

Ars Longa

Autumn 2020

St. Jerome's University

Department of English

Creative Writing

ENGL 335

Morteza Dehghani

Like an abstract: in short

we will have three modules but before

that: copyright; the picture at the end of

this outline shows a cricket singing and writing

under piles of snow. Please cite **him** if you wish to quote **her**.

m6dehgha at uwaterloo dot ca

online office hour: Fridays 1-2pm

Eastern time.

(Bongo)

The butterfly is ready to fly.

1. **Poetry** including one class on **aphorism** (5 classes). **Aphorism** as an independent form [it's OK to be slightly abstract. Poets do that but do it well], and aphorism as one-liners or short pithy writings incorporated into the **poems** you have written or want to write.
2. **(iterative) translation.** (2 classes).
3. **Flash fiction:** 5 classes.

Every week we will discuss the readings in **Discussion Boards**. I may give you a question or a little poem, a little story to get the discussion going. (as part of in-class work)

Every week we will write and post a new creative work to a Learn **Dropbox**. (as part of home work, yes, it's two words)

Every week we will respond to a prompt on a creativity exercise and submit to a Learn **Dropbox**. (as part of in-class work)

Every week we will reflect creatively, in experimental ways, on the creative readings (assigned poems, stories of the week). We will our reflections to a Learn **Dropbox**. (as part of home work)

We will also critique a poem (due week 4) and a story (due week 10) written by one of our peers. We will post these to **Peer Critiques Discussion Forum**. (as part of home work)

(I value process more than product in this workshop)

We won't be meeting synchronously. You have an entire week to read, write, comment, discuss, submit

at your own

pace.

at your own

pace.

If you have any questions, post to the Learn Discussion Forum,
Ask me!

If it's a personal Q, email me please.

We can also always meet online via

Teams or
WebEx or

Zoom.

But our weekly meeting space on Learn is
BONGO!

Instead of an intro:

“The lyf is so short, the craft so long to lerne...” (Chaucer, *The Parliament of Fowles*)

Hello, how're you? My name's Morteza.

If you want to know where I'm from: I'm an earthling, maybe my background is China, or Siberia, but I opened my eyes to date palm trees and marshlands and rivers and rolling hills. Then I grew up by mountains because one night a monster attacked my hometown, when people were fast asleep; in human language that monster is a species called war and it is still alive and at work.

And this is my story plot.

But I'd like to know your story and I'm excited to read yours. We are all story-tellers whether we write poetry, make a painting, take a photo, or speak with friends, mom, dad.

We also write stories through walking and as we walk, as we live.

Any movement from point a to point b is a story.

A line is a Nile; a story.

A few introductory notes:

we are in this course to write, honestly, courageously, passionately. Don't keep the creative energy inside you restrained; let it flow and roar; I'm here to shape and guide it with your help and with the support of your fellow classmates. We produce our own work while we read the work written by other writers/poets (from different geographies and eras, from poets old and new). We come to class prepared to discuss them, online of course because of the ongoing situation—I hope you're all well and safe.

Throughout the term, **we read as writers and not as critics.**

This course is as much about reading as it is about writing.

We become familiar with a set of formal elements and get immersed in the rudiments of composing poetry, that is, we become familiar with such elements as imagery and sound, verse forms, lineation and punctuation, rhyme and rhythm, yes! Poems can rhyme even today without sounding old-fashioned or song lyrics. We will also read each other's work. We offer written feedback (only written) to the works produced by our peers.

We will begin with writing poems and then will focus on writing pithy aphoristic lines which you can incorporate into your poems. This will in turn be followed by a little work on (iterative) translations. We will look at translation from a broad perspective, as re-iteration of another poem or work of art. The main focus will be how a text can be recreated differently at different iterations.

We will finally write short stories in the last few weeks of the term, getting inspiration from both craft readings and the short stories we'll read.

Every week we experiment with form and with language in **Weekly Reflections.**

Literary production is as much about form as it is about subject matter and content.

I'd like all of us to see afresh, to see “the dearest freshness deep down things” as G. M. Hopkins says. I'd like all of us to think about capturing this freshness in our works of art.

These weekly posts are a good practice towards the writing of creative nonfiction.

We also have **weekly exercises in creativity.** I'll give you prompts on these weekly writings.

And then online **weekly discussions**, on Learn, will replace our in-person class participation.

One central premise in this course is experimentation with different forms. I cherish the existing forms (of poetry, drama, fiction, etc.) but I think we all need to be wary of the ways these forms may be limiting to our creativity.

Please note
while we stick to this outline, things are not set in stone; there is always a degree of spontaneity in courses like this.

Texts we'll be working with

include

Oliver, Mary. *A Poetry Handbook*. Available at the Bookstore; unfortunately, this book is not available as an ebook. This is a useful book on the craft of poetry. If you do not have access to this handbook, please read the alternative texts on craft – Stephen Minot's *Three Genres* -- that I will be posting to Learn under Content.

Excerpts from *The Basbo Variations* by Steve McCaffery. On Learn.

Excerpts from *Exercises in Style* by Raymond Queneau. On Learn.

All creative works and the critical/technique/craft writings can be found on the **Learn site**.

Most of these are in public domain or on free Websites. All New Yorker stories were retrieved from the New Yorker website on September 7, 2020.

Useful websites for this course:

Poetry Foundation

Poets.org, Academy of American Poets

Please be ready to read poetry and prose not listed here

but posted to Learn later throughout the term as I see them helpful.

And please read with pleasure.

And please share your own outside-this-course readings with us all as well. You are a **StudentWriter in this course. (no, no space is needed there! I admit I get the idea from Marguerite Porete's *FarNear: an exercise in the art of acknowledgement*.)**

(An aside) Here's some useful journals and magazines that you may want to read, browse through, subscribe to, submit to (all are Canadian but you can also identify and submit to any magazine in any English-speaking country. Finding a magazine is part of your literary/publishing quest.)

The New Quarterly- Contemporary Verse2- Antigonish Review- Prism International-
Brick- Grain- The Fiddlehead- Malahat Review- Geist- Prairie Fire Exile
The Puritan Arc Room etc etc

Assignments (if this is the right word)

Please keep in mind, you want to produce your creative work with passion, so this is as a way of giving structure to our efforts to write creatively and share with excitement.

Poems 20%>>>>> 10% for drafts>>>> 10% for the final portfolio

Stories 20%>>>>> 10% for drafts>>>> 10% for the final portfolio

Iterative translations – dropbox submission 15%

Weekly discussions in discussion boards 10%

Peer critiques 10% >>> poem 5%>>>> story – 5% discussion forum submission

Weekly creativity exercises - dropbox submission 10%

Weekly experimental reflections – dropbox submission 15%

I. Poems (20%)

5 poems as part of your portfolio. One poem per week in the first five weeks of the term. No particular length but keep short please; and keep in mind that this is not a directive, only a guide. (20% for writing the poems, posting them to Learn, and finally submitting them as part of your portfolio, at the end of the term. 10% for writing and posting the first drafts to Learn and 10% for revising them and submitting them as part of your portfolio.) Please, no fancy fonts, unless it's part of the style, and unless you are doing something with font. Use a clear, legible, font. Font size? This is poetry; you may want to use different font sizes in a single poem. Again, it's part of your style. Please submit to the Learn Dropbox. Linked to Learn grades notebook.

II. Translation: (15%)

Eight iterations
of a haiku; and perhaps
from another tongue.

these are not haikus,
although a 5.7.5
pattern can be seen

We will discuss the craft of iterative translation –briefly—and read adaptations or re-created versions of other works, asking if translation of poetry is governed by the same set of rules that dominates poetry writing. Submit as part of your portfolio. For this assignment, I'll give you prompts; a poem or two to re-create or re-make your poems. Submit 8 iterations. You will receive marks for this component of the course when you submit.

Please submit to the Learn Dropbox. Linked to Learn grades notebook.

III. Flash fiction (20%)

Good writers are always learning -- from other writers, and also from their own writing, their mistakes and failures, and from their own experiences of the world. Short fiction is an exciting genre, and rather new. The short short is even newer. In this course we'll try to write flash stories. The brevity of the course only allows for short genres, I believe, and learning how to start writing short stories, with all the elements of the craft, requires at least a full term. We'll write weekly sudden fiction. But we will read classic and contemporary short stories as well as flash stories. Through reading both shorts and short shorts, we will be able, I hope, to see the differences between the two although sometimes -- even in a few of the stories I have selected as part of the weekly readings -- the boundary between the two is blurry; not clear. You will receive 10% for submitting these stories on time and to the right dropbox. The other 10% will be given to you at the end of the term. Please submit to the Learn Dropbox. Linked to Learn grades notebook.

IV. Weekly reflections (15%)

Every week we write our reflections on weekly creative readings listed below in the schedule; please write as a poet/writer; this should be written as a piece of creative nonfiction. Engage in a personal conversation with the work, focus on any aspect of the piece you want and be creative, write on how you made a connection with that work. Instead of writing what the text means, you can focus on how it says what it says. Don't critique, respond to the text. Again, this is an exercise in

creative nonfiction writing. Just to emphasize: these weekly posts should incorporate the assigned poems and prose,

and **should** be done in a creative way

and **should not** be written as an academic essay.

Experiment with form in these reflections, allow your imagination to do what it wants with these.

If you take some time thinking about it, you'll find a way about doing it. I have no prescription but I have these pointers which, I hope, can guide you through that. I'll show you some samples, posted under Content as "Sample Weekly Reflections." The writers of these sample reflections -- my former students/fellow writers -- have given me permission to share their work with you. Be **innovative, be synthetic** with these posts. Read all the works on the list but **YOU DON'T NEED TO INCLUDE ALL OF THEM IN YOUR REFLECTION.**

(15% for writing and posting 9 reflections. You lose 5% for missing one; and if you miss 2 posts, you will get a zero on this component of the course.)

Please submit to the Learn Dropbox. Not linked to Learn grades notebook. I will give you a grade on this towards the end of the course.

V. Workshop discussions, contributions (10%)

These weekly discussions are posted to discussion boards; there are twelve weeks listed under Discussion Forum but only **from week 2 through to week 11 discussions are required**, that is, no discussion posts required in weeks 1 (except that you need to introduce yourselves) and 12 and of course nothing over the reading week! These discussions should reflect your understanding of craft readings. You find something interesting in readings, you like or dislike something about them, you have a question about them, you want to discuss a point about them, you want to share a work you've read that is not on our reading list, well, these forums are the place for you to write.

Can you please post an introductory note within the first two days of the term to the first discussion board? Introduce yourselves; your name, why you've taken this course, something you've recently read, why you write, anything really. If you're comfortable, please also upload a profile pic to Learn.

We are here because we love reading and producing literature; don't squander your time. I do my best to create a comfortable atmosphere so you can speak even if you are a bit shy. I'm shy too, sometimes. But please do your best to comment, critique, agree, disagree, and care! Remember this is called discussion not monologue. This means you need to talk as a class. Come to online class

prepared for these discussions. The life of the workshop depends on you and your excitement about, your engagement with the course. Please be kind and gracious as you comment and criticize (in the technical sense of the word. You put on your critic's hat as you read your classmates' work). We are entitled to artistic expression and we are allowed to express our opinions honestly. We may also speak and write about sensitive topics. Please be tolerant if you don't like an idea. Try to offer your own opinions rather than quote from others. Go beyond "I like" or "I didn't like." Of course, you can always praise or dismiss a work but they should be followed by your critical words; comments which are made to help us improve our work. Having no comment means you haven't read the materials. **You will be given the full 10% for these discussions as long as you maintain an active presence in these discussion boards.**

Please post to Discussion boards. Not linked to Learn grades notebook. I will give you a grade on this towards the end of the course.

Peer Critiques (10%)

You will be critiquing a poem and a story written by one of your classmates/fellow writers. The first peer feedback will be given on a poem any time within week 4. The second is done on a flash story any time within week 10. You should write a full page (at least 300 words) on your peer's creative work. If you don't respect your peers by spending time on their writings, how can you expect your work to be read well and critically and thoroughly? This assignment will be done in pairs and is part of class participation. A Learn scheduler will assign you to a pair, randomly. Go to Connect>>>Groups>>>Members to see a schedule. You will post your critiques along with a copy of the annotated poem and the story that you have critiqued. Submit to Peer Critique discussion forum. **(5% for the poetry critique, 5% for the story critique).**

~~Linked to Learn grades notebook.~~ Well, maybe, yes! **No!** ~~Linked to Learn grades notebook.~~ Yes, linked to Learn grades notebook.

VI. Weekly creativity exercises: 10 exercises. (10%)

Every week throughout the term, we'll also respond to writing prompts that allow us to practise creativity. These exercises in creativity are a replacement for in-person, in-class writings. These exercises start right from week 1. No exercise in week 12 and of course no assignment over the reading week. Please write these exercises as works in progress, as a scribbling really. Some of these prompts include: (subject to change)

- a. Make a list of the nouns, only nouns: bodies of water, geological features, gemstones, plants, animals, anything really, just name nouns. As a poet you develop your own vocabulary. Is it easy to do? Let's try! Feel free to use a thesaurus. How many can you write?
- b. Write twenty similes and twenty metaphors, using the vocabulary from last week's creativity exercise.

- c. Identify ten one-liners, or aphorisms, in the poems of the week. Write ten others of your own.
- d. (Copyright: George Elliott Clarke) The walk: Outdoors, walk with a notebook and pen, recording impressions of everything noticed, while also letting various memories and insights come to mind. The purpose is to encourage spontaneous composition.
- e. (Copyright: George Elliott Clarke) The translation: Take an English translation of a foreign-language poem and rewrite it in your own words. the purpose is to develop an acquaintance with structure (form) and to think afresh about the syntax and grammatical order.
- f. (Copyright: George Elliott Clarke). The collage: Write lines and images as they come up in your consciousness, partly observations, partly impressions, partly memories, partly rhetorical or political statements. Foreign phrases and even “anti-poetic” asides are welcomes. The purpose here is write meditatively, letting whatever happens happen.
- g. Imagine a character you are developing for a story you are writing. What’s the character like? What does he look like? Describe in detail.
- h. Change the point of view of a story that I will to post to Learn.
- i. Write a page of dialogue between two characters. You can use the conversation you hear in daily life around you. The purpose is learning to turn every conversation, even mundane, into a story with a punch.

Please submit to the Learn Dropbox. Linked to Learn grades notebook.

I.

Poetry

T. S. Eliot: "I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter... Shantih"

Week 1.

Read and write and submit all assignments and discussions any time between Sep 8 - Sep 14

Reading pleasures:

Craft readings:

Oliver 1-18, Oliver (Sound, More Devices on Sound) 19-34.

Minot (The Source of a Poem) 14-24, (The Sound of Words) 25-37.

Poems: readings: Tom Wayman's "Did I Miss Anything?," The Poet," "Billy Collins's "Introduction to Poetry," three poems by Susan Holbrook, Anne Michaels: excerpts from *Infinite Gradation*, Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," Dylan Thomas's "One Craft," "The force that though the green fuse drives the flower," W. H. Auden's "Stop all the clocks," W. C. Williams's "Landscape with the Fall of Icarus," "This Is Just To Say," Carolyn Forché's "The Colonel," Louise Glück's "Faithfull and Virtuous Night," W. S. Merwin's "Separation", Mary Oliver's Percy poems (available on free websites), Agha Shahid Ali "Stationary," Meghan O'Rourke's "Navesink," Annie Dillard's excerpts from *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (we hear lots of sounds there), G. M. Hopkins, "Windhover," "Spring and Fall," "Binsey Poplars."

Also: (English Alphabet with Seamus Heaney, Mark Strand's "Notes on the Craft of Poetry," bpNichol), Sample reading reflections.

In-class (online) activities:

Discussion boards: Billy Collins's "Introduction to Poetry." Introduce yourself! Why I write. You are also invited to play a game with the English alphabet. Pay attention to sound patterns and sound devices.

Home activities:

The joy of writing: write a poem. Post to Learn.

Creativity exercise 1: Make a list of the nouns, only nouns: bodies of water, geological features, gemstones, plants, animals, anything really, just name nouns. As a poet you develop your own vocabulary. Is it easy to do? Let's try! Feel free to use a thesaurus. Your list will tell a story!

And don't forget your weekly reflection.

Week 2.

Read and write and submit all assignments and discussions any time between Sep 15 - Sep 21

Reading Pleasures:

Craft readings:

Oliver: Diction, Tone, Voice, Imagery (76-108).

Minot: Images (56-72), Diction (73-82).

Poems: Lucille Clifton's "I am accused of tending to the past..." , "Linda Hogan's "Workday," Stanley Kunitz's "The Round," Bukowski "The Man with Beautiful Eyes," very short excerpts from Allen Ginsberg's "Howl," Robert Hass's "A Story about the Body," "Privilege of Being," "Human Wishes," "The Beginning of September," "The Yellow Bicycle," "Poem with a Cucumber in It," "Cymbeline," "The Poet at Nine," "Faint Music," Louise Gluck's "Wild Iris," "Averno," Sylvia Plath's "Daddy," Anne Carson's "Triple Sonnet of the Plush Pony," T. S. Eliot "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," Elizabeth Bishop "The Fish," Theodore Roethke's "The Bat," Eavan Boland's "This Moment," Ilya Kaminsky's "We Lived Happily During the War," Wislawa Szymborska's "The End and the Beginning," Anne Michaels "The Weight of Oranges."

In-class (online) activities

Discussion boards: Discuss metaphor and imagery. I'll post a poem to the board as a prompt!

Creativity exercise 2: Write twenty similes and twenty metaphors, using the vocabulary from last week creativity exercise. Also, can you write a paragraph, just a piece of prose, in which one or more senses (visual, olfactory, etc) are evoked? The purpose: sensualizing through sensory experience, to create a visceral experience.

home activities

The joy of Writing: write a poem. Post to Learn. Bring a copy to class.

And don't forget your weekly reflection.

Week 3.

Read and write and submit all assignments and discussions any time between Sep 22 - Sep 28

Reading Pleasures:

Craft readings:

Oliver, The Line (35-57), Some Given Forms (58-66), Verse That Is Free (67-75).

Minot: Rhythm of Stress (38-46), Rhythm of Free verse (47-55)

Poems: Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass (a short excerpt), William Carlos Williams's "The Red Wheelbarrow," Robert Hass's "Meditation at Lagunitas" (again), "English, an Ode," "Picking Blackberries with a friend who has been reading Jacques Lacan," Louise Glück, "Landscape," "Violets," Anne Carson [from Decreation], Jan Zwicky "Small Songs," Bp Nichol's "Love," Anne Michaels, "Women on a Beach," "Flowers," Depth of Field," F. J. Bergman's "An Apology," Etel Adnan: from *The Arab Apocalypse*, Adonis: *from Selected Poems* **And to the other side of the Atlantic:** Don Paterson: "Two Trees," "Poetry," Seamus Heaney: "A Kite for Aibhin," Digging," "Mid-Term Break," "Gifts of Rain," Alice Oswald: "A Short Story of Falling," "Snowdrop," Full Moon," "Fox," Andrew Motion: "Laying the Fire," "Passing on," "Losses," A Moment of Reflection," "Simon Armitage: "You're Beautiful," "Camera Obscura," "Homework," "The Unthinkable," *The Stanza Stone Walk* (a few poems), Kathleen Jamie: "Moon," The Stags," Before the Wind," The Dipper," Paul Muldoon: "Milkweed and Monarch," Derek Walcott "Oddjob: A Bull Terrier."

In-class (online) activities

Discussion boards: Also, or alternatively, you can discuss lineation: for me it's completely instinctual or rather intuitive, in fact, I've found that lines define themselves in my work. I mean; lineation relies more on intuition than deliberation for me. I'd like to hear how you come up with your line forms or lineation. Are you, for example, like the American poet, Nathaniel Mackey, who (sometimes) writes a poem as one block paragraph and then decided how to order, or rearrange the lines?

Creativity exercise 3: (Copyright: George Elliott Clarke) The walk: Outdoors, walk with a notebook and pen, recording impressions of everything noticed, while also letting various memories and insights come to mind. The purpose is to encourage spontaneous composition.

home activities

The joy of writing: write a poem. Post to Learn.

And don't forget your weekly reflection.

Check Learn for peer critique schedule. Share your poem with your peers by Oct 3.

Week 4.

Read and write and submit all assignments and discussions any time between Sep 29 - Oct 5

Reading Pleasures:

Craft readings:

Oliver: Revision, Workshop and Solitude, Conclusion (109-122)

Minot: From Units to Unity (95-104), Revising a Poem (105-109)

Poems: contemporary American poetry. Poems by Robert Hass, Louise Glück, Jorie Graham, Frank Bidart, Jane Hirshfield, Forrest Gander, James Wright, and a few established contemporary Canadian poets including but not limited to Anne Michaels, Jan Zwicky, the list is to be completed. (I love these poems and I think there's a lot in them to learn from, and I return to these poets every now and then.)

In-class (online) activities

Discussion boards: Focus on the ways in which poets move between the concrete/particular and the general/abstract, and from the inner/internal to the outer/external, or do they? You can question this observation. I think these negotiations are key to your creativity. I'll post a poem to the board as a prompt to show the negotiation between the outside world and the inside, between the general and the particular. Is this the only poetic style? Absolutely not!

Creativity exercise: (Copyright: George Elliott Clarke) The collage: Write lines and images as they come up in your consciousness, partly observations, partly impressions, partly memories, partly rhetorical or political statements. Foreign phrases and even "anti-poetic" asides are welcome. The purpose here is write meditatively, letting whatever happens happen.

home activities

The joy of writing: write a poem. Post to Learn.

And don't forget your weekly reflection.

Also due this week: Poetry Critiques. Submit to Learn discussion forum.

Aphorism

Kafka: "the cage went in search of the bird"

Week 5.

Read and write and submit all assignments and discussions any time between Oct 6 – Oct 10 (and over the reading week. But no work is required over this week)

Reading Pleasures:

Craft readings and aphorisms: from New Yorker "Yes, I wrote a Book of Aphorism," Excerpts from Don Paterson's book of aphorisms *The Fall at Home*, readings by Andrew Hui, "The Thinker as Poet" from Heidegger's *Poetry, Language, Thought*, William Stafford's book of aphorisms, *Sound of the Ax*.

Craft readings:

Poems: *The Basbo Variations* by Steve McCaffery, sections from *Exercises in Style* by Raymond Queneau, Mark Strand's "Translation," Adonis (from Arabic), Tranströmer (from Swedish), Rilke (from German), Haiku by three Japanese masters translated by Robert Hass, Bei Dao, (from Chinese), Cavafy (from Greek), Sappho (also Greek as translated by Anne Carson), Rumi's Ghazals as translated by Coleman Barks (from Persian), Pablo Neruda (from Spanish), excerpts from Bashō's *Narrow Road to Deep North*, Erin Moure's *Sheep's Vigil by a Fervent Person* from Portuguese. Also Ono no Komachi as translated by Jane Hirshfield

In-class (online) activities

Discussion boards: Iterative translation; discuss *The Basbo Variations* and/or Erin Moure's *Sheep's Vigil*

Creativity exercise: Re-create excerpts from Moure's *Sheep's Vigil* with a different setting; try Kitchener-Waterloo or any other locale! Change the poem as you see fit.

home activities

The joy of writing: write 4 iterations of a poem I'll give you. Post to Learn.

And don't forget your weekly reflection.

Week 7.

Read and write and submit all assignments and discussions any time between Oct 26 – Nov 1

Reading Pleasures:

Craft readings:

Poems: (Yes! Copied from previous week, please re-read or catch up) *The Basbo Variations* by Steve McCaffery, sections from *Exercises in Style* by Raymond Queneau, Strand's "Translation," excerpts from Bashō's *Narrow Road to Deep North*, Erin Moure's *Sheep's Vigil by a Fervent Person* from Portuguese. Hass's "Czesław Miłosz: In Memoriam," "Horace: Three Imitations," Also Ono no Komachi as translated by Jane Hirshfield

In-class (online) activities

Discussion boards: Raymond Queneau's *Exercises in Style*

Creativity exercise:

(Copyright: George Elliott Clarke) The translation: Take an English translation of a foreign-language poem and rewrite it in your own words. the purpose is to develop an acquaintance with structure (form) and to think afresh about the syntax and grammatical order.

home activities

The joy of writing: write 4 iterations of poem I'll give you. Post to Learn.

And don't forget your weekly reflection.

II.

Flash Fiction

Week 8.

Read and write and submit all assignments and discussions any time between Nov 2 – Nov 8

Reading Pleasures:

Craft readings: Anne Michaels: excerpts from *Infinite Gradation* (a poetic meditation on the poetry and fiction). Minot: "The Scope of Fiction," Nathan Leslie: "That 'V' Word"; Steve Almond: "Getting the Lead Out"; Robert Olen Butler: "A Short Short Theory."

Stories: Hemingway: "Old Man at the Bridge," Hass, "Museum," "Novella," and "Human Wishes," Etgar Keret, "Director's Cut," Jamaica Kincaid, "Girl." Chekhov: "The Lady and the Dog," and "Misery." Other short short stories may be added.

In-class (online) activities

Discussion boards: What is flash fiction? Think about "Director's Cut," "Girl," and "Museum" as examples. What is the scope of flash fiction?

Creativity exercise:

Imagine a character you are developing for a story you are writing. What's the character like? What does he look like? Describe in detail.

home activities

The joy of crafting: write a flash story, post to Learn dropbox, between 300-700 words. You can but don't have to use the prompts at the end of the craft readings.

And don't forget your weekly reflection.

Week 9.

Read and write and submit all assignments and discussions any time between Nov 9 – Nov 15

Reading Pleasures:

Craft readings: Martone: “Titled: The Title: A Short Short Story’s Own Short Short Story,” Gebbie, “Fireworks and Burnt Toast: The Process of Opening Up Your Writing,” Casto: “The Myth-ing Link,” Budman: “Expose Yourself to Flash,” Qi: “Old Wine in New Bottles.”

Stories: Hemingway: “Cat in the Rain,” Raymond Carver: “Cathedral,” Margaret Atwood: “Happy Endings,” Peter Taylor: “The Walled Garden,” Aimee Bender: “Origin Lessons,” T. C. Boyle: “The Hit Man”; Sheila Hett: “Grayness,” Joyce Carol Oates: “Hospice/Honeymoon.” Other short short stories may be added.

In-class (online) activities

Discussion boards: Sheila Hett: “Grayness,” Joyce Carol Oates: “Hospice/Honeymoon.”

Creativity exercise:

Change the point of view of a story that I will post to Learn.

home activities

The joy of crafting: write a flash story, post to Learn dropbox, between 300-500 words. You can but don’t have to use the prompts at the end of the craft readings.

And don’t forget your weekly reflection.

Check Learn for peer critique schedule. Share your story with your peers by Nov 15.

Week 10.

Read and write and submit all assignments and discussions any time between Nov 16 – Nov 22

Reading Pleasures:

Craft readings: Philips: “Cheers,” Dybek: “Great Thoughts” Williford: “Forty Stories in the Desert,” Shapard: “Staying True to the Image.”

Stories: Hemingway: “Hills Like White Elephants,” Vonnegut: “Harrison Bergeron,” Marquez: “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings.” Woolf: “A Haunted House,” Angela Carter: “The Company of Wolves,” “Brautigan: “Lint,” László Krasznahorkai: “I Don’t Need Anything from here,” Lore Segal: “Ruth, Franks and Dario.” Other short short stories may be added.

In-class (online) activities

Discussion boards: László Krasznahorkai: “I Don’t Need Anything from here,” Lore Segal: “Ruth, Franks and Dario.”

Creativity exercise:

Write a page of dialogue between two characters. Only dialogue lines. You can use the conversation you hear in daily life around you. The purpose is learning to turn every conversation, even mundane, into a story with a punch. Partly fiction, partly reality (documentary). Or first reality turned into fiction. **Or alternatively:** describe an imaginary setting in great detail.

home activities

The joy of crafting: write a flash story, post to Learn dropbox, between 300-500 words. You can but don't have to use the prompts at the end of the craft readings.

And don't forget your weekly reflection.

Also due this week: the flash fiction Critiques. Submit to Learn discussion forum.

Week 11.

Read and write and submit all assignments and discussions any time between Nov 23 – Nov 29

Readings Pleasures:

Craft readings: Barnes: "Editing and Revising Flash Fiction," Carlson: "On Writing Flash Fiction," Ehrhardt: "Plaster Dust and Sleeping Jockeys," Julio Ortega: "A Flash Before the Bang."

Stories: Hemingway: "A Clean, Well-lighted Place," Laurie Moore: "Paper Losses," Marquez: "The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World," David Lehman: "Tales Told to Tevye," Haruki Murakami: "The Kingdom That Failed," Other short short stories may be added.

In-class (online) activities

Discussion boards: David Lehman: "Tales Told to Tevye," Haruki Murakami: "The Kingdom That Failed."

Creativity exercise:

Scribble down an interior monologue; a couple of paragraphs or any number of words you want. The purpose: to practice how to turn an interior monologue into a story.

home activities

The joy of writing: write a flash story, post to Learn dropbox, between 300-500 words

And don't forget your weekly reflection.

Week 12.

**Read and write and submit all assignments and discussions any time between Nov 30
– Dec 6**

Reading Pleasures:

We end with a few classic short stories:

Hemingway: “The Snows of Kilimanjaro,” Junot Diaz: “Fiesta 1980,” Raymond Carver: “Errand,”
Katherine Mansfield: “Miss Brill,” Borges: “The Library of Babel,” A few short short stories will be
added.

home activities

The joy of writing: **write a flash story, post to Learn dropbo, between 300-700 words**

**Final reflection: reflect back on the term, readings, poems, stories, discussions, your
writings etc. Tell your story of this term, you may want to write a short story or a poem to
complete this activity.**

Submit the final portfolio to the dropbox by Dec 13, in PDF only.