

OHLONE COLLEGE
Ohlone Community College District
OFFICIAL COURSE OUTLINE

I. Description of Course:

1. **Department/Course:** ENGL - 108
2. **Title:** Writing Short Fiction
3. **Cross Reference:**
4. **Units:** 3
Lec Hrs: 3
Lab Hrs:
5. **Repeatability:** No
6. **Grade Options:** Letter Grade, May
Petition Credit/No Credit (GC)

7. **Degree/Applicability:**
Credit, Degree Applicable, Transferable -
CSU (T)
8. **General Education:** District General
Education (Plan A)
Elective
9. **Field Trips:** Not Required
10. **Requisites:**
Prerequisite
Completion of English 111A or
equivalent, or consent of the instructor
Advisory
Students should be eligible for English
101A.

12. Catalog Description:

This course will review the fundamentals of fiction writing, provide an in-depth study of intermediate short fiction writing techniques, and offer exercises designed to stimulate creativity.

13. Class Schedule Description:

Indulge your creative mind and learn how to write powerful (and maybe publishable) short stories.

14. Counselor Information:

This course will count toward the Literature AA degree program and is transferable as an elective to the CSU and UC systems. This course is an excellent choice for any student who wants to experiment with writing short fiction.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

The student will:

1. Examine the creative process and the key elements of the craft of writing fiction.
2. Demonstrate the ability to apply the key elements of craft to their own writing.
3. Practice the craft of fiction by experimenting with several different techniques and forms of writing.
4. Analyze and discuss how selected examples of short fiction are crafted.
5. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their own writing and the writing of others.

III. Course Outline:

I. The Creative Process

How do writers find their stories? What specific methods can be used to gather material and jumpstart the creative process? What is the "start-to-finish" process of writing a story?

II. Reviewing the Basics of Plot and Character

What constitutes a successful plot? Do stories require a plot? What makes us like, dislike, or care about a character? How do writers make their characters compelling to a reader?

III. First Person Point of View and Dramatic Monologues

What are the advantages and disadvantages of first person POV? What are the different types of first person narrators (uninvolved observer, unreliable narrator, etc.)? How can dramatic monologues be useful in creating an effective first person narrator?

IV. Other Types of Point of View: Third, Multiple, and Second

What is the difference between an "up-close" third person limited POV and a distant one, and what are the effects of each? When can a writer use multiple POV or second person POV? Is third person omniscient appropriate for short fiction?

V. Pacing

When do you speed up the action in a story? When do you slow down and linger? How do you begin and end a scene? What is the "rule of thirds" and how does it apply to short fiction?

VI. Style

What are the various elements of style (word choice, length and variety of sentences, use of imagery/dialogue)? What are some specific ways that writers can improve their style?

VII. Revising Your Work

What is the process of revising a piece of fiction? How does a writer know when a piece is "done"?

VIII. Developing a Unique Voice

What topics, themes, and styles have become cliched? How does a writer avoid cliches and develop a fresh, unique voice? How does a writer avoid imitating other writers?

IX. Publishing Your Work

Where should fiction writers submit their work for publication? What is the process of preparing and submitting a manuscript?

IV. Course Assignments:

A. Reading Assignments

1. Students will read a textbook on the craft of writing fiction. Students will also read and analyze a selection of contemporary short fiction.

B. Projects, Activities, and other Assignments

1. Students will participate in online discussions about course concepts and required readings, share brief pieces of their writing with other students, and provide constructive critiques of each other's writing.

C. Writing Assignments

1. Students will complete at least six short writing assignments (roughly 1-4 pages in length) and one complete short story (of 3 pages or more) to demonstrate their ability to apply the elements of craft to their own writing. Example Assignments: 1. The Creative Process: Visit a place that is foreign to you. Some examples include: a bowling alley, a roller rink, an airport, a night-club, a Nascar race, or a museum. Take notes about what you see, hear, smell, etc. Write 1-2 pages starting with the line "I never should have come here." 2. Point of View: Find a newspaper article about a bizarre event or phenomenon. Write a 1-2-page story about the article using first person POV. Now, rewrite the story in third person POV. Finally, rewrite the story in second person or multiple POV.

V. **Methods of Evaluation/Assessment:**

- A. Written Assignments: Successful completion of at least six brief pieces of fiction and at least one short story of three pages or more.
- B. Discussion: Students will make weekly written responses to discussion questions and will be evaluated on the thoughtfulness of their responses. If this class is taught online, these responses will be made via the online discussion board.

VI. **Methods of Instruction:**

- A. Discussion
- B. Distance Learning
- C. Lecture

VII. **Textbooks:**

Required

Optional

- A. Gioia and Gwynn *The Art of the Short Story: 52 Great Authors, Their Best Short Fiction, and Their Insights on Writing* paperback Edition, Longman, 2005 ISBN: 0321337220
- B. Gotham Writers' Workshop *Writing Fiction: The Practical Guide from New York's Acclaimed Creative Writing School* ed. Moustaki Edition, Bloomsbury USA, 2003 ISBN: 1582343306
- C. Lex Williford, Michael Martone, Rosellen Brown *The Scribner Anthology of Contemporary Short Fiction : Fifty North American American Stories Since 1970* paperback Edition, Touchstone, 1999 ISBN: 0684857960

VIII. **Supplies:**