

FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
COURSE OUTLINE

ENGLISH 594.01

Fall 2017

COURSE TITLE: Studies in Creative Writing: Prose Fiction

Wed 18:00 – 20:45, Room: SS 1015

Instructor: Suzette Mayr

Office: SS1148 (Graduate Program Office) or SS1048

E-mail: smayr@ucalgary.ca

Office hours: Thursdays, 12-2:00 pm or by appointment

Homepage/course website: www.english.ucalgary.ca/profiles/suzette-mayr

E-mail and electronic submissions policy:

I am happy to reply to short, specific questions via e-mail, and will answer as promptly as possible. However, I cannot guarantee that you will have a reply within any specific amount of time. If you have detailed questions on the course material it is more appropriate to make an appointment and see me personally at my office.

Course description:

English 594 is a senior course in Creative Writing, intended to offer advanced students an opportunity to work intensively on a long prose piece or prose collection. Students at this level must be completely comfortable with the various practices and theories of narrative intervention, and should be prepared to work creatively and imaginatively in applying those theories to their own writing, as well as to their colleagues' work. Students are also expected to read widely as part of their background work, and to engage with local literary events.

This course requires students to work toward completion of a polished prose manuscript of 70-100 pages. Students who have been given permission to register in this class will already have a clear sense of the project they wish to undertake; and they will bring to the class a description of their project. This project might consist of a series of stories, a novella, a series of interconnected tales, a prose-poem, among other genres. Genre is not a rigid consideration, but the object of this course is to enable each student to realize that project in its greatest possible configuration within the limit of the academic term. This course requires critical acumen, editorial focus, and steady writing and reading – I strongly recommend that you endeavour to write every day. Students must be prepared to read and critique approximately 600 pages of workshop material.

Pedagogy:

This class will be conducted primarily as a once-a-week workshop, with students handing in portions of their project on an ongoing basis. Regular submissions should be between 20-30 pages; the “Peripheral Character Scene” and “Beginning/Ending Scene” exercises should be 2-3 pages each. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss their colleagues' writing and the published texts with constructive, informed, and intelligent criticism. Grades will be based on writing achievements, ability to critique, and

class participation. On Tuesday, 12 December 2017, students will hand in the finished project of approximately 70-100 revised and polished pages for instructor evaluation.

The workshop format does not imply group work, but all-class participation under my direction. Students upload writing to D2L one week in advance, and students are expected to come to class having read that material and prepared with constructive criticism and relevant responses.

Texts and readings (available from the U of Calgary Bookstore unless otherwise indicated):

Joyce, James. "The Dead" (from *The Dubliners*)

Spark, Muriel. *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*

Flaubert, Gustave. *Three Tales*

Ondaatje, Michael. *Coming Through Slaughter*

Page, Kathy. *Paradise and Elsewhere*

Kincaid, Jamaica. *Annie John*

Assorted handouts as needed.

Assignments and Evaluation:

Writing and writing exercises (70-100 pages, double-spaced): 70%

Editing, analytical skills, critiques: 20%

Participation: 10%

There will be no final exam in this course. Students will be given graded feedback around mid-term following the "Peripheral Character Scene" exercise, and at the end of the course.

All work must be completed in order to pass this course.

Writing:

Students must plan their term, taking the course schedule into account. Students will choose their own deadlines to submit work to be critiqued by the class, but must do so twice per term. The last day to submit your final, polished draft to the instructor is **Tuesday, Dec. 12**, via Dropbox. Students will upload work to be critiqued at least ONE WEEK before class. If work is distributed less than seven days before class, it will be bumped to the following week and discussed last. Please take this into consideration in your planning. Your disorganization is not the class's emergency.

Each student comes to this course having submitted a portfolio of work and with the aspiration of completing a specific work or project. Projects do evolve as the writing proceeds, but the initial outline that the student prepares is useful as a template. By the end of the course, each student should have between 70-100 pages of a manuscript, sufficiently framed as a revised and polished draft. Each student can count on having 30 pages workshopped twice per term. Students are expected to rewrite as the course progresses toward the submission of their final project.

Please upload pdf versions of your fiction submissions to the class discussion board on D2L, where the class will access them. It is your responsibility to keep a copy of all assignments in case of loss by any cause.

Editing and Critiques:

Editing and criticism are part of this class. Students must keep up with critiques of their colleagues' writing. Written critiques of the material being workshopped are due the night they are workshopped. It is

unacceptable to hand in late critiques; these will be penalized. Late critiques will lose a third of a grade (an A- to B+) for each business day (not class) overdue.

Participation:

Your attendance and participation are part of your grade. In order to receive full marks for the Participation portion of your final grade, you must arrive punctually, attend class regularly, and contribute to class discussion, having read your colleagues' work and having read the assigned published texts. Absolute silence will not fulfill this grade; however, dominating the class and interrupting your colleagues during discussion will not either. Participation is also graded on fluency, relevance, background knowledge and literary expertise. In our discussions of the published texts (eg: "The Dead," *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, etc.) you must come to each class prepared to discuss at least ONE literary technique you noted or learned in the text up for discussion that night.

Every student is expected to critique and to edit their colleagues' work with care and in some detail. Workshopping takes place in class, orally, while the writer whose work is being discussed takes notes. All students submit to the writer (with a copy to the instructor), a written critique on each of their colleagues' submissions. Critiques should offer both appropriate critical analysis and suggestions for improvement, engaging with the text from the position of both writer and reader. Students thus develop critical acumen, and must be able to read varieties of writing with an objective and critical eye.

Additional expectations:

Assignments submitted after the deadline will be penalized with the loss of a third of a grade (an A- to B+) for each business day [not class] that the assignment is overdue. No assignments will be accepted one week past the assignment deadline without the prior consent of the instructor.

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.

Guidelines for in-class discussion:

Discussion forms the body of in-class time in this course. For the sake of useful criticism and discussion, certain words and expressions are not permitted in this class. Please make note of them and add to the list as the year progresses. For a beginning, avoid using the following words or phrases: **I liked, I didn't like, I loved, I enjoyed, I hated, it's real, but it really happened.** When reading a piece of fiction, please stay away from personal tastes; the questions you must confront are not whether you "like" a character, but whether the character was convincing and whether their actions are prepared for in the light of the fictional trajectory required. If you feel that some aspect of the text works well, explain why. And if you feel some aspect of the text does not work well, explain why, using literary terminology.

Guidelines for written critiques:

Each student is required to critique and to edit his/her colleagues' work with care and in some detail, providing two copies of a half a page (minimum) to one page (maximum), double-spaced written commentary for each text critiqued (one for the instructor and one for the student whose work is being discussed). Critiques for the "Peripheral Character Scene" and "Beginning/Ending Scene" exercises may be shorter (2-3 sentences), but should still be thorough.

These critiques are due on the evening of the class discussion; your reading should thus not be a regurgitation of what is said in class, but your own initial but thoughtful response to the work. Critiques

should include the name of the piece being analyzed, your name and the date. Keep in mind how useful these critiques are to you as a writer. You must give helpful critiques to receive helpful critiques.

Critiques should focus on what strikes you, as the reader, as the most interesting element of the writing you have read. They should cover two aspects: what works well and what does not work well, and why. Always begin positively, with what is effective. Then address what worked least well, and why. Critiques should avoid, at all costs, general or self-evident comments, or spurious praise. “I like this piece,” is not useful. And critiques must **NEVER** be personal or in any way derogatory – personal remarks are considered academic misconduct and could result in permanent expulsion from the class. Students are addressing the work on the page and not the writer. Nor should critiques consist of hollow praise (“this is a fantastic story!”) without substantial editorial comment. Constructive criticism analyzes both the merits and the flaws of creative work, the point being to help the writer improve work-in-progress; all the writing in this class is work-in-progress. The more critically a writer can read, the better a self-critic and consequently writer you will become. Learning to be a discerning reader is an important step in developing into a better writer.

Grading system:

In this course, all essays, exams, and presentations will be marked on the University of Calgary’s four-point Grading System, as described in the Calendar:

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

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

A range: Consistently exceptional work

The work is moving toward a publishable level. The use of language is concise and precise and original; figures of speech are imaginative and compelling; the content of the work is interesting and is treated in a fresh, new way, and the form chosen is the best possible. Writing in this range employs every element of fiction with sophistication and elegance. **A+ is a grade earned in only very rare instances by work that is absolutely stellar. Although the A+ is solely an honorific that entails no additional points in the four-point system, this grade is earned for work that exceeds expectations in style, intellectual depth and breadth, sophistication, and originality.**

B range: Consistently good work

The work is above average, with good use of language, originality, and control, but could use more refinement or development, and more revision. It shows at least in part a heightened awareness of structure and image, several striking aspects of narrative, and an interesting perspective or point of view. Word choice and description are generally exact and thoughtful.

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 plot are sound but may verge on clichéd and predictable. Vocabulary is adequate but may be limited.

D range: Minimal pass

The work shows some effort but is carelessly constructed and may have grammatical problems or lack awareness of the mechanics of English. Use of language will be undistinguished and clichéd, ideas ordinary, even predictable.

F: No credit

Work shows no effort; no work has been done at all.

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.

NB: If you are having difficulties of any kind, or if you have any questions, please feel free to meet with me. If you cannot make an appointment during my regular office hours, I am happy to arrange to meet at another time. Do not hesitate to inform me of potential difficulties because I may be able to help you solve them.

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:

Christie Hurrell, Interim Librarian for English, offers research support to students, including strategies for finding articles, books, and other library materials. Contact: christie.hurrell@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>.

Student Accommodations:**ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS**

The student accommodation policy can be found at: [ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy](http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy).

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities [ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy](http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy).

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available

at http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf.

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.