COURSE SYLLABUS

CAMOSUN COLLEGE

COURSE TITLE: CRWR-150-Introduction to Speculative Fiction

CLASS SECTION: 001

TERM: 2024F

COURSE CREDITS: 3

DELIVERY METHOD(S): Face-to-face,

Tuesday, 1:00 pm – 2:20 pm, Wilna Thomas, 201

Thursday, 1:00 pm – 2:20 pm, Young Building, 217

Camosun College respectfully acknowledges that our campuses are situated on the territories of the Ləḱʷəŋən (Songhees and Kosapsum) and WSÁNEĆ peoples. We honour their knowledge and welcome to all students who seek education here.

INSTRUCTOR DETAILS

NAME: Max Olesen

EMAIL: olesenm@camosun.ca

PHONE: 250-370-3349

OFFICE: Lansdowne Campus, Paul Building, Room 328

HOURS: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00 am – 12:00 pm; Thursdays only, 4:00-5:00 pm; Online office are held from 1-2 pm on Wednesdays and Fridays. Please contact me for details about how to access them.

As your course instructor, I endeavour to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me. Camosun College is committed to identifying and removing institutional and social barriers that prevent access and impede success.

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

Do you have a lively imagination? In this course, students will develop their skills in writing various types of speculative fiction, such as fantasy, magical realism, Indigenous futurisms, science fiction, horror, and weird fiction. Students will read and discuss representative samples from several subgenres; explore techniques for creating story concepts; practice world-building; develop their own original stories; and offer peer feedback.

PREREQUISITE(S):

One of:

C+ in English 12

C in Camosun Alternative

CO-REQUISITE(S):

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES / OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Analyze diverse published stories to identify their crafting techniques.
- Distinguish literary characteristics specific to several sub-genres of speculative fiction, including Indigenous adaptations of the form.
- Use a clear writing process that involves generating, drafting, workshopping, revising, and editing.
- Write stories with well-crafted plots, settings, characters, dialogue, and themes.
- Use a range of literary devices common to speculative fiction to enhance stories.
  - For example, use or incorporate appropriate points of view, rich imagery, effective symbolism, clear allegory, and/or extended metaphor.
- Practice appropriate research and incorporate authentic detail to give fiction credibility.
- Identify and use various resources available for writers in preparing work for presentation or publication.

REQUIRED MATERIALS & RECOMMENDED PREPARATION / INFORMATION

- All class readings will be provided to you via our D2L course website, either as PDFs or links to a website. If paywalls are encountered, please contact me. You will not have to pay for access to any class readings.
- We will be discussing 'content warnings' and 'trigger warnings' together as a class regarding your own creative work, and I will include specific content warnings about our class readings in advance of our discussion of them. Please know you can speak to me about any issues you may have with the readings to the level you feel comfortable with.
- If any technical issues are encountered with your access to D2L or any Camosun website, please contact Camosun eLearning Support at eLearning@camosun.bc.ca. If there is a technical issue with course content, please let me know.
- Planned Reading List (subject to change with notice):
  - "The Specialist's Hat" by Kelly Link, https://kellylink.net/specialists-hat
  - "A Redress for Andromeda" by Caitlín R. Kiernan, paper copy provided.
  - "Pre-Simulation Consultation XF007867" by Kim Fu, https://www.tor.com/2021/10/26/excerpts-kim-fu-lesser-known-monsters-of-the-21st-century/
  - "Hinterlands" by William Gibson, PDF to be provided.
  - "Troll Bridge" by Terry Pratchett, PDF to be provided.
  - "Ogres of East Africa" by Sofia Samatar, https://www.uncannymagazine.com/article/ogres-east-africa/
  - "Ratspeak" by Sarah Porter, https://www.tor.com/2016/08/24/ratspeak/
  - "Security Breach at Sugar Pine Suites" by Pamela Rentz, https://apex-magazine.com/short-fiction/security-breach-at-sugar-pine-suites/
  - "Skinny Charlie's Orbiting Teepee" by Pamela Rentz, https://apex-magazine.com/short-fiction/skinny-charlies-orbiting-teepee/
  - "Selfies" by Lavie Tidhar, https://www.tor.com/2014/09/17/selfies-lavie-tidhar/
  - "The Devil's Reel" by Sean Eads and Joshua Viola, https://www.tor.com/2020/10/29/read-the-devils-reel-from-the-new-horror-anthology-it-came-from-the-multiplex/
  - "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, https://www.ndsu.edu/pubweb/~cinichol/CreativeWriting/323/MarquezManwithWings.htm
  - "Hello Moto" by Nnedi Okorafor, https://www.tor.com/2011/11/02/hello-moto/

The following schedule and course components are subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

You are expected to have all class texts before the class during which they will be discussed.

WEEK or DATE RANGE	ACTIVITY or TOPIC	OTHER NOTES
Week 1 <u>Class days:</u> Tuesday, Sept. 3 Thursday, Sept. 5	- Introductions: What is Speculative Fiction? - Considering Sub-Genres: Types of Speculative Fiction. - Having Fun While Writing Well: How do we balance genre conventions with literary concerns? - For Your Consideration: Submitting and Publishing.	
Week 2 <u>Class days:</u> Tuesday, Sept. 10 Thursday, Sept. 12	- Creating mood and atmosphere – setting, description, detail, and imagery - World Building Introduction: What makes up our imaginary landscapes? - Considering Genre: Weird Fiction, part 1: What is it and how do we write it? Reading for discussion: "The Specialist's Hat" by Kelly Link.	
Week 3 <u>Class days:</u> Tuesday, Sept. 17 Thursday, Sept. 19	- Creating mood and atmosphere – setting, description, detail, and imagery, continued. - Eureka! Generating Ideas - Considering Genre: Weird Fiction, part 2: What is it and how do we write it? Reading for discussion: "A Redress for Andromeda" by Caitlín R. Kiernan.	
Week 4 <u>Class days:</u> Tuesday, Sept. 24 Thursday, Sept. 26	- Making a Scene: Elements of writing scenes. - Considering Genre: Science Fiction, part 1: What is it and how do we write it? Reading for discussion: "Hinterlands" by William Gibson.	**Genre Exercise #1 - Weird Fiction** due via D2L Dropbox on <u>Tuesday, Sept. 24</u>. Use D2L Dropbox for digital or bring paper copy to class.
Week 5 <u>Class days:</u> Tuesday, Oct. 1	- It thickens: Thinking about plot and structure. - Showing, telling, and using dialogue effectively. - Considering Genre: Science Fiction, part 2: What is it and how do we write it?	**Midterm Short Story Draft -** Bring into class on Oct. 1 and Oct. 3!

WEEK or DATE RANGE	ACTIVITY or TOPIC	OTHER NOTES
Thursday, Oct. 3	Reading for discussion: "Pre-Simulation Consultation XF007867" by Kim Fu.	
Week 6 Class days: Tuesday, Oct. 8 Thursday, Oct. 10	- Themes, critiques, celebrations: Making genre personal and specific. - Considering Genre: Indigenous Futurism, part 1: What is it and how do we write it? Reading for discussion: "Security Breach at Sugar Pine Suites" by Pamela Rentz.	**Genre Exercise #2 - Science Fiction** due via D2L Dropbox on <u>Tuesday, Oct. 8</u>. Use D2L Dropbox for digital or bring paper copy to class.
Week 7 Class days: Tuesday, Oct. 15 Thursday, Oct. 17	- Themes, critiques, celebrations: Making genre personal and specific, continued. - Considering Genre: Indigenous Futurism, part 2: What is it and how do we write it? Reading for discussion: "Skinny Charlie's Orbiting Teepee" by Pamela Rentz.	
Week 8 Class days: Tuesday, Oct. 22 Thursday, Oct. 24	- Fleshing out our characters: techniques of characterization. - Considering Genre: Horror, part 1: What is it and how do we write it? Reading for discussion: "Selfies" by Lavie Tidhar.	**Genre Exercise #3 – Indigenous Futurism** due via D2L Dropbox on <u>Tuesday, Oct. 22</u>. Use D2L Dropbox for digital or bring paper copy to class.
Week 9 Class days: Tuesday, Oct. 29 Thursday, Oct. 31	- It thickens: Thinking more about plot and structure. - Fleshing out our characters: techniques of characterization, continued. - Considering Genre: Horror, part 2: What is it and how do we write it? Reading for discussion: "The Devil's Reel" by Sean Eads and Joshua Viola.	**Midterm Short Story** due Tuesday, Oct. 29. Use D2L Dropbox for digital or bring paper copy to class.
Week 10 Class days: Tuesday, Nov. 5 Thursday, Nov. 7	- Choosing a Point of View: Who is Telling This Story? - Subverting genre expectations effectively. - Considering Genre: Fantasy, part 1: What is it and how do we write it? Reading for discussion: "Troll Bridge" by Terry Pratchett.	**Genre Exercise #4 – Horror** due via D2L Dropbox on Tuesday, Nov. 5. Use D2L Dropbox for digital or bring paper copy to class.

WEEK or DATE RANGE	ACTIVITY or TOPIC	OTHER NOTES
Week 11 Class days: Tuesday, Nov. 12 Thursday, Nov. 14	- Choosing a Point of View: Who is Telling This Story? - World Building, continued: What makes up our imaginary landscapes? - Considering Genre: Fantasy, part 2: What is it and how do we write it? Reading for discussion: "Ogres of East Africa" by Sofia Samatar; "Ratspeak" by Sarah Porter.	**Genre Exercise #5 – Fantasy** due Friday, Nov. 15. Use D2L Dropbox for digital or bring paper copy to class.
Week 12 Class days: Tuesday, Nov. 19 Thursday, Nov. 21	- Symbol-minded: Using metaphor and symbolism effectively. - Considering Genre: Magical Realism, part 1: What is it and how do we write it? Reading for discussion: "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" by Gabriel Garcia Marquez.	**Final Short Story Draft -** Bring into class on Nov. 19 and Nov. 21!
Week 13 Class days: Tuesday, Nov. 26 Thursday, Nov. 28	- Symbol-minded: Using metaphor and symbolism effectively, continued. - Considering Genre: Magical Realism, part 2: What is it and how do we write it? Reading for discussion: "Hello Moto" by Nnedi Okorafor.	
Week 14 Class days: Tuesday, Dec. 3 Thursday, Dec. 5	- Finishing touches: Testing your structure, completing your worldbuilding, and editing your work. - Revising your Final Story.	**Genre Exercise #6 – Magical Realism** due via D2L Dropbox by Tuesday, Dec. 3. Use D2L Dropbox for digital or bring paper copy to class. **Final Story Draft -** Bring into class on Dec. 3 and Dec. 5! **Final Short Story in Preferred Genre** due Monday, Dec. 9. Use D2L Dropbox for digital or bring paper copy to my office: Paul 328.
Exam Period	No final exam in this course.	

WEEK or DATE RANGE	ACTIVITY or TOPIC	OTHER NOTES
Dec. 9-17		

Students registered with the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) who complete quizzes, tests, and exams with academic accommodations have booking procedures and deadlines with CAL where advanced noticed is required. Deadlines can be reviewed on the CAL exams page. https://camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/accessible-learning/academic-accommodations-exams

EVALUATION OF LEARNING

DESCRIPTION		WEIGHTING
<u>In-class Group or Partner Peer Feedback</u> – This will take the form of guided feedback sessions during class time. You will earn the grade by being present in these classes and participating. We will share our work (Genre Exercises, Midterm Short Story, and Final Short Story), both in draft and completed forms, by reading out loud to small groups or exchanging written work with a partner. I will provide questions and prompts to help guide your feedback. Your comments will be provided to your peers in discussion with some written feedback. This assignment's goal is participation and engagement with the creative community we hope to build. Whatever stage your work is in (completed, draft, fragment, outline, idea, etc.), bring it to class and share it. It will help your work!		20%
<u>Genre Exercises</u> (250 words min. - 500 words max. each) - These assignments will allow you the opportunity to write brief scenes or partial 'flash' narratives in each of the 6 genres we will be playing with. While I will offer 6 genre exercises for you to work on, a <u>**minimum of 4 genre exercises must be completed and submitted.**</u> You can choose the 4 genres you want to work within. If you wish to complete all 6 exercises, you can. The more exercises you complete, the more you reduce the amount of grade weight pressure on each exercise but choose the path that works best for you. There will be specific focuses on employing literary devices including point of view, dialogue, symbolism, etc. in individual exercises. We will have the opportunity to draft these exercises in class but expect to work on them outside of class time.		25% for total exercises completed (4-6)

DESCRIPTION		WEIGHTING
Midterm Short Story Draft – You will be required to bring in a draft of the Midterm Short Story assignment into class to share during group/partner work. A draft means a draft – it does not need to be a 'complete' draft of the story; it can be very rough at this stage, and there is no minimum word count, but I want to see that you are making progress on this larger assignment.		5% for bringing in the draft to class for feedback lab.
Midterm Short Story (1000 words min. – 2000 words max.) – This assignment will allow you to take a crack at writing a longer work of fiction at the halfway point of class. By the point in class that this assignment is due, we will have discussed Weird Fiction, Science Fiction, and Indigenous Futurism. You will be able to write your story in any of these three genres. You will be expected to bring together your knowledge of the specific conventions of your chosen genre with the literary skills we have discussed and employed in our genre exercises to this point. You can also expand one of the genre exercises you have already submitted.		20%
Final Short Story Draft - You will be required to bring in a draft of this assignment into class to share during group/partner work. A draft means a draft – it does not need to be a 'complete' draft of the story; it can be very rough at this stage, and there is no minimum word count, but I want to see that you are making progress on this larger assignment.		5% for bringing in the draft to class for feedback lab.
Final Short Story in Preferred Genre (3000 words min – 5000 words max.) – This assignment is due at the end of our class, so we will have discussed all 6 of our sub-genres of Speculative Fiction. This final assignment will allow you to focus on writing a more complex story in the sub-genre you most enjoy and connect with. You will be expected to bring together your knowledge of the specific conventions of your chosen genre with the literary skills we have discussed and employed in our genre exercises.		25%
	TOTAL	100%

If you have a concern about a grade you have received for an evaluation, please come and see me as soon as possible. Refer to the Grade Review and Appeals policy for more information.

https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-1.14.pdf

COURSE GUIDELINES & EXPECTATIONS

Assignment Expectations:

- All specific instructions for assignments will be provided on their respective assignment sheets.

- <u>Assignment submissions:</u> Please submit assignments either as a paper copy submitted to me on the due date or as a digital copy submitted to the appropriate D2L drop-box by **11:59 pm** (PST) on their due dates.

- <u>Due dates</u>: While I aim to be understanding, due dates are there to help us move through class at a smooth, manageable pace. If you need an extension, you must discuss it with me in-person, via a Zoom meeting, or via a phone call to me. I do not discuss requests for extensions by email alone. If an assignment is late without a formal extension, it will lose 5% per day, including weekends, until it is submitted. Late assignments will receive a grade, but no comments.

- <u>Academic Integrity</u>: The Camosun College's policy on Academic Integrity (https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-09/e-1.13.pdf) defines it this way: "Academic integrity is the commitment to and demonstration of honest and ethical behaviour in an academic setting. It is the performance of all academic work without cheating, plagiarizing, lying, stealing, inappropriately collaborating, falsifying information, or receiving unauthorized assistance from any other person or using any source of information not appropriately authorized or attributed" (Camosun College, 2).

  As Camosun's policy further states, "Academic integrity is the responsibility of the entire College community" (Camosun College, 2). I take my responsibility in this regard seriously, and all suspected instances of academic misconduct will be addressed by me. If you have difficulty completing assignments, please do not engage in unethical academic behaviour. Instead, contact me for help. My main responsibility is to your academic well-being, and I aim to be understanding.

- <u>Generative AI</u>: I do not recommend the use of generative AI programs in your creative writing. Should publication be your goal, most speculative fiction publications do not accept work that uses generative AI. Therefore, developing a reliance on the AI's 'creativity' will not serve your craft well. We can, of course, have discussions about the contingency and interconnectedness of literary work, the nature of human creativity, and the concept of the art made versus the tool used to make it, but I would prefer to see your singular creativity and words in this class. I would rather have an 'imperfect' story where I see you thinking, playing, trying, and working things out. If you do use any generative AI, its work is not your work. As such, you must put its words in quotation marks to let me know they are not your words, and you must provide a proper citation. If you don't do this citing, it is plagiarism. The Camosun Library has produced a guide to help you in citing such tools: https://camosun.libguides.com/ai/citation. I can see a place for working with these tools in creative ways, but, for me, they must be the tool rather than the artist. Androids might dream of electric sheep, but dreaming your own dreams is more valuable to you at this stage as a writer than outsourcing your creative struggle to a computer program. If you have nothing of your own to say, why then bother typing?

<u>Class Environment</u>:

- <u>Our class is an inclusive, non-judgmental, and respectful space</u>: Let us build a shared environment where we are all creative artists and collaborators and where we can have fun, learn, and express ourselves. Respect for each other and our divergent worldviews and creative expressions is a requirement for all participants. Please practice tolerance, judgment, maturity, politeness, and respect in all interactions and communications with me and your fellow students. If you find that any texts or discussion comments are troubling to you, please let me know, to the extent you feel safe and comfortable doing so, so that you can be well supported. Camosun also has resources to support you and your well-being.

- <u>Participation</u> is essential to creating a productive classroom environment, especially with creative writing. A large part of our class will involve sharing our work in group or partner feedback sessions. Students are expected to bring in works-in-progress to share in class when required. Being comfortable sharing your creativity with others can take time, but it will benefit your work. Feedback, from both your peers and me, is given in the spirit of encouragement. Writing is often difficult, solitary work, so sharing our work with one another, reading our work out loud to each other, and sharing open, constructive feedback allows us to encourage and celebrate our creativity in a supportive environment.

- <u>Please practice polite tech etiquette:</u> Devices and computers, including smartphones, may be used in class **<u>only as required for an instructor-directed activity or assignment</u>** (e.g., research or in-class writing), or if your CAL designation includes use of a computer. **Please mute your devices. Please no texting, calls, or social media use during class time.** You will be asked to leave the class if you are doing these activities. If you must answer a call or text for personal reasons, please quietly excuse yourself from class to do so.

- <u>Communication outside class</u>: Check your email and D2L email regularly, as I send announcements and updates about class via them.

SCHOOL OR DEPARTMENTAL INFORMATION

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

Enrolment at Camosun assumes that the student will become a responsible member of the College community. As such, each student will display a positive work ethic, assist in the preservation of College property, and assume responsibility for their education by researching academic requirements and policies; demonstrating courtesy and respect toward others; and respecting expectations concerning attendance, assignments, deadlines, and appointments.

SUPPORTS AND SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

Camosun College offers a number of services to help you succeed in and out of the classroom. For a detailed overview of the supports and services visit camosun.ca/services.

Support Service	Website
Academic Advising	camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/academic-advising
Accessible Learning	camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/accessible-learning
Counselling	camosun.ca/services/health-and-wellness/counselling-centre
Career Services	camosun.ca/services/co-operative-education-and-career-services
Financial Aid and Awards	camosun.ca/registration-records/financial-aid-awards
Help Centres (Math/English/Science)	camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/help-centres
Indigenous Student Support	camosun.ca/programs-courses/iecc/indigenous-student-services
International Student Support	camosun.ca/international

Support Service	Website
Learning Skills	camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/help-centres/writing-centre-learning-skills
Library	camosun.ca/services/library
Office of Student Support	camosun.ca/services/office-student-support
Ombudsperson	camosun.ca/services/ombudsperson
Registration	camosun.ca/registration-records/registration
Technology Support	camosun.ca/services/its
Writing Centre	camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/help-centres/writing-centre-learning-skills

If you have a mental health concern, please contact Counselling to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. Counselling sessions are available at both campuses during business hours. If you need urgent support after-hours, please contact the Vancouver Island Crisis Line at 1-888-494-3888 or call 911.

COLLEGE-WIDE POLICIES, PROCEDURES, REQUIREMENTS, AND STANDARDS

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to comply with all College policy regarding academic integrity; which is about honest and ethical behaviour in your education journey. The following guide is designed to help you understand your responsibilities: https://camosun.libguides.com/academicintegrity/welcome

Please visit https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-1.13.pdf for Camosun's Academic Integrity policy and details for addressing and resolving matters of academic misconduct.

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Camosun College is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging appropriate academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a documented disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) and register as early as possible. Please visit the CAL website for more information about the process of registering with CAL, including important deadlines: https://camosun.ca/cal

Academic Progress

Please visit https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2023-02/e-1.1.pdf for further details on how Camosun College monitors students' academic progress and what steps can be taken if a student is at risk of not meeting the College's academic progress standards.

Course Withdrawals Policy

Please visit https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-2.2.pdf for further details about course withdrawals. For deadline for fees, course drop dates, and tuition refund, please visit https://camosun.ca/registration-records/tuition-fees#deadlines.

Grading Policy
Please visit https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-1.5.pdf for further details about grading.

Grade Review and Appeals
Please visit https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-1.14.pdf for policy relating to requests for review and appeal of grades.

Medical / Compassionate Withdrawals
Students who are incapacitated and unable to complete or succeed in their studies by virtue of serious and demonstrated exceptional circumstances may be eligible for a medical/compassionate withdrawal (see Medical/Compassionate Withdrawals policy). Please visit https://camosun.ca/services/forms#medical to learn more about the process involved in a medical/compassionate withdrawal.

Sexual Violence

Camosun is committed to creating a campus culture of safety, respect, and consent. Camosun's Office of Student Support is responsible for offering support to students impacted by sexual violence. Regardless of when or where the sexual violence occurred, students can access support at Camosun. The Office of Student Support will make sure students have a safe and private place to talk and will help them understand what supports are available and their options for next steps. The Office of Student Support respects a student's right to choose what is right for them. For more information see Camosun's Sexualized Violence Policy: https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-2.9.pdf and camosun.ca/services/sexual-violence-support-and-education.

To contact the Office of Student Support: oss@camosun.ca or by phone: 250-370-3046 or 250-370-3841

Student Misconduct (Non-Academic)
Camosun College is committed to building the academic competency of all students, seeks to empower students to become agents of their own learning, and promotes academic belonging for everyone. Camosun also expects all students to conduct themselves in a manner that contributes to a positive, supportive, and safe learning environment. Please review Camosun College's Student Misconduct Policy at https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-2.5.pdf to understand the College's expectations of academic integrity and student behavioural conduct.

Looking for other policies?
The full suite of College policies and directives can be found here: https://camosun.ca/about/camosun-college-policies-and-directives

Changes to this Syllabus: Every effort has been made to ensure that information in this syllabus is accurate at the time of publication. The College reserves the right to change courses if it becomes necessary so that course content remains relevant. In such cases, the instructor will give the students clear and timely notice of the changes.