



ENGLISH 303-W01
SHORT STORY WRITING
SYLLABUS – WINTER 2007

Professor: D. Harlan Wilson
Office: 257 Dwyer
Phone: 419.586.0317
Office Hours: MW 12:15-2:15
Email: david.wilson@wright.edu
Course Website: www.wright.edu/~david.wilson/winter2007/index.html
Personal Website: www.dharlanwilson.com

Meeting Place & Time

190 Dwyer | Th 4:10 – 5:50

Website

www.msu.edu/~david.wilson/winter2007/index.html

Course Description

English 303 is designed to develop students' skills in writing the short story. This includes extended works (500 – 2,000 words) and shorter pieces (less than 500 words), the latter of which has been referred to as flash fiction, sudden fiction, quiction, short shorts and prose poetry, among other things. Students will study a range of readings and experiment with the elements of fiction such as narration, point of view, style, characterization, story and plot, setting, figurative language, genre and theme. The course focuses on the processes of reading, writing and editing through the following activities: 1) the study of a diversity of short stories which will be used as models for students' own creative explorations; 2) the study of criticism on fiction writing and authorial techniques and advice; 3) writing exercises designed to develop students' imaginative and stylistic skills; 4) peer editing and constructive criticism of student writing in a workshop setting.

Course Objectives

After successfully completing this course, students should be able to do the following:

- ✓ Prepare and submit a piece of fiction for professional publication.
- ✓ Respond critically and creatively to a wide variety of short fiction.
- ✓ Assess the aesthetic of a particular genre of fiction.
- ✓ Compare literary works to distinguish differences in style and/or theme.
- ✓ Analyze devices that help construct meanings in literary texts.
- ✓ Actively and effectively edit and revise short stories.
- ✓ Identify the literary conventions and elements of fiction writing.

Texts

Bernays, Anne & Pamela Painter, eds. *What If? Writing Exercises for Fiction Writers*. 2nd Ed. New York: Pearson/Longman, 2004.

Thomas, Denise & James, eds. *Flash Fiction: 72 Very Short Stories*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1992.

Mead Composition 100-Sheet Notebook.

Grading Scale

Course grades will be based on the following percentages:

Attendance & Participation	20%
Assignments	15%
Journal	15%
Fiction	45%
Presentation	5%

Attendance

Attendance is an essential part of this course. It is expected that you will come to each class period prepared for the day's activities; when you do not show up, or when you show up unprepared, the quality of the class's labor suffers. As we only meet once a week, it is important that you attend class, barring any unforeseen illnesses, family emergencies, religious observances, etc. More than TWO unexcused absences will negatively affect your grade. Should you miss a class, you are responsible for all assignments given during that class period.

Participation

This includes in-class speaking, activities, and responsive listening. Participation is crucial, especially in writing workshops. Simply showing up for class does not constitute participation. You are expected to present your informed ideas and criticism and show respect for others in the classroom. Participation is mental attendance. You will be graded on how much you

contribute to the learning environment of each class session. In workshops, your grades will be contingent upon the degree to which you constructively critique your peers' work.

Assignments

Regular in-class assignments and exercises will be given to you throughout the semester, many of which will involve experimentation with narrative. These will usually be collected in class; if you have an unexcused absence on the day of an in-class assignment, you will not be able to make it up.

Fiction

The fiction you produce in this course will vary in length and genre. You will be graded not only on final, polished drafts but on how you enact the writing process; all prewriting and revisions must be turned in, too. Each student will present a flash fiction to the class. Presentations should include a brief explanation of the style and origin of your work, a reading of the work, and a short interpretive commentary.

Journals

Journals are valuable tools for developing and refining your creative writing and thinking skills. You are required to keep a regular journal in which you address issues and topics posed to you in class as well as record ideas of your own. You should form the habit of writing in your journal on a daily basis, if only briefly, detailing your thoughts, observations, dreams, insights, experiences – anything you might draw on for your writing. Mead Composition 100-Sheet Notebooks must be used to keep journals, and each entry that you make must be dated. Journals will be collected at random, undisclosed intervals, so make sure your writing is always up to date.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when a writer: (1) copies verbatim from an author without quotation or attempts to disguise the act by selective omissions or alterations; (2) paraphrases from an author without naming the source in the text of the paper or providing a list of references at the end; (3) turns in a paper written by somebody else. As a point of academic integrity, you are required to submit original material of your own creation. Plagiarism of any material is a serious offense and, if established with sufficient evidence, can result in failure of the course or dismissal from the university.

Writer's Hotline

This service is available for quick or one-time questions that can be answered over the phone and usually involve grammar or writing mechanics. The phone number is 937.775.2158. The hotline is open daily until 4 p.m.

Class Calendar

Week	Schedule
1	Introduction to the Course <i>What If?</i> – PART ONE: Beginnings
2	<i>What If?</i> – PART TWO: Notebooks, Journals & Memory
3	<i>What If?</i> – PART FOURTEEN: Sudden, Flash & Microfiction Selections from <i>Flash Fiction</i>
4	<i>What If?</i> – PART EIGHT: The Elements of Style Selections from <i>Flash Fiction</i>
5	<i>What If?</i> – PART THREE: Characterization Speculative Fiction
6	WRITING WORKSHOP
7	<i>Rebel Yell</i> – Chp. 3 (Handout) Irrational Fiction
8	<i>What If?</i> – PART SEVEN: Plot <i>Rebel Yell</i> – Chps. 1 & 8 (Handout)
9	WRITING WORKSHOP
10	Final Presentations
E	Final Project Due

(NOTE: This schedule is subject to changes.)