



**FACULTY OF ARTS  
Department of English**

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**ENGL 594: Studies in Creative Writing: Prose Fiction**

**Winter 2022**

**Wednesdays, 18:00-20:45, SS1153**

**In-person**

**(NOTE: the first three weeks will be via Zoom, but this is subject to change depending on pandemic protocols)**

<b>Instructor</b>	Suzette Mayr
<b>Email:</b>	smayr@ucalgary.ca
<b>Web Page:</b>	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Via Zoom Thursdays, 1:30-2:30 pm, or by appointment

**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.

This course requires students to work toward completion of a polished prose manuscript of 60-100 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 students endeavour to write every day. Students must be prepared to read and critique approximately 600 pages of workshop material.

There is no prerequisite for this course, but students must apply with a portfolio to gain entry into the course.

**Course learning outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify elements of craft in fiction-writing, and be able to discuss and analyze what differentiates one writer's style and craft from another writer's;
2. Identify the elements that make up their own voices as emerging writers;
3. Determine where to "find" story while embarking on their own creative writing practice;
4. Read fiction thoughtfully and critically at an advanced level from a writerly perspective;
5. Read fiction effectively from an editorial perspective, with a concentration on elements such as character, setting, language choice, and plot;
6. Use newfound tools taught in the course to embark on a book-length creative writing project.

**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.

Selected groups of students upload creative writing submissions to D2L one week in advance for workshopping. The workshop format does not imply group work, but all-class participation under the instructor's direction. All students are expected to post formal written critiques of each other's creative writing submissions on the course D2L discussion board, to come to/attend class prepared to discuss orally their colleagues' writing, and to respond to recorded group presentations with constructive, informed, and intelligent criticism.

Grades will be based on writing achievements, ability to critique, and class participation. On Wednesday, 20 April 2022, students will submit the finished project of approximately 60-100, revised and polished pages for instructor evaluation.

**Texts and readings (available at the UCalgary bookstore unless otherwise indicated):**

Ball, Jonathan. *The Lightning of Possible Storms*

Reid-Benta, Zaliqa. *Frying Plantain*

Van Camp, Richard. *Moccasin Square Gardens*

Various handouts available on D2L as required

**Learning technology requirements:**

Students will need to have access to a laptop computer or smartphone in order to post their own short stories, read other students' short stories, post their critiques to other students' short stories, and post responses to other students' presentations. There is a D2L site for this course which contains other relevant class resources and materials (see [d2l.ucalgary.ca](https://d2l.ucalgary.ca)).

Your final grade will consist of an evaluation of all the work you hand in. Your attendance, participation, and the degree of improvement you make will figure in your final mark. You are

expected to attend classes in person (barring any required university pandemic protocols) and to contribute to class discussion. Below is how the final grade is determined.

All work must be typed and double-spaced in a legible font, no smaller than 12-point. Fiction to be workshopped must be posted in a Word document to the class D2L discussion board one week before it is due to be workshopped.

Written critiques of other students' fiction, as well as responses to group presentations and course readings, must be posted to the class D2L discussion board on the dates outlined in the syllabus.

<b>Assignment #1: Writing (Due date: Ongoing)</b>	<b>70%</b>
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Manuscript submission #1 – 20-30 pages (due date will be determined in class)  
Manuscript submission #2 – 20-30 pages (due date will be determined in class)  
Exercise #1 – “Peripheral Character” exercise – 2-3 pages (due **Thurs., Feb. 17**, 11:59 pm, via D2L)  
Exercise #2 – “Beginning/Ending” exercise – 2-3 pages (due **Thurs., March 31**, 11:59 pm, via D2L)  
Manuscript submission #3 – 60-100 pages (due **Wed., April 13**, 11:59 pm, via D2L Dropbox)

NB: STUDENTS IN THE CLASS ARE NOT OBLIGED TO POST WRITTEN FEEDBACK TO OTHER STUDENTS' LATE SHORT STORIES. LATE STORIES WILL BE WORKSHOPPED LAST, AND WILL RECEIVE ONLY LIMITED IN-CLASS ORAL FEEDBACK.

<b>Assignment #2: Group Presentation (Due dates will be determined in class)</b>	<b>10%</b>
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Each group must give one, approximately 15-20 minute video or audio presentation on one of the published stories or books included on the reading list over the course of the semester. The presentations are to be creative and engaging, and presenters should refrain from doing a presentation that is a flat reading from a paper or screen.

<b>Assignment #3: Discussion Board Posts and Class Participation (Due date: Ongoing)</b>	<b>20%</b>
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1. Presentation Analyses: 150-200 words each, responding to asynchronous group presentations, and the published text being presented on (due dates to be determined in class);
2. Critiques (weekly): minimum 100 words each, responding to other students' fiction throughout the semester. These critiques are due at 5:30 pm (ie, one hour before class) on the day that students' fiction pieces will be workshopped;
3. Engaged participation during in-person classes, demonstrating knowledge of the student and published texts being discussed.

In response to other students' posted fiction and in preparation for the in-person Zoom sessions, you must create one well-considered critique to each student fiction posted to D2L. Students may also post responses to other students' critiques, however, students cannot rebut

a critique of their *own* work – they can only respond to a critique of *another student's* fiction. This simulates the real world of publishing where writers rarely speak back to reviewers or critics. To ensure your written comments are respectful and relevant, please plan and re-read each comment carefully before posting it and remember that your audience will not have the benefit of social cues, tone of voice or body language. Consider composing your comments and posts in Word or some other suitable word processing program first. Racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, or other discriminatory comments will not be tolerated in this class. See “Conduct” below for further details.

NB: LATE POSTS WILL NOT RECEIVE CREDIT TOWARDS ASSIGNMENT #3.

### **ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION EXPECTATIONS**

Because of the workshop nature of this class, students are expected to attend class regularly whether in person or via Zoom, and to be fully present and engaged in class activities and discussions. This class will function much more effectively if all the students are all present for all of the classes. Your creative work will not be workshopped if you do not attend class when your work is scheduled for workshopping; conversely, your participation grade will be severely affected if you *only* attend classes when your creative work is being workshopped.

### **ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS**

#### **Late Assignments:**

The student fiction submissions that comprise Assignment #1 will not receive credit if submitted after the due date(s) without express clearance from the instructor. Assignment #2 posted after the deadline will be penalized with the loss of a third of a grade (eg: an A- to B+) for each day that the presentation is overdue. Late critiques or analyses posted about other students' short stories or presentations/published works (Assignment #3) will not be considered or counted toward a grade when posted after the due date(s).

There is **NO** final exam in this course. You do not have to submit every assignment in order to pass the course, but assignments that are not submitted will receive an F grade.

There are no extra credit assignments available in this course

Final 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 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.

#### **Conduct:**

Students, employees, and academic staff are also expected to demonstrate behaviour in class that promotes and maintains a positive and productive learning environment. As members of the University community, students, employees, and academic staff are expected to demonstrate conduct that is consistent with the University of Calgary Calendar, the Code of

Conduct and Non-Academic Misconduct policy and procedures, which can be found at:  
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

**Policy on use of electronic devices:**

The use of laptop and mobile devices in class is acceptable when used in a manner appropriate to the course and classroom activities. Please refrain from accessing websites and resources that may be distracting to you or for other learners during class time. Students are responsible for being aware of the University's [Internet and email use policy](#).

**Grading System:**

This course uses a combination of percentages and letter grades.

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

The interpretation of the undergraduate university grading system can be found at  
<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-1-1.html>

Students must reach the minimum percentage threshold for the grade range to receive that letter grade (e.g., to receive an A- a student will have surpassed the minimum threshold of 80.00% in the course).

**Grading Criteria for Creative Writing (Exercises and Fiction Submissions)**

**A+: Outstanding work**

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. This work has all of the characteristics of work described below in the A range, but exceeds this. The work is publishable in every way; mechanical and grammatical problems are nonexistent or at a minimum.

**A range: Consistently excellent 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.

**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.

**Rubric for Creative Writing (Short Stories and Exercises)**

	Excellent (A)		Good (B)		Satisfactory (C+)		Unsatisfactory (D)		Absent (F)	N/A
Beginning										
Middle (atmosphere, narrative development, etc.)										
End										
Character / Characterization										
Structure and format (narrator, literary form, etc.)										
Language (eg: sentence flow, distinct character speech patterns, imagery, metaphors, vs. clichéd, banal, bland, etc.)										
Originality										

**Academic Integrity:**

This course, like all courses at the University of Calgary, holds students to high standards of honest and responsible scholarship. Please consult the [Academic Integrity website](#) for a detailed description of university policies, which will be enforced in this course. Cases of suspected academic misconduct will be referred to the Associate Dean of Arts for a ruling.

Plagiarism is a type of academic misconduct. Plagiarism occurs when a student presents the ideas, expression of ideas, or work of another person as their own. Another equally serious form of plagiarism occurs when a student submits something they have written themselves for credit in two or more courses without first securing written permission from all those course instructors. Consequences for plagiarism include failure on the assignment, failure in the course, and possible suspension or expulsion from the university. Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense.

**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](#) must be completed. It is the student's responsibility to initiate this process with the instructor. The University also has regulations governing the [deferral of final examinations](#).

**Grade appeals:**

To pursue a Reassessment of Graded Term Work or a Reappraisal of an Academic Assessment, Consult the [University Calendar](#) and request advice from the English Department at [engl@ucalgary.ca](mailto:engl@ucalgary.ca). Please note that mere dissatisfaction with a grade is not sufficient grounds for an appeal.

**[English Department Website:](#)**

For more information about courses, programs, policies, events and contacts in the Department of English.

**Scribe and Muse Club for English Students:**

The [Scribe and Muse Reading and Writing Club](#) fosters and champions reading and writing through community service, leadership, and engagement. Our email address is [smecuofc@gmail.com](mailto:smecuofc@gmail.com).

**Writing support:**

[The Student Success Centre](#) offers both online and workshop writing support for U of C students.

**[Academic regulations and schedules](#)****Student Academic Accommodations:**

The Student Accessibility Services website is available [here](#). University accommodation policies can be found at the following links:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6-1.html>

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6.html>

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6-2.html>

**Program Advising and Student Information Resources** is done through the Faculty of Arts Students' Centre. Office location: SS102; phone: 403-220-3580; email: [ascarts@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ascarts@ucalgary.ca)  
Website: <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate>

### **Instructor's Intellectual Property**

Course materials created by instructors, including presentations, posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments, and exams, remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may not be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

### **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy**

Student information will be collected in accordance with usual classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty and teaching assistants. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary.

### **Sexual violence policy:**

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/sexual-violence-policy.pdf>

### **Other important information:**

- [Wellness and Mental Health Resources](#)
- [Student Success](#)
- [Student Ombuds Office](#)
- [Student Union \(SU\) Information](#)
- [Graduate Students' Association \(GSA\) Information](#)
- [Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points](#)
- [Safewalk](#)

### **Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI):**

Please participate in [USRI Surveys](#) toward the end of the course. The feedback they provide helps us evaluate teaching, enhance student learning, and guide students as they select courses.