



UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY

FACULTY OF ARTS  
Department of English

COURSE OUTLINE  
ENGL 594.03: Studies in Creative Writing  
Crafting the Short Story  
Winter 2023  
Mondays 09:00-11:45 A.M., SS 1059

Instructor	Uchechukwu Peter Umezurike
Email:	<a href="mailto:uchechukwu.umezurike@ucalgary.ca">uchechukwu.umezurike@ucalgary.ca</a>
Web Page:	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
Office Hours:	Tues: 1:00-15:00, or by appointment. Office: SS 1024

**Course description:**

English 594 is a senior course in Creative Writing that focuses on the craft of short stories. It provides students with an opportunity to deepen their grasp of the mechanics of short fiction and apply them to their writing and to their colleagues' work. We will read selected short stories by different writers, examine techniques and elements employed by these writers, and apply them to our writing. Students will write short stories on subjects (agreed upon and approved by the instructor) and explore different approaches. This class aims to encourage students to practise writing short stories and see themselves as an aesthete, a maker of art and beauty. Overall, this class will offer students a space to sharpen their aptitude for reading like a writer and motivate them to work towards producing a short story collection.

**Pedagogy:**

We will study together in a space that is safe, respectful, inclusive, collaborative, and cognizant of our strengths and vulnerabilities. Racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, or other discriminatory comments will not be tolerated in this class. This class will involve craft and workshop sessions, with students handing in portions of their short story drafts on an ongoing basis. Students are expected to attend class prepared to discuss their colleagues' writing and respond to each other's presentations with constructive, informed, and intelligent criticism. Grades will be based on writing achievements, ability to critique, and class participation. See "Conduct" below for further details.

*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. Determine where to find story while learning about their own creative writing practice;
2. Identify elements of craft in fiction writing, and be able to discuss and analyze these elements;
3. Develop their own individual voice and style as emerging writers;
4. Read fiction thoughtfully and critically at an advanced level from a writerly perspective;
5. Read fiction effectively from an editorial perspective, focusing on character, plot, setting, conflict, and diction;
6. Use feedback received from workshop to improve their own work.

**Texts and readings:**

- Janet Burroway, "Whatever Works: The Writing Process." *Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft*. Tenth Edition. U of Chicago P, 2019, pp. 1-21.
- Isabel Allende, "Why I Write."
- Tobias Wolff, "Bullet in the Brain."
- Louise Erdrich, "The Red Convertible."
- Chanel M. Sutherland, "Beneath the Softness of Snow."
- Pelc Krzysztof, "Green Velvet."
- Jamaica Kincaid, "Girl."
- Margaret Atwood, "Happy Endings."

**Recommended texts (available at the UCalgary bookstore):**

- Burroway, Janet. *Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft*. Tenth Edition. U of Chicago P, 2019.
- Baechtel, Mark. *Shaping the Story*, Pearson Longman, 2004.

**Learning technology requirements:**

Students will need to have access to a laptop computer or smartphone in class time and to post works to D2L discussion board. There is a D2L site for this course which contains required readings and other relevant class resources and materials (see d2L.ucalgary.ca).

**Assessments and Evaluation:**

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.

**ASSIGNMENTS:** Assignment Submission D2L or Email

Class Attendance/Participation (due on the last day of class)	20%
Short Story I (due Fri. Jan. 27)	10%
Short Story II (due Fri. Feb. 17)	10%
Presentation/Workshop (dates for individual presentation/workshop to be assigned in class; Feb. 27 - Mar. 27)	20%
Final Story (due Wed., Apr. 12, 2023)	40%

**DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS**

**Class Attendance/Participation:** Students are expected to attend class regularly and to contribute substantively to class discussions and workshops. Students should inform the instructor if they are sick or have tested positive for Covid. This class will function much more effectively if students are present for all 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 affected if you *only* attend classes when your creative work is being workshopped. Class attendance and participation constitute 20% of the overall course grade: *attendance* is 20% of the Attendance/Participation grade and *participation* in writing workshops is 80%.

***PARTICIPATION RUBRIC***

Participation in the workshop entails submitting a two-paragraph comment (max. 150 words) on each draft submission by other students in the class. The two-paragraph comment is your appreciation and critique of the draft writing. First paragraph should be on what you think works or is done well about the writing, while the second paragraph focuses on what you think should be improved upon. Your comments must be sent to me through email or D2L BEFORE the class.

A class roster will be circulated at the beginning of each class for attendance. Participation will be based largely on feedback comments on draft (work-in-progress) submitted by students in the class. Grading of submitted feedback will use the following rubric:

A (90-100)	Timely submission of 2 copies of feedback comments; comments follow stipulated 2-paragraph structure of approx. 150 words, comments demonstrate in-depth engagement with the drafts submitted by other students; present in class, and uses written comments to engage class discussions/presentations
B (70-89)	Timely submission of 2 copies of feedback comments; comments follow stipulated 2-paragraph structure of approx. 150 words, comments demonstrate in-depth engagement with the drafts submitted by other students; present in class
C (60-69)	Timely submission of 2 copies of feedback comments; comments follow stipulated 2-paragraph structure of approx. 150 words; comments do not demonstrate in-depth engagement with the drafts submitted by other students; present in class
D (50-59)	Unexcused absence in class; submission of 2 copies of feedback comments; comments follow stipulated 2-paragraph structure of approx. 150 words, comments do not demonstrate in-depth engagement with the drafts submitted by other students
F (0)	Unexcused absence in class. No submission of feedback comments.

**Short Story I & II (500 words each; 20%; due Jan. 27 & Feb. 17):** This assignment requires students to write 2 short stories of 500 words each. Your short stories could be based on any subject(s) of your choice. Originality of contents will be rewarded. Please ensure that you do not use works or sections of works that you have previously written (whether in draft or published form). Your short stories should contain narrative elements including plot, setting, point-of-view, conflict, etc. Your submission should be uploaded to the specified folders on D2L on or before 11:59pm on Friday, Jan 27 (for your first story) and Feb 17 (for your second story). This assignment is worth 20% of the overall course grade, 10% for each essay.

**Presentation/Workshop (750 words; Feb. 27 - Mar. 27):** Students are expected to submit a short fiction for workshop in class. The draft should not exceed 750 words in length. The draft must be submitted one week in advance of your selected workshop date. Each student should select their workshop date from a roster that will be circulated in the first week of classes. The workshops will run from February 27 through March 27. Please note that the workshops constitute a core part of this course. Each student should be prepared to provide feedback on writing drafts by other members of the class. Students are expected to attend ALL workshops to help them develop their own writing and editorial skills. Per procedure for each workshop: the writer gives a 5-minute orienting presentation based on the draft they submitted followed by feedback from members of the class. Each student must provide TWO copies of their feedback comments on each workshop submission as indicated above under Attendance and Participation. When absent from class, participation grade is 0.

**Final Story (3000 words; 40%):** This is a fresh creative work that shows your mastery of the narrative elements learnt in the course. Please note that originality of content and depth of creativity brought to your writing will be greatly awarded. Prose work should be between 2500-3000 words. Your creative work can be on any subject/theme and based on any stylistic choices that you find most conducive. Your work must reflect the narrative elements discussed in the course, including but not limited to the following: plot, point of view, characterization, and setting. The final creative work is due on Thursday, Apr. 12, 11:59 pm and is worth 40% of the overall course grade.

**Note:** All work must be typed and double-spaced in a legible font, no smaller than 12-point. Please submit each assignment as an attachment in Microsoft Word or PDF format by D2L/email. 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.

## ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS

### Late Assignments:

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.

### 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](#). Electronic devices are not permitted during the Final Examination.

### 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

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)

- 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 far exceeds expectations in style, correctness, intellectual depth and breadth, sophistication, and originality.
- The interpretation of the undergraduate university grading system can be found at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-1-1.html>
- Or, for graduate courses: please refer to the Graduate Grading System at the following link: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/grad/current/gs-h-1.html>
- There is no D- grade.

## 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**

No work has been done at all.

### **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.