

# ENGL A121: SHORT STORY WRITING I

Item	Value
Curriculum Committee Approval Date	05/03/2023
Top Code	150700 - Creative Writing
Units	3 Total Units
Hours	54 Total Hours (Lecture Hours 54)
Total Outside of Class Hours	0
Course Credit Status	Credit: Degree Applicable (D)
Material Fee	No
Basic Skills	Not Basic Skills (N)
Repeatable	No
Grading Policy	Standard Letter (S), • Pass/No Pass (B)
Associate Arts Local General Education (GE)	• OC Active Participation - AA (OC2)
Associate Science Local General Education (GE)	• OCC Arts - AS (OSC1)

## Course Description

Formerly: Short Story Writing. An introductory class in writing short fiction, centered on discussing and evaluating students' original work. Includes practical strategies for generating strong prose, based on techniques of published writers. This is a course for beginning writing students. ADVISORY: ENGL C1000 and ENGL A119. Transfer Credit: CSU; UC.

## Course Level Student Learning Outcome(s)

1. Analyze and compare published short stories in order to identify various conventions of the genre to understand how those conventions help support and develop the stories' goals, and utilize those conventions in the completion of a writing portfolio containing a finalized short story.

## Course Objectives

- I Reading skills:
- I. 1. Identify the fundamental features of the short story, such as plot, characterization, conflict, setting, dialogue, and point of view.
- I. 2. Explain and correctly employ the terminology and models of short fiction, such as initiation. complication. resolution; exposition, rising action, turning point, denouement; postmodernist forms; literary memoir; voice, tone, persona, flashback, compression, risk, and payoff.
- I. 3. Devise, recognize, and apply general standards for critically evaluating short stories.
- I. 4. Analyze writer strategies for maximizing the impact of their work and apply those strategies, when appropriate, to their own original work.
- I. 5. Evaluate published short stories in terms of risk and payoff, taking into account the traditions from which the work emerged.
- II Writing skills:

- II. 1. Utilize techniques such as journaling, quick drafts, and freewriting, to generate raw material to be shaped into original short stories.
- II. 2. Discriminate between fruitful and problematic approaches to storytelling.
- II. 3. Write a series of original short stories.
- II. 4. Identify audience and adjust register accordingly.
- II. 5. Experiment with narrative line.
- II. 6. Recognize and exploit the interplay between various sections of a work.
- II. 7. Enter into a discourse with established writers by responding in writing to their essays on craft.
- II. 8. Generate written evaluations of the original short stories of peers in a workshop setting, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of works-in-progress.
- II. 9. Apply critical skills to successfully identify the strengths and weaknesses of their own original work.
- II. 10. Gain mastery in basic revision techniques and apply those techniques during their own revision process.
- II. 11. Edit original work to eliminate surface errors and to meet basic publication standards.
- III Ancillary skills:
- III. 1. Develop greater appreciation of short stories.
- III. 2. Apply research skills, as appropriate, in preparation for writing.
- III. 3. Read segments of their original work to the class.
- III. 4. Develop awareness of publication requirements for contemporary fiction.
- III. 5. Understand basic marketing techniques.

## Lecture Content

In addition to the topics addressed below, students participate in weekly workshops where they provide each other with written responses to all original stories. Students also produce weekly in-class writing based on exercises related to the days topic. What is a story. Plot Traditional structure: exposition, trigger, rising action, turning point, falling action, denouement. Contemporary structure: initiation. complication. resolution. The hook. Set-up and payoff. Reversal. Epiphany. Character Round vs. flat characters Sympathetic vs. unsympathetic characters. Character sketches exercises in character development. Conflict Wants: Objectives, obstacles, beats. Video examples. Where to begin. Opening lines. Opening beats. Writing exercise for generating opening beats. Close Reading. Group analysis of selected stories. Valid and not-so-valid interpretations. Showing telling. Significant Sensory Detail. Concrete imagery. Inference. Dialogue. Lecture/discussion. Analysis of model(s). Setting. Setting as psychology. Discussion samples. Point of View. First Person. Second Person. Third Person. Omniscient. The Unreliable Narrator. Experimental POVs. Voice / Tone / Audience. Definition and discussion. Samples. Imagery Irony. Discussion and close reading. Application. Memoir. Range of approach. Discussion of models. Postmodernism. Metafiction. Magical Realism. Breaking the frame. Revisiting History. Popular Culture and High Culture Collide. Fact Meets Fiction. Revision. Writers on writing. Revision techniques. Revision samples. Style. Endings. Theories and techniques. Epiphany in depth. Editing. Goals and methods. Peer editing session. Contemporary Issues and Trends. Presentation and discussion. Marketing Your Work. Marketing trends, venues, options, warnings. Writers resources. Journals, mags, on-line opportunities. Networking. Agents and editors. Literary

Journal Production. How, when, where to submit. The selection process. Finding the right place for your work. Optional: Class Anthology. Selection of material. Editing. Sequencing. Layout. Cover design title. Distribution and open mike readings.

Guide for Students, 4 ed. Bedford/St. Martin, 2020 3. Required Lawn, B. 40 Short Stories: A Portable Anthology, 6 ed. New York: St. Martins, 2021

## Method(s) of Instruction

- Lecture (02)
- DE Live Online Lecture (02S)
- DE Online Lecture (02X)

## Instructional Techniques

Lecture, demonstration, modeling and in-class writing exercises pertaining to the topic under discussion, weekly workshop sessions, written peer responses, individual conferences, occasional videos to reinforce learning.

## Reading Assignments

Published short stories, peer stories, essays on theory and craft. 1 hour a week

## Writing Assignments

Students perform a range of writing tasks on a weekly basis. In addition to generating a minimum of three full-length short stories and one competent revision, students evaluate each others stories in writing each week, respond critically to published writers works, and perform regular writing exercises. 5 hours a week

## Out-of-class Assignments

Students read and analyze published stories and essays on theory in preparation for class discussion. They also read and respond in writing to fellow students work. Students will produce 40-50 pages of original fiction and will revise their most promising stories. 6 hours a week

## Demonstration of Critical Thinking

The quality and quantity of their original fiction. Their ability to effectively revise their work. The quality of their participation in peer review and in-class writing exercises. The thoroughness of their written responses to published works.

## Required Writing, Problem Solving, Skills Demonstration

Students perform a range of writing tasks on a weekly basis. In addition to generating a minimum of three full-length short stories and one competent revision, students evaluate each others stories in writing each week, respond critically to published writers works, and perform regular in-class writing exercises.

## Eligible Disciplines

English: Masters degree in English, literature, comparative literature, or composition OR bachelors degree in any of the above AND masters degree in linguistics, TESL, speech, education with a specialization in reading, creative writing, or journalism OR the equivalent. Masters degree required. English: Masters degree in English, literature, comparative literature, or composition OR bachelors degree in any of the above AND masters degree in linguistics, TESL, speech, education with a specialization in reading, creative writing, or journalism OR the equivalent. Masters degree required.

## Textbooks Resources

1. Required Turchi, Peter. A Maze and a Muse, ed. Trinity University Press, 2017 2. Required Sellers, Heather. The Practice of Creative Writing: A