

FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
COURSE OUTLINE

English 265-01

Winter 2015

Course Title: Introductory Creative Writing

Instructor: Dr. Larissa Lai

Time: M W 3:30 - 4:45

Classroom: ICT 122

Office: SS1120

Office Hours: W 2:30 - 3:30 PM or by appointment

Email: larissa.lai@ucalgary.ca

Workshop Leaders/Teaching Assistants and classrooms for Wednesday tutorials:

SEM 01	Chris Kelly	SS006	chris_kelly07@hotmail.com
SEM 02	Kerry-Leigh Fox	SS010	kayellefox@gmail.com
SEM 03	Ben Groh	SS012	benjamin.groh@ucalgary.ca
SEM 04	David Eso	SA107	deso@ucalgary.ca
SEM 05	Tom Sewel	SA235	tom.sewel@ucalgary.ca

Please note that you must attend the Wednesday tutorial session that you registered for. This means that you have been assigned a TA. No switches are permitted. If you need help with anything registration related, please visit Rofina Groebmair in the main English Office on the 11th floor of the Social Sciences Tower, or email her at: rgroebma@ucalgary.ca.

General Description:

This is an introductory course in creative writing. It is intended to give students a few basic tools to begin a creative writing practice and/or to develop and render social an already existing (private/ early stage) one. Topics to be discussed and explored include: sources of inspiration, form, structure, schools and traditions, writing communities, and the necessary work of drafting. There will be lots of guest speakers in this class as well, speaking about their own practices, as well as chapbooks and the small magazine. The focus of the course is on writing as practice, and how to be a strong writing community member. Regular lectures, guest lectures/readings, writing exercises and weekly workshops will constitute the main pedagogical modes. Students are expected to write a lot and read a lot. Basic critique skills will also be taught and practiced. These will serve students well should they wish to take further creative writing workshops in the future. Though we will address some of the specificities of the genres, this will occur in a "sampling" rather than comprehensive way. This course will, however, be useful preparation for students interested in a range of genres including poetry, fiction, drama and non-fiction prose.

Required Texts:

Anonymous. "The Story of Grandmother."

(http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/harris/StudentProjects/Student_FairyTales/WebProject/Fairy%20Tales/The%20Story%20of%20Grandmother.htm)

Carter, Angela. "The Company of Wolves."

(http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/harris/StudentProjects/Student_FairyTales/WebProject/Fairy%20Tales/Company%20of%20Wolves.htm)

Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm. "Little Red Cap."

(http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/harris/StudentProjects/Student_FairyTales/WebProject/Fairy%20Tales/little%20red%20cap.htm)

Filling Station, latest issue.

Lamott, Anne. "Shitty First Drafts" (<https://wrd.as.uky.edu/sites/default/files/1-Shitty%20First%20Drafts.pdf>)

Lau, Evelyn. *A Grain of Rice*. (Available at the University of Calgary Bookstore.)

Perrault, Charles. "Little Red Riding Hood."

(http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/harris/StudentProjects/Student_FairyTales/WebProject/Fairy%20Tales/little%20red%20riding%20hood.htm)

Williams, Ian. *Personals*. (Available at the University of Calgary Bookstore.)

Other freely available online texts may be added as the courses progresses.

Classroom conduct:

Classroom conduct will be guided by the following purposes and values:

- to promote free inquiry and debate
- to act as a community of scholars
- to lead and inspire societal development
- to respect, appreciate, and encourage diversity
- to display care and concern for community

In our classroom we seek to create and maintain a positive and productive learning and working environment, that is, an environment in which there is:

- respect for the dignity of all persons
- fair and equitable treatment of individuals in our diverse community
- personal integrity and trustworthiness
- respect for academic freedom
- respect for personal and University property

Students may be expected to read, respect, consider and discuss materials that they find challenging on a number of accounts, whether this is because of sexually explicit content, controversial ideas, or unfamiliar world views. Critical thinking is encouraged. Racism, sexism, homophobia, and classism of any kind will not be tolerated. Please turn off your cell phones before coming in to class. Laptops may be used in the classroom for note-taking purposes only. If you wish to watch a movie or engage in on-line chat, please leave the room to do so.

The email address provided above may be used solely for housekeeping purposes. Any student wishing to discuss substantive questions of any kind must first speak with her or his teaching assistant. If the question or problem is unresolved after speaking with your TA, you may come see me during office hours or by appointment.

Mark Distribution:

Exercises (10 x 2%)	20%
Comments	15%
Performance	05%
Chapbook	50%
Participation	10%

Note: All assignments must be completed and submitted in order to receive a passing grade in the course. There is no final examination. All work discussed by the class must be submitted one week prior to its scheduled workshop in order for it to be on time. All assigned readings are mandatory for the course. All assignments are graded by the Workshop Leaders/TAs, except the final chapbook. The chapbook is graded by the course instructor, in this case, Dr. Lai.

Exercises:

Students must complete and submit 10 assignments over the term. Each exercise is due by the start of class, one week in advance of the workshop scheduled to address that particular assignment. This is to give your peers a week to prepare their critiques. Each assignment is very short so as to enable discussion in scheduled workshops. Even if students are not scheduled to have their work discussed in a given class, they must still submit the assignment for grading by the instructor. All assignments must be posted online according to your Workshop Leader/Teaching Assistant's instructions.

Comments:

Seminars are structured as workshops. This means that students will take turns offering work for critique, and giving critique to their peers. Each student receives two opportunities to have her or his work discussed over the course of the term (once in the first half of the course; and once in the second half of the course). Each discussion should last no more than 10-15 minutes (so as to accommodate 5-6 discussions per workshop). Each seminar is divided into two groups (Group A and Group B, each one consisting of 14-18 students). Each group is physically (and creatively!) present in a workshop every other week (i.e. during alternate workshops). In your off-week, when you are not attending the workshop, you are required to provide written comments online for the

pieces under critique. Students under critique for any given week must submit their exercises online by the start of the seminar, one week in advance of its discussion, and commenters must submit all comments online by the start of the seminar in question.

Every week, all students will prepare comments for the 4-6 people on the "hot seat" (ie. up for critique) that week. Each response should consist of 3-5 sentences. The first sentence should say something positive and specific about the piece being critiqued. eg. "Your characterization of the grandmother figure as both loving and avaricious was well-executed." The second sentence should offer a constructive criticism. Eg. "I wasn't entirely convinced by the pub setting because it seemed insufficiently noisy." The third sentence should tell the writer what you learned from them. Eg. "I had never before considered the possibility that a person could murder someone they love." Please note that critiques must be both incisive and constructive. In other words, you are meant to actually help the person in the hot seat by giving him or her specific, honest and generous feedback. "I liked it" does not cut it; neither does "You're not a very good writer." Rather, you must comment specifically on what the writer has done well. Eg. "The way you placed the furniture in the protagonist's living room worked really well to illustrate how upset he felt about his boyfriend leaving him." You must also comment on what needs improvement. Eg. "In the dialogue on p. 2, I couldn't quite figure out which character was speaking because they sounded too much alike."

A note as well about receiving commentary, for your day on the hot seat: Do not take your peers' comments personally. Listen quietly and use the comments to improve your writing. You are not required to defend your work. To the contrary, defensiveness is both unproductive and against workshop protocol. You do not have to agree with any of the critique, but keep your disagreement to yourself. Even if you don't agree with the critique, you can still use it to improve your work. As yourself: "Why did that reader respond in that way?" If you don't like the response ask yourself: "How can I improve the writing to foreclose such a response in my next draft?" A wise workshop participant uses the positive feedback to generate energy for writing, and critical feedback to deeply self-interrogate.

Students are marked for the quality of their engagement with the class online, receiving merit for the insightfulness of their observations and the thoughtfulness of their conversation. The workshops provide an opportunity for students to give personal responses and to pose critical questions. The students are marked not only on the quality of each submission, but also on their ability to incorporate any commentary into their practice so as to improve their work throughout the course of the term.

Performance:

All students in a seminar (i.e. both Group A and Group B) will perform readings of their best work to each other in the final class. Each reading lasts no more than 2.5 minutes. You are encouraged to debrief the performance with your colleagues after the class. Consider which performances held your attention and why. The grade, however, is

predicated upon mere completion. In others words, as long as you are present and do the reading, you will be awarded the 5%.

Chapbook:

Each student will generate a publication so as to showcase their best work from class. The chapbook must contain work written for this course, which has been edited and revised. You are encouraged to submit work that has been critiqued in workshop, revised in response to feedback you've received from your peers and your workshop leader. Ultimately, however, the chapbook should contain the work you consider your best.

The chapbook will take the form of a booklet (with dimensions 5.5” x 8.5,” equivalent to a standard sheet of paper, folded in half to make a “signature”), and these nested, folded sheets will be bound with either staples or thread. The chapbook should be between 8 and 12 chapbook pages in length, plus a cover. Note then, that that you are being asked to generate enough writing to fill 2-3 sheets of regular 8.5" X 11" paper, front and back. It is not actually a lot. You must produce enough copies of the chapbook to give one to each of your peers in the seminar.

The chapbook will be evaluated, based upon its literary merits and its material design, according to a rubric supplied by the instructor.

The chapbook must include, on a separate sheet, a preamble (of 300 words), which not only outlines the style, but also assesses the merit of the project, explaining the aesthetic and/or social and/or critical and/or literary rationale for the work included in the pamphlet.

Participation:

10% of your grade takes into account the quality of your contribution to the experience of the class through your preparation, attendance, and discussion over the course of the term.

Note: Please make every effort to submit any assignments and manuscripts directly to the instructor. If you cannot do so, please take your assignment to SS-1152, where the work can be dated and then filed in the mailbox of the instructor. Staff in the office cannot return assignments to students under any circumstances.

Grading system:

University of Calgary’s Grading System: A+/A (4.0); A- (3.7); B+ (3.3); B (3.0); B- (2.7); C+ (2.3); C (2.0); C- (1.7); D+ (1.3); D (1.0); F (0)

Please note that, according to the University Calendar (F.1), instructors may use their discretion when rounding upwards or downwards if the average of term work 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.

Late assignment policy:

Assignments submitted after the deadline will be penalized with the loss of a third of grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late. Weekends count as two days. Exceptions will be granted only with a doctor's note. Likewise, make-ups for missed exams or in-class essays will be provided only with a doctor's note.

Reading:

It is your responsibility to have read the text under discussion on the day it is discussed in class. Longer texts will not necessarily be discussed in a linear fashion. Expect spoilers.

Class Schedule:

Week 1: Introduction

Jan. 12 (Mon.) Introduction to the course
Exercise #1 posted

Jan. 14 (Wed.) Workshop (Orientation: All groups in attendance. Make sure you attend the section in which you are enrolled.)

Week 2: Training the Senses

Jan. 19 (Mon.) Lecture
Exercise #2 posted
Homework: Read *A Grain of Rice*, available at U of C Bookstore

Jan. 21 (Wed.) Workshop (Workshop experience dry run)
Exercise #1 due at the start of class

Jan. 23 (Fri) Last day to drop Winter Term half courses.

Week 3: Autobiography/Experience

Jan. 26 (Mon.) Lecture

Exercise #3 posted

Homework: prep questions for visiting writer, Evelyn Lau

Jan. 26 is also the last day to add or swap Winter Term half courses.

Jan. 28 (Wed.) Workshop

(First real workshop A, Exercise #1, Group A in attendance, Group B offers feedback online)

Hot Seat:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Week 4: Visiting Writer: Evelyn Lau

Feb. 2 (Mon.) Guest reading plus Q & A

Exercise #4 posted

Homework: read "The Story of Grandmother", "Little Red Cap" and "Little Red Riding Hood" for next week, URLs posted above.

Feb. 4 (Wed.) Workshop (First real workshop B, Exercise #2, Group B in attendance, Group A offers feedback online)

Hot Seat:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Week 5: Myths, Fairytales, Classical Narrative Structure

Feb. 9 (Mon.) Lecture on LRR

Exercise # 5 posted

Homework: Read Angela Carter's "The Company of Wolves",
URL posted above.

Feb. 11 (Wed.) Workshop (Exercise #3, Group A in attendance, Group B online)

Hot Seat:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Feb. 15-22 Reading Week

No classes

Week 6: Retakes, Repetitions, Non-Linear Form

Feb. 23 (Mon.) Lecture

Exercise #6 posted

Homework:

Feb. 25 (Wed.) Workshop (Exercise #4, Group B in attendance, Group A online)

Hot Seat:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Week 7: Constrictions

Mar. 2 (Mon.) Lecture on constrictions

Half lecture: Benjamin Groh

Exercise #7 posted

Homework:

Mar. 4 (Wed.) Workshop (Exercise #5, Group A in attendance, Group B online)

Hot Seat:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Week 8: Digital poetry/fiction

Mar. 9 (Mon.) Lecture

Exercise #8 posted

Homework:

Mar. 11 (Wed.) Workshop (Exercise #6, Group B in attendance, Group A online)

Hot Seat:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Week 9: Contemporary Oral Forms: Slam, Dub

Mar. 16 (Mon.) Lecture

Half lecture: David Eso on slam poetry

Exercise #9 posted

Homework: Read *Personals*, available at U of C Bookstore

Homework: prep questions for Derek Beaulieu visit

Mar. 18 (Wed.) Workshop (Exercise #7, Group A in attendance, Group B online)

Hot Seat:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Week 10: Publisher Visit: Derek Beaulieu on Chapbooks

Mar. 23 (Mon.) Derek Beaulieu lecture + Q&A

Exercise #10 posted

Homework: prep questions for Ian Williams visit

Homework: read/browse your copy of *Filling Station*

Mar. 25 (Wed.) Workshop (Exercise #8, Group B in attendance, Group A online)

Hot Seat:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Week 11: Writer Visit: Ian Williams

Mar. 30 (Mon.) Ian Williams Reading + Q&A

Homework: prep questions for small magazine editor Paul Zits

Apr. 1 (Wed.) Workshop (Exercise #9, Group A in attendance, Group B online)

Hot Seat:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Week 12: Small Magazines: Paul Zits Visit

Apr. 6 (Mon.) Paul Zits talk + Q&A

Homework: Read "Shitty First Drafts", URL posted above

Apr. 8 (Wed.) Workshop (Exercise #10, Group B in attendance, Group A online)

Hot Seat:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Week 13: Writing as Community-Building, Draft and Redraft, Wrap Up

Apr. 13 (Mon.) Lecture

Apr. 15 (Wed.) Workshop (Performance Day, both groups in attendance)

Apr. 15 is the last day to withdraw with permission from Winter Term half courses.

There is no final exam for this course.

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 smecuofc@gmail.com.

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>

Guidelines on e-mail Etiquette:

<http://www.enough.utoronto.ca/computeruse/eetiquette.htm>

Library and Research Support:

Melanie Boyd, Librarian for English, offers research support to students, including strategies for finding articles, books, and other library materials. Contact:

maboyd@ucalgary.ca

Find *The English Pages* research guide here: <http://libguides.ucalgary.ca/english>

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>

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 Arts Students' Centre (ASC) is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at SS102, call us at 403-220-3580 or email us at ascarts@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>

Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI):

"At the University of Calgary, feedback provided by students through the Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) survey provides valuable information to help with evaluating instruction, enhancing learning and teaching, and selecting courses (www.ucalgary.ca/usri). Your responses make a difference - please participate in USRI Surveys."

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.