts and Readings:

- English 265-01 Course Pack (available from Bound and Copied, located in the retail corridor in the lower level [1st floor] of MacEwan Student Centre)
- A comprehensive dictionary and thesaurus are recommended

Participation in the Writing Workshop (Tutorial Groups):

The workshop is a chance to enhance not only your writing skills, but also your reading and editing abilities. The workshops will require students to submit and discuss written exercises and assignments, and to receive oral peer feedback in class. Participation is essential to ensure a successful workshop; this means that all students must come to class with their completed exercises, having read assigned texts, and prepared to provide thoughtful responses to each other's work.

Assignments and Evaluation:

Readings will be assigned for most classes and these must have been read BEFORE we discuss them in class. **KEEP ALL DRAFTS OF ALL EXERCISES AND ASSIGNMENTS IN THIS COURSE.** Revision and rewriting are an important part of the Creative Writing process, and are part of your evaluation in this course. Additionally, it is good practice for tracking your own progress as a writer. Students must hand in earlier drafts with the instructor's comments along with rewrites and final assignments.

In order to qualify for a passing grade in this course, students must submit all workshopping/tutorial assignments as well as the following: one fiction assignment of 1600 words (approximately 5 pages); one assignment of EITHER poetry (5-8 poems) OR drama (5-8 pages of a scene that has a beginning, middle, and end); two journal submissions; and a final major rewrite/portfolio of approximately 10 pages.

All submissions must be typed, double-spaced (poetry can be single-spaced), with 1-inch margins and in legible 12-point font. Ensure that your name is on your submission and that the pages are numbered in sequence.

The specific apportioning of grades for the class is as follows:

Participation (includes workshop submissions and attendance)	10%
Fiction assignment (1600 words) due to tutorial instructor Wed., 16 Oct. 2013	15%
Poetry (5-8 pages) or Drama assignment (5-8 page scene with beginning, middle, and end) due to tutorial instructor Wed., 13 Nov. 2013	15%
Workshop/Tutorial Assignments	10%
Journal due to Prof. Mayr Mon., 28 Oct. 2013 and Mon., 18 Nov. 2013	5%

Final Portfolio assignment due to Prof. Mayr Mon., 02 Dec. 2013
(10 pages in any genre[s] + 8 pages previous drafts + 2 page process statement) 45%

There is no final exam in this course.

Late Assignments or Absences:

Electronic submissions are NOT permitted. All assignments must be completed in order to receive a passing grade in the course. Course assignments must be submitted in class, on the due date, and in printed form. You must speak to your instructor prior to submitting a late assignment. Assignments submitted after the due date will be penalized (with the loss of a third of a grade [eg: an A- to B+] for each business day – not class – that the assignment is overdue). Late assignments will not be accepted after three weeks have elapsed past the due date, resulting in failure of the assignment and failure of the course.

Late submissions for workshopping will be looked upon with extreme disfavour. If you submit your workshop assignment late, it will be ranked as last priority in terms of workshopping, and may not be workshopped at all if there is insufficient class time. Late workshop assignments will also severely affect your participation grade.

Please make every effort to take assignments directly to the instructor. If it is not possible to do so, take your assignment to SS 1152 and put it in the dropbox. Your assignment will be date-stamped and placed in the instructor's mailbox. It is your responsibility to keep a copy of all assignments in case of loss by any cause. Assignments cannot be returned by staff in the Department office.

Journal:

Students will keep a writer's journal in which they will complete assigned journal-writing exercises. This journal will be submitted twice to Prof. Mayr in the semester, Mon., 28 Oct. 2013 and Mon., 18 Nov. 2013; however, tutorial instructors may check the journal at any time throughout the semester to see that work is being completed on schedule. Incomplete journals will be penalized. Students should ensure that any hard copies of the journal submitted to the instructor for grading are not the only copies of the work that will be submitted for assignments or for the final portfolio.

The Writing Workshop (Tutorial Groups):

Each student will provide one formal writing submission for workshopping in the tutorial during the semester (the due date for this assignment will be determined on the first day of the tutorial). The workshop is a chance to enhance not only your writing skills, but also your reading and editing abilities. The workshops will require students to submit a text to receive oral peer feedback in class, and written feedback from the instructor following the workshop. Participation is important to ensure a successful workshop; this means that all students must read their peers' texts, and provide a thoughtful response. These basic guidelines apply to all workshops:

- be respectful of all work submitted to the workshop; this means reading each text with care and attention;
- all work submitted to the workshop is CONFIDENTIAL – only class members are allowed to read the work of other class members;
- feedback must be directed at the text, not the author of the text;
- discuss what works and does not work in the text using examples from the text;
- avoid saying 'I like' or 'I don't like' – these phrases are based on personal preference rather than the merit of the text;

- offer suggestions as well as criticism: if something is not working, what are strategies the author can employ to revise a text?
- work to avoid “writing” a text for the person whose work is being workshopped – try to honour what the writer might have intended in the text rather than what you would do in her or his place.

When it is your turn to have a text workshopped:

- listen to feedback with an open mind – remember that your peer-reviewers are only trying to make the writing better and have your best interests in mind;
- avoid explaining your work – remember the readers of your writing outside the class will not have you there to tell them what you meant.

The workshop format does not imply group work, but all-class participation under the tutorial instructor’s direction. Students are expected to read and engage with published works as well as their classmates’ writing, and to come to class prepared to discuss this writing with constructive, informed, and intelligent criticism.

Some Strictures

To keep students focused on mastering the basic skills of fiction, poetry, and drama, some strictures apply. For the duration of the course (Sept.-Dec.), students are not permitted to submit writing assignments outside of the journal that contain any of the following words:

beauty, dawn, death, dream, future, God, god, heart, hope, humanity, life, love, mind, muse, mystery, peace, soul, thought [the verbs “to think” and “to dream” are allowed in fiction and drama assignments, but not in poetry assignments], time, truth, war, world

Except in your journal, in this course you are also 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 a story or play or poem;
- write procedural police dramas;
- have a character be “insane” or develop “insanity” in a clichéd or generic manner with clichéd characteristics (eg: schizophrenia presented solely as an individual having several personalities);
- have a character encounter or be transformed into, or be possessed by, aliens, demons, vampires, or other imaginary beings;
- introduce dwarves, elves, angels, robots, robots with consciousness, monsters or other imaginary beings;
- write graphic violence or graphic sex scenes (if you are unsure about this, have your tutorial instructor preview your assignment prior to handing it in).

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, even the kind of writing found within so-called “genre” writing.

Special Note:

In this class there is no such thing as writer's block and this excuse will not be accepted. If you are to make good progress, it is essential that you set aside time for writing every day because waiting for inspiration will only lead to trouble and lack of discipline.

Grading System:

Grades are arrived at through a combination of the percentages and letter grades. The following grading system is used in this course:

90 + %	A+	4.0
85 – 89 %	A	4.0
80 – 84 %	A–	3.7
77 – 79 %	B+	3.3
74 – 76 %	B	3.0
70 – 73 %	B–	2.7
67 – 69 %	C+	2.3
64 – 66 %	C	2.0
60 – 63 %	C–	1.7
55 – 59 %	D+	1.3
50 – 54 %	D	1.0
0 – 49 %	F	0

The University of Calgary's four-point Undergraduate Grading System is described in the Calendar (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-2.html>). Please note that, according to the University Calendar (F.1), instructors may use their discretion when rounding upwards or downwards when the average of term work and exams is between two letter grades.

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.

A+: Outstanding Work

This work has all of the components of work that fits in the "A range" category (see below), but is at a publishable or near-publishable level in that the ideas and language are wholly original, and presentation (including formatting and language) is impeccable.

A range: Consistently exceptional work

Outstanding or superior performance that shows a comprehensive understanding of subject matter. The work is moving toward a publishable level. The use of language is precise, original, imaginative and compelling; if applicable, the content of the work is treated in a fresh, new way, and the form chosen is the best possible. Writing in this range employs every element of the genre with sophistication and elegance.

B range: Consistently good work

Good, clearly above average performance. The work demonstrates originality, control, and generally exact and thoughtful use of language, but could use more refinement or development, and more revision. It shows at least in part a heightened awareness of language and image, and an original perspective or point of view.

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 sound but may verge on clichéd and predictable.

D range: Minimal pass

The work shows some effort but is carelessly constructed. Use of language will be undistinguished and clichéd, ideas ordinary, even predictable.

F: No credit

Work shows no effort or flippant treatment of the assignment; no work has been done at all.

Use and Abuse of Electronic Devices in Class:

Laptops are permitted for class use, but please refrain from engaging with social media or other non-class related activities during class time.

Plagiarism:

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possible suspension or expulsion from the university. Please refer to the following information and make sure you are familiar with the statement below on plagiarism.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-2-1.html>

Scribe and Muse Club for English Students:

The Scribe and Muse Reading and Writing Club (SMRWC) fosters and champions reading and writing through community service, leadership, and engagement. We strive to enhance the academic and social experience of undergraduate students by promoting academic excellence and interaction between students, faculty, and the community, through social, cultural, and academic events

<http://english.ucalgary.ca/scribe-and-muse-english-club>.

Our email address is smec@ucalgary.ca.

English Department Website:

For more information about courses, programs, policies, events and contacts in the Department of English, please go to our website at <http://english.ucalgary.ca>. Please note that the course outlines posted on the English Department website constitute the official course outline for purposes of appeals. Students should verify any hard copies against this posted version. For courses which employ numerical grades, the official departmental percentage to letter grade conversion scale is also posted on the department website.

Writing support:

The Student Success Centre offers both online and workshop writing support for U of C students.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Follow the Department of English on Facebook & Twitter:



Academic regulations and schedules:

Consult the Calendar for course information, university and faculty regulations, dates, deadlines and schedules, student, faculty and university rights and responsibilities. The homepage for the University Calendar is

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/index.htm>

Guidelines on e-mail Etiquette:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/it/help/articles/email/etiquette>

Grade appeals:

Consult the following University Calendar link and request advice from the English Department office, SS 1152. Please note that “mere dissatisfaction with a decision is not sufficient grounds for the appeal of a grade or other academic decision.”

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>

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 form must be completed. The University also has regulations governing the deferral of final examinations. See Calendar:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>,

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>.

Academic Accommodation:

It is the students' responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodations and have not registered with Student Accessibility Services, please contact them at 403-220-6019. Students who have not registered with Student Accessibility Services are not eligible for formal academic accommodations. More information about academic accommodations can be found at www.ucalgary.ca/access.

Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>;

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip/>

“Safewalk” Program:

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night: call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot pay booths.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk/>

Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources:

Have a question, but not sure where to start? The new Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (PIC) is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at SS110, call us at 403-220-3580 or email us at artsads@ucalgary.ca. You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate> which has detailed information on common academic concerns.

For program planning and advice, contact the Student Success Centre (formerly the Undergraduate programs Office) at (403) 220-5881 or visit them in their new space on the 3rd Floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at (403) 210-ROCK [7625] or visit them at the MacKimmie Library Block.

Contact for Students Union Representatives for the Faculty of Arts:

arts1@su.ucalgary.ca, arts2@su.ucalgary.ca, arts3@su.ucalgary.ca, arts4@su.ucalgary.ca

Contact for Students Ombudsman's Office: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is an extremely serious offence. Please read the following information carefully. The penalty routinely recommended by the English Department for documented plagiarism is failure of the course in which the offence occurred; academic probation is also routinely applied at the Faculty level. Suspension or expulsion can result from severe or repeated plagiarism.

The University Calendar states:

1. Plagiarism - Essentially plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Most commonly plagiarism exists when:

- (a) the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test),
- (b) parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author,
- (c) the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source, and/or,
- (d) a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted.

Plagiarism occurs when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement, or when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. Citing your sources in a bibliography is not enough, because a bibliography does not establish which parts of a student's work are taken from other sources. MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose. Advice on adequate documentation can be found at the following web sites:

<http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STATEMENT ON PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT

According to the University Calendar, (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/j.html>)

“The University of Calgary community has undertaken to be guided by the following statements of purpose and values: to promote free inquiry and debate, to act as a community of scholars, ..., to respect, appreciate, and encourage diversity, [and] to display care and concern for community”. The Department of English, like the university as a whole, is committed to a “positive and productive learning and working environment.” This environment is characterized by appreciation and encouragement of diversity and respect for the dignity of all persons: students, support staff, and faculty. The department will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour, such as threatening gestures, threatening or abusive verbal or written communication (including e-mails), or any conduct that “seriously disrupts the lawful education and related activities of students and/or university staff”. Any cases of such misconduct should be reported immediately to the department Head, who, depending on the nature and severity of the incident, may then take further appropriate action.