

INTRO TO PROSE AND POETRY WRITING CW 2100, CRN 43702

Instructor Info:

Dr. Gania Barlow
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Office Hours: T/Th 12:30-2pm, 542 O'Dowd Hall

Course Info:

Fall 2018
T/Th 10:00-11:47am
Classroom: SFH 170

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Entry-level creative writing workshop in fiction, poetry and literary nonfiction. (Formerly ENG 216). Prerequisite(s): (WRT 160 or WRT 1060) with a grade of C (2.0) or higher.

Course Goals: "The purpose of a writer is to keep civilization from destroying itself." –Albert Camus. (No pressure).

Okay, seriously, Course Goals: "If you want to be a writer, you must do two things above all others: read a lot and write a lot." –Stephen King

By the end of the course you will:

1. Learn and experiment with the basic elements of poetry and prose writing.
2. Create a body of writing that you can go on to revise and expand
3. Read and discuss a variety of poetry, fiction, and literary nonfiction
4. Develop your abilities to give and receive constructive criticism in peer workshops
5. Build a community of writers and readers to support your work.

REQUIRED BOOK & PRINTING COSTS

The only required book is:

- **40 Short Stories, 5th edition, ed. Beverly Lawn (2016). ISBN-13: 978-1319035389.** You should get this edition. There are older editions of this anthology, but they don't have all the same stories, and the page numbering will be different, both of which would make it difficult for you to prepare and participate fully. You should also buy the physical book not a digital copy.
- In addition, there will be readings posted to Moodle that you will be **required to print out and bring to class**. Between printing those readings and printing your materials for workshops, you should expect to spend about \$50-60 on printing over the course of the semester. (This sounds like a lot but is only about \$4-5/week on average. If this represents a financial burden, come and talk to me ASAP.)

The following two books of writing exercises were ordered as "recommended books." Only buy them if you want to have them for your personal use beyond this class.

- Behn and Twichell eds., *The Practice of Poetry*, ISBN 978-0062730244
- Kiteley, *The 3 A.M. Epiphany*, ISBN 978-1582973517

NOTE on readings: I do not include trigger warnings. If you have concerns about possible triggering materials seriously affecting your ability to do the work of the course, please come talk with me.

GRADE DETERMINATION

See course schedule below for due dates

- Participation: 15%
- Writing Exercises: 20%
- Workshop drafts: 20%
- Quizzes: 15%
- Final Portfolio: 30%

Participation: This grade has four components:

1. **Timeliness & Attendance:** You may miss two regular (non-workshop) classes without penalty to this grade. For each additional missed class, and for any missed workshop days, five points will be taken off. Repeated late arrivals (or early departures) will also affect your grade. For any absences, you will still be held responsible for the assigned work and should consult with a fellow student to get notes on what we did and discussed in class. The only excused absences will be religious observance, major medical emergency (with doctor's note), and events that fall under the OU Excused absence policy: <https://oakland.edu/provost/policies-and-procedures/>. If you know you will need to miss classes, you should notify me within the first two weeks of class.
2. **Preparation for class.** For the purposes of this grade preparation means bringing the assigned readings to class with you every day, printing the readings from Moodle when applicable, and bringing writing materials for note taking and in-class writing activities. Preparation, of course, also includes doing all assigned readings and making sure you comprehend them, but that element will be periodically evaluated via the quizzes.
3. **Discussion.** Every student is expected to participate regularly in creating a lively, thoughtful, and collegial classroom environment via class discussion. Quality of contributions is just as or more important than their quantity. A quality contribution can be a question as well as an answer. Good participation also means taking part in in-class writing and small group work, and demonstrating attention to the lecture or discussion even when you are not speaking; this includes keeping your phones off and out of sight.
4. **Workshop citizenship:** Being a good citizen of a workshop means respecting your fellow students' work by reading and commenting on it carefully, and by participating in a collegial and constructive manner in workshop discussions. Your comments on your classmates' work will periodically be collected and checked. More information about how to do Workshop Responses will be forthcoming.

Quizzes: Quizzes cannot be made up if missed due to absence or late arrival. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped at the end of the semester.

Late Assignments:

Workshop Drafts: Turning in workshop drafts late will most likely exclude you from having your piece workshopped in class by your peers. Late workshop drafts will lose 3 points for every day they are late and will not be accepted more than 7 days late.

Writing Exercises: If you notify me in advance, you may turn in one Writing Exercise up to 72 hours late without penalty. Otherwise late Writing Exercises will lose 1 point for every day they are late, and will not be accepted more than 7 days late.

More information about assignments will be posted to Moodle throughout the semester.

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

Technology: You should turn off cell phones and other electronic devices before coming to class. **This includes computers/tablets/e-readers.** Of course, do not ever answer a call, read or send texts, browse

the web, etc. while in class. Using devices in class will result in a loss of participation points. Again, this means that you have to buy paper (not digital) versions of texts and print out readings from Moodle to bring with you to class.

Privacy: Some students will write and share personal stories this semester. Do not share or discuss student materials from this class with anyone who is not in this class. To do so is a violation of each other's trust and privacy, and of the law.

Respect: Disrespectful and inappropriate behavior or commentary toward the instructor or other students in the class will result in dismissal from class, a loss of participation and preparedness points, and a possible failing grade for the semester. You are all sharing pieces of your very personal experience with each other. Respect the bravery this takes for yourself and your classmates. Show respect by: showing up to class on time with your weekly work done, putting your devices away, listening to others, staying in class during the entire class period, staying awake, participating, giving thoughtful and constructive comments during workshops.

Content Advisory: Being respectful and constructive pertains to your writing as well as your in-class presence. Work that contains gratuitous violence or sex may not be acceptable for workshops and may not full credit. I don't mean to say that you can't write about sex or violence—indeed, we will likely see sex and violence in some of our assigned readings as well as in student writing—rather, I mean that such content has to be motivated and earned by the piece you're writing, rather than just being thrown in to be “shocking” or “edgy.” (Note that this type of material used gratuitously is rarely really shocking or edgy—it's more likely to just be boring, bad writing). Feel free to consult with me if you have questions about what might be acceptable or unacceptable.

Office Hours / Contacting me: I encourage you to visit me in office hours to discuss any aspect of the course. Making an appointment is advised but not required. Please let me know in advance, as early as possible, if you will have to miss a scheduled office hours meeting. You may contact me at any time via email. As a general rule, though, allow 24-48 hours for me to respond. I may get to emails more quickly than that, but you should never depend on an immediate response, nor that I will receive last-minute emails before class or before an assignment deadline.

Academic Conduct Policy: Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are considered serious breaches of academic conduct. Plagiarism is “using another person's ideas, information, or expressions without acknowledging that person's work” and it constitutes both intellectual theft and fraud.¹ The Oakland University policy on academic conduct will be strictly followed with no exceptions. See the catalog under Academic Policies and Procedures. Don't hesitate to see me with any questions you may have, but a good rule of thumb is: whenever you've consulted something in any way in forming your ideas, cite it! You can test your knowledge and learn more about plagiarism in this Tutorial: http://research.library.oakland.edu/sp/subjects/tutorial.php?faq_id=35

PLEASE NOTE: TURNING IN WORK FOR ONE CLASS YOU HAVE ALREADY TURNED IN FOR ANOTHER IS ALSO PLAGIARISM. YES! IT IS POSSIBLE TO PLAGIARIZE YOURSELF! All documents you turn in for this class must be written during your enrollment in this class and turned in for credit in only this class.

¹ *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th edition. New York: The Modern Language Association of America (2009): 52.

CAMPUS RESOURCES:

Appropriate Name/Pronoun: If you do not use the name that is listed with the registrar, please notify me so that I may appropriately amend my records. In addition, if you go by a different pronoun, please inform me. More information on changing your preferred name with OU can be found here: <https://www.oakland.edu/uts/common-good-core-resources/name-services/>

Writing Center: The Oakland University Writing Center is open to OU students, faculty, and staff in all disciplines at any stage of the writing process. The center provides writers with an interested and supportive audience of well-trained consultants who help both novices and experts develop ideas and revise drafts into polished products. Students in WRT classes are strongly encouraged to visit the Writing Center. <https://www.oakland.edu/ouwc/>

Disability Support Services: Students with disabilities who may require reasonable accommodations should make an appointment with OU’s Disability Support Services office by calling (248) 370-3266 or TTY: (248) 370-3268; faxing (248) 370-4989; or e-mailing dss@oakland.edu. The DSS provides Faculty Notification Letters detailing approved services. Students are responsible for delivering these letters to their professors and are encouraged to discuss specific arrangements for reasonable accommodations with their professors. Please see the DSS website at www.oakland.edu/dss for more information.

Center for Multicultural Initiatives: <https://www.oakland.edu/cmi/>

Counseling Center: <http://www.oakland.edu/oucc/>

Gender and Sexuality Center: <http://www.oakland.edu/csa/gsc/>

Graham Health Center: <https://www.oakland.edu/ghc/>

Veterans Support Services: <https://www.oakland.edu/veterans/>

COURSE SCHEDULE

Schedule is subject to minor changes with notification.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topics and Readings</i>	<i>Assignments Due</i>
	Readings are due on the day listed on the schedule. Note that all readings in the “Fiction” unit will be from the <i>40 Short Stories</i> textbook unless marked [M] for Moodle. All other readings will be posted to Moodle, and must be printed and brought to class .	<i>All assignments due both in paper copy and on Moodle.</i>
<u>Poetry Unit</u>		
Week 1		
Th 9/6	In class: Course Introduction	
Week 2		
T 9/11	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Topic: Imagery & Language</i></p> <p>Read: Mason & Nims “Where Experience Starts”; Addonizio & Laux “Images” and “Simile & Metaphor”; Rich “Diving Into the Wreck”; Doty “Brilliance”; Komunyakaa “Facing It”; Sexton “The Starry Night”; Oliver “When Death Comes”</p> <p>Remember to print all readings from Moodle and bring them to class.</p>	<p>Due: Writing Exercise 1</p> <p>Remember that assignments are due both on Moodle and in paper copy in class.</p>

Th 9/13	<i>Topic: Imagery & Language</i> Read: Collins “Vehicle of Language”; Wright “A Blessing”; Lorde “Coal”; Hughes “Harlem”; Nguyen “Heavy”	
Week 3		
T 9/18	<i>Topic: Perspective and Conflict</i> Read: Addonizio & Laux “Writing and knowing” & “Stop Making Sense”; Dickey “Sheep Child”; Atwood “Pig Song”; Moss “The Pruned Tree”; Goodison “To Make Various Sorts of Black”; Swenson “Teleology”	Due: Writing Exercise 2
Th 9/20	<i>Topic: Perspective and Conflict</i> Read: Lamott “Shitty First Drafts” & “Writing Groups”; Levine “You can have it”; Hass “Heroic Simile”; Strand “The Prediction”; Smith “Dinosaurs in the Hood”; Kinnell “The Man Splitting Wood in the Daybreak”	Syllabus quiz due online
		Friday 9/21: Poem 1 due by 11:59pm on Moodle.
Week 4		
T 9/25	<i>Topic: Sound, Rhythm, Line</i> Read: Workshop 1A pieces; Addonizio & Laux “Music of the Line” & “Meter, Rhyme and Form”; Roethke “My Papa’s Waltz”; Sexton “Her Kind”; Harper “Dear John, Dear Coltrane”; Lowell “Skunk Hour” In class: Workshop & discussion	Due: Workshop 1A Responses
Th 9/27	<i>Topic: Sound, Rhythm, Line</i> Read: Workshop 1B pieces; Ryan “Drops in the bucket”; O’Hara “Having a Coke With You”; E.E. Cummings “Pity this busy monster, manunkind”; Meredith “The Illiterate” In class: Workshop & discussion	Due: Workshop 1B Responses
Week 5		
T 10/2	<i>Topic: Fixed Form—Villanelle</i> Read: Workshop 1C pieces; Thomas “Do not go gentle”; Plath “Mad girl’s love song”; Bishop “One Art”; Gutmann “The Villanelle’s Appeal” In class: Workshop & discussion	Due: Workshop 1C Responses; Writing Exercise 3
Th 10/4	<i>Topic: Fixed Form—Sonnet</i> Read: Workshop 1D pieces; Millay “Love is not All”; Frost “I have been one acquainted with the night”; Hayes “American sonnet” In class: Workshop & discussion	Due: Workshop 1D Responses
Week 6		
T 10/9	<i>Topic: Fixed & Unfixed Form—Sestina & Prose Poem</i> Read: Bishop “Sestina”; Heaney “Two Lorries”; Baudelaire “Be Drunk”; Horvath “Definition”; Eliot “Hysteria”; McGrath “The Prose Poem”; Ayan “Oklahoma”;	

Prose Unit 1: Fiction		
<i>Remember that all readings in this unit are in 40 Short Stories unless marked [M] for Moodle</i>		
Th 10/11	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Topic: Intro to Fiction; Flash Fiction</i></p> <p>Read: Baxter “Against Epiphanies”; Kincaid “Girl” (in <i>40 Short Stories</i> 333-334); Flash selections on Moodle by Dybek, Fenn, Goldberg, Cisneros, Voskuil [M]</p>	Poem 2 due 10/11
Week 7		
T 10/16	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Topic: Point of View & Voice</i></p> <p>Read: Workshop 2A pieces; Kiteley “Point of View” & “Characters and Ways of Seeing” [M]; García Marquez “A very old man with enormous wings” (220-226); O’Connor “A good man is hard to find” (205-219)</p> <p>In Class: Workshop & Discussion</p>	Due: Workshop 2A Responses
Th 10/18	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Topic: Point of View & Voice</i></p> <p>Read: Workshop 2B pieces; Carver “Cathedral” (244-257); Walker “Everyday Use” (286-294)</p> <p>In Class: Workshop & Discussion</p>	Due: Workshop 2B Responses
Week 8		
T 10/23	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Topic: Plot & Conflict, Character & Dialogue</i></p> <p>Read: Lamott “Plot”, “Plot Treatments” [M]; Tan “Two Kinds” (335-345); Oates “Where are you going where have you been” (258-273); Atwood “Happy endings” (282-285)</p>	Due: Writing Exercise 4
Th 10/25	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Topic: Plot & Conflict, Character & Dialogue</i></p> <p>Read: Kiteley “Conversation” and “Time” [M]; Hemingway “Hills like white elephants” (139-143); Alexie “The Lone Ranger and Tonto fistfight in heaven” (363-368)</p>	
Week 9		
T 10/30	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Topic: Imagery, Description, Setting</i></p> <p>Read: Kiteley “Images” and “Description” [M]; Baldwin “Sonny’s blues” (175-204); Russell “Vampires in the lemon grove” (464-479)</p>	Due: Writing Exercise 5
Th 11/1	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Topic: Imagery, Description, Setting</i></p> <p>Read: Goldberg “Don’t Tell, but Show”, “Be Specific”, “The Ordinary and Extraordinary” [M]; Lahiri “Interpreter of Maladies” (369-387); O’Brien “The Things They Carried” (295-312)</p>	
Prose Unit 2: Literary Nonfiction		
Week 10		
T 11/6	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Topic: Varieties of Literary Nonfiction</i></p> <p>Read: Gutkind “What is Creative Nonfiction?”; Biss “No Man’s Land”; Sedaris “Me Talk Pretty One Day”; Didon “On Keeping a Notebook”; Thomas <i>from</i> “Safekeeping”</p>	Due: Prose 1: Fiction Due

Th 11/8	<i>Topic: Exploring the Self</i> Goldberg “Elkton Minnesota,” “Power of Detail,” “Baking a Cake”; Abdurraqib “A night in Bruce Springsteen’s America”; Black “The answer that increasingly appeals”; Cooper “The fine art of sighing”; Grealy “Mirrorings”	Writing Exercise 6
Week 11		
T 11/13	<i>Topic: Observing the World</i> Read: Workshop 3A pieces; Lamott “Polaroids”; Gutkind “Difficult Decisions”; Iyer “Where worlds collide” In Class: Workshops & Discussion	Due: Workshop 3A Responses;
Th 11/15	<i>Topic: Encountering Nature</i> Read: Workshop 3A pieces; Dillard “Living like weasels”; Eisley “The angry winter”; Doyle “The greatest nature essay ever” In Class: Workshops & Discussion	Due: Workshop 3B Responses
Week 12		
T 11/20	<i>Topic: Family & Culture</i> Read: Dumitrescu “My father and the wine”; Tan “Mother Tongue”; Sanders “Inheritance of Tools”; Kincaid “Biography of a dress”	Due: Writing Exercise 7
Th 11/22	<i>No class—Happy Thanksgiving!</i>	
Week 13		
T 11/27	<i>Topic: Personal and Communal Tragedies</i> Read: Beard “The Fourth State of Matter”; Gerard “What they don’t tell you about hurricanes”; Baldwin “Notes of a Native Son”; Nye “This is not who we are”	Prose 2: LNF due
Revision		
Th 11/29	<i>Topic: Revision</i> Read: Workshop 4A pieces; Addonizio & Laux “Energy of Revision”; In Class: Workshops & Discussion	Due: Workshop 4A Responses
Week 14		
T 12/4	<i>Topic: Revision</i> Read: Workshop 4B pieces; Goldberg “Rereading & Rewriting” In Class: Workshops & Discussion	Due: Workshop 4B Responses
Th 12/6	Read: TBA In class: Revision, Wrap up, Reading Party	
Final Portfolios Due Tuesday December 11th by 11:59pm		