

St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo
Department of English
Course ENGL 335 001
Introduction to Creative Writing – Winter 2020
Tuesdays 6:30 – 9:20, SJ1 2009

Instructor Information

Instructor: Claire Tacon

Office: SH 2110

Office Hours: Tuesdays 5:30 – 6:30

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Course Description

What makes a piece of writing grab your attention? What makes it stay with you long after you've read it? Why are others almost instantly forgettable? This course explores how poems and stories affect us and challenges students to find tools to make their own writing burrow into the reader's skin.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

In this course, we are working towards:

- A. Improving writing skills in poetry and fiction
 - Understanding common techniques and finding interesting ways to apply them
 - Reading published examples to understand how the author has achieved various effects
- B. Developing a stronger critical eye
 - Providing workshop feedback to peers
 - Analysing our own revision process
- C. Greater understanding of the contemporary Canadian literary landscape
 - Introduction to literary journals, small presses and reading series

Required Text

- ENGL 335 001 Courseware, available at the campus bookstore
- Composition book (your choice of format)

Course Requirements and Assessment

Assessment	Date of Evaluation	Weighting
<i>List poem draft</i>	Wed, January 22 (midnight)	
<i>List poem workshop sheets</i>	Tues, January 28 (in class)	
<i>Response poem draft</i>	Wed, January 29 (midnight)	
<i>Response poem workshop sheets</i>	Tues, February 4 (in class)	
Poem revision	Wed, February 12 (midnight)	25%
<i>Short story draft</i>	Wed, March 4 (midnight)	
<i>Short story workshop sheets</i>	Tues, March 10 (in class)	
Short story revision	Fri, March 20 (midnight)	35%
<i>Postcard story draft</i>	Wed, March 25 (midnight)	
<i>Postcard story workshop sheets</i>	Tues, March 31 (in class)	
Postcard story revision	Wed, April 8 (midnight)	15%
Participation	Comp books collected March 31 (in class)	25%
Total		100%

List Poem

Your poem must incorporate a list into a substantial part of the poem and be at least 14 lines and 140 words in length. It should show consideration of the elements of poetry discussed in class.

Response Poem

Your poem must respond to another poem in the courseware and be at least 14 lines and 140 words in length. It should show consideration of the elements of poetry discussed in class.

Poem Revision

You can choose to revise **either** the list poem or response poem. You will be expected to undertake a thorough revision of the draft and to complete a revision analysis (available on LEARN).

Short Story

The short story has a limit of between 2000 and 2500 words. You will be expected to undertake a thorough revision of the draft and to complete a revision analysis.

Postcard Story

This final story is an exercise in working with constraints. You will be limited to 150 words and, in collaboration with your group, you will set one or two other limits on the piece. You will be expected to undertake a thorough revision of the draft and to complete a revision analysis.

Workshop sheets

Peer feedback is a cornerstone of this class and you are expected to provide a written critique of your group's stories in advance of class. Your insight and generosity in peer feedback will influence your participation grade.

Participation

Includes: attendance, contributing to class discussion, completing reading assignments, constructive workshop participation, and composition book writing assignments.

Late Work

Handing in first drafts on time is imperative as there is a short interval between submission dates and workshops. Late assignments will lose 10% per day to a maximum of 3 days. No assignments will be accepted later than this and a grade of zero will be awarded. Any arrangements for exceeding circumstances are at the discretion of the instructor. With good cause and advance notice, I am amenable to extensions for revisions.

Electronic Device Policy

We can discuss this on our first day. While my preference is for students to complete in-class assignments by hand in their composition books, I am open to accommodations for laptops. Otherwise, students are asked to respect common courtesies such as no texting during class.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory. Any absence without good cause, particularly at a workshop, will affect your participation grade. Please let me know at least one day in advance if you are unable to attend class.

*As a fun, optional exercise, students are invited to create writing prompts in exchange for chocolate. These prompts will be provided to the class at the end of the semester and may also be used anonymously on The New Quarterly's social media channels to encourage other writers. If you do not want your prompt to be shared online, please put an asterisk next to it.

Course Outline / Class Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due
1	January 7	Course introduction; list poetry	
2	January 14	Poetry sketching; list poetry	
3	January 21	Line breaks; connotation; types of endings; response poetry; workshopping expectations	
4	January 28	Revision part one, list poem workshop	WORKSHOP SHEETS DUE
5	February 4	Revision part two; response poem workshop	WORKSHOP SHEETS DUE *Please bring two hard copies of your response poem to class.
6	February 11	Introduction to fiction; character development; voice; point of view; dialogue and subtext	READING RESPONSE DUE "Death of Mustango Salvaje" by Jessica Anthony "Pastoralia" by George Saunders "Drinking Coffee Elsewhere" by ZZ Packer "I Demand to Know Where You're Taking Me" by Dan Chaon "Old Man Marchuk" by Kevin Hardcastle "Hills Like White Elephants" by Ernest Hemmingway "Leopard" by Wells Tower "Come, Japanese!" by Julie Otsuka "A Short History of Indians in Canada" by Thomas King "God Damn, How Real Is This?" by Doretta Lau "Dance in America" by Lorrie Moore
	<i>February 18</i>	<i>Reading Week</i>	<i>No Class</i>
7	February 25	Plot and structure	"Surrounded by Sleep" by Akhil Sharma (with questionnaire) "How to Survive a Summer in the City" by Amy Jones
8	March 3	Human library; writing exercises; introduction to postcard stories; writing with constraints	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS DUE
9	March 10	Scene vs summary; fiction workshop	WORKSHOP SHEETS DUE
10	March 17	Field trip; classroom exercises; setting	Fiction excerpts
11	March 24	Collective creation	
12	March 31	Postcard story workshop, course wrap-up	WORKSHOP SHEETS DUE *Composition books due

Important Information

Academic Integrity: To maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo and its Federated University and Affiliated Colleges are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility.

[Academic Integrity Office \(UW\)](#): A resource for students and instructors.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the [St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Discipline](#). For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [University of Waterloo Policy 71 \(Student Discipline\)](#).

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Students who decide to file a grievance should refer to [University of Waterloo Policy 70 \(Student Petitions and Grievances\)](#). For more information, students should contact the Associate Dean of St. Jerome’s University.

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under the St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Discipline or University of Waterloo Policy 70 (Student Petitions and Grievances) if a ground for an appeal can be established. In such a case, read [St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Appeals](#).

Note for Students with Disabilities: The [AccessAbility Services \(AS\) Office](#), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS Office at the beginning of each academic term.

Mental Health Services:

On Campus

- Counselling Services: counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4567 x32655
- [MATES](#): one-to-one peer support program offered by Federation of Students (FEDS) and Counselling Services
- Health Services Emergency service: located across the creek from the Student Life Centre

Off campus, 24/7

- [Good2Talk](#): Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Extended Assessment Unit Phone: 519-749-4300 x6880
- [Here 24/7](#): Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- [OK2BME](#): Support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 x222