



School of Arts & Science
 ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
 CRWR 154–002 Fiction Writing
 Fall 2015: Sep 8 – Dec 12
 Tu, Th 6:00 p.m.-7:20 p.m. Fisher 203

“The fact is that the materials of the fiction writer are the humblest. Fiction is about everything human and we are made out of dust, and if you scorn getting yourself dusty, then you shouldn’t try to write fiction. It’s not a grand enough job for you.”
 - Flannery O’Connor

You can't wait for inspiration, you have to go after it with a club.
 - Jack London

Calendar Description

This course offers students with strong writing ability a chance to explore and develop their skills and possible goals in writing fiction, especially short stories. Students study such elements as characterization, plot, dialogue, setting, point of view, openings and endings, and theme. *Formerly known as ENGL 154. Note: Students should not take this course if they already have credit for the previously offered ENGL 154.*

Ω *Please note: the College electronically stores this outline for five (5) years only. It is **strongly recommended** you keep a copy of this outline with your academic records. You will need this outline for any future application/s for transfer credit/s to other colleges/universities.*

1. Instructor Information

(a)	Instructor:	Sara Cassidy		
(b)	Office Hours:	Tuesdays 1:00 – 2:00 & by appointment		
(c)	Location:	Paul 337		
(d)	Phone:	250.370.3354		
(e)	Email:	CassidyS@camosun.bc.ca		

2. Intended Learning Outcomes

(No changes are to be made to these Intended Learning Outcomes as approved by the Education Council of Camosun College.)

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Analyse, at a beginner’s level, the process of writing fiction.
2. Practice the writing process appropriate to fiction.
3. Produce plots, settings, characters and appropriately nuanced language with effective use of figures of speech.
4. Compose a journal for the purpose of experiencing the effectiveness of journal keeping.
5. Practice appropriate research for giving fiction credibility.
6. Identify the various resources available for writers.
7. Prepare a story for submission for publication.

3. Required Materials

- ❖ *The Making of a Story: A Norton Guide to Creative Writing* by Alice LaPlante
- ❖ Lined 8.5- by 11-inch paper (for work to be done in class)
- ❖ A good dictionary and thesaurus
- ❖ Copy card/money for photocopying. About \$20
- ❖ Journal. Electronic or hard copy. For submission at end of class, and returned to you.

4. Classes

Classes consist of lectures, discussion (large and small group), writing exercises, and workshops (peer review) of your short story drafts. Every Tuesday we will have a five-minute grammar lesson on a specific topic. It is essential to do each week's assigned readings.

5. Basis of Student Assessment (Weighting)

1. In-class responses to readings, written and oral	10%
2. Two short stories, 1500-2500 words each	40%
3. Short short story, focus on diction (500 – 750 words)	10%
4. Peer critique, both written and oral	10%
5. Midterm (definitions, techniques)	10%
6. Journal, five entries	10%
7. Final exam	10%

*Midterm and exam will take place at the beginning of class and cannot be made up without valid documentation (e.g. medical note).

6. Grading System
Standard Grading System (GPA)

Percentage	Grade	Description	Grade Point Equivalency
90-100	A+		9
85-89	A		8
80-84	A-		7
77-79	B+		6
73-76	B		5
70-72	B-		4
65-69	C+		3
60-64	C		2
50-59	D	Minimum level of achievement for which credit is granted; a course with a "D" grade cannot be used as a prerequisite.	1
0-49	F	Minimum level has not been achieved.	0

Temporary Grades

Temporary grades are assigned for specific circumstances and will convert to a final grade according to the grading scheme being used in the course. See Grading Policy E-1.5 at camosun.ca for information on conversion to final grades, and for additional information on student record and transcript notations.

Temporary Grade	Description
I	<i>Incomplete:</i> A temporary grade assigned when the requirements of a course have not yet been completed due to hardship or extenuating circumstances, such as illness or death in the family.
IP	<i>In progress:</i> A temporary grade assigned for courses that, due to design may require a further enrollment in the same course. No more than two IP grades will be assigned for the same course. (For these courses a final grade will be assigned to either the 3 rd course attempt or at the point of course completion.)
CW	<i>Compulsory Withdrawal:</i> A temporary grade assigned by a Dean when an instructor, after documenting the prescriptive strategies applied and consulting with peers, deems that a student is unsafe to self or others and must be removed from the lab, practicum, worksite, or field placement.

7. Recommended Materials or Services to Assist Students to Succeed Throughout the Course

LEARNING SUPPORT AND SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

There are a variety of services available for students to assist them throughout their learning. This information is available in the College calendar, at Student Services, or the College web site at camosun.ca.

STUDENT CONDUCT POLICY

There is a Student Conduct Policy **which includes plagiarism**. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the content of this policy. The policy is available in each School Administration Office, at Student Services, and the College web site in the Policy Section.

Class Overview

Note: Reading assignments are underlined.

Journal assignments are in bold, and included on the dates they are assigned, not due..

Sept 8: Introductions, class overview. Class code of conduct (Wordle). What is fiction?

Grammar Burst: your/you're.

Sept 10: Discussion of readings:

Writing That Is Surprising Yet Convincing (pp. 27 – 28)

Resisting Paraphrase (p. 28 – 29)

Our First Job As Writers Is To Notice (pp. 35 - 36).

On Keeping A Notebook by Joan Didion (pp 40 – 46)

Journal assignment #1, for Sept. 15: Three descriptions of two people observed talking to each other. Note ages, genders, colours, styles, body language. What are they wearing? What is the tone of their conversation? How can you tell? Who is talking more? What strikes you about the conversation they are having?

Sept 15: Showing, telling. Details. Imagery. Grammar Burst: you and I.

The Things They Carried by Tim O'Brien (pp 131 – 146)

Sept 17: Details, Details, Details (pp 107 - p. 120) Imagery, continued.

Journal assignment #2, for Sept. 22: Collect three images each: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, olfactory, gustatory.

Sept 22: Tension. Conflict. Pacing. Scenes. Grammar Burst: Ending a sentence with a preposition. (Starting a sentence with “and” or “but”.)

Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been? By Joyce Carol Oates. (pp 70 – 86)

Sept 24: More discussion of Oates’s story. Aboutness. Layers. Description vs. narration.

Sept 29: Fiction lengths (including postcard fiction), pros and cons of. Diction. Plot. Grammar Burst: the sentence fragment.

People Like That Are The Only People Here: Canonical Babbling in Peed Onc. By Lorrie Moore. (pp. 479 – 506)

Text, pp 375 - 388

Story #1 assigned.

Oct 1: Discussion of *Peed Onc*, cont. Narrative point of view. More about diction. Latinate vs. Angle Saxon. A word about drafting.

Oct 6: Narrative distance. Epiphany. Grammar Burst: run-on sentences vs. beautiful, long sentences.

The Lady With The Little Dog by Anton Chekhov (pp 286 – 294)

From textbook: pp 259 – 278

STORY #1 DISTRIBUTED TO WORKSHOP MEMBERS AND SARA (hard copy)

Oct 8: Editing. Wordiness. Copy editing.

Workshop: Story #1

Oct 13: Filtering. Grammar Burst: The Oxford comma.

Emergency, by Denis Johnson. (pp 47 – 56)

Workshop: Story #1

Journal Assignment #3, for October 15: Study someone on the street, a stranger. Write – in the first person or third - about who he or she is, what he or she is thinking, what the tension in his/her life might be. Tap into her/his inner life. Make it all up. Capture his or her “voice” as a thinker – is it jumpy? Languorous? 300 – 500 words.

Oct 15: Discussion of *Emergency*, continued. Movement in a story. Telescoping. Dialogue (including talking while doing).

Oct 20: Figurative language, especially metaphor. Grammar Burst: punctuating dialogue.

Oct 22: Character. Opening sentences. Story #1 final submitted to Sara, with peer editing notes, and 200-300 words about the editing process. Story #2 Assigned.

Oct 27: Character and plot. Symbolism. Grammar Burst: That and which.
The Bath, by Raymond Carver. pp 591 – 618.

Oct 29: Thickening a story. Research, sources of inspiration.

Nov 3: Active and passive language. Grammar Burst: generated by student work. Story #2 submitted to workshop members and to Sara.
Dialogue pp 342 - 356

Journal Assignment #4: A dialogue between two people engaged in doing something that is hands on.

Nov 5: Sentence lengths. Workshop: Story #2

Nov 10: Workshop: Story #2

Nov 12: Submitting a story for publication. Query letter. Market research. Formatting. Grammar burst: generated by student work. Story #3 assigned.

Nov 17: Problems and concerns with the stories you are writing. Style. Grammar Burst: paragraphs. Story #2 submitted to Sara, with notes about editing.
The Embassy of Cambodia, by Zadie Smith, online at <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/02/11/the-embassy-of-cambodia?currentPage=all>

Nov 19: Climax. Structure. Story #3 submitted to workshop members.

Nov 24: Catch up on past topics. Grammar burst: Irregardless and other non-words, including archaisms.
Workshop: Story #3

Nov 26: Workshop: Story #3
Journal Assignment #5: TBA

Dec 1: Handling time. Grammar Burst: parentheses.
Sonny's Blues by James Baldwin. pp 390 – 417

Dec 3: How to give a reading. Story #3 submitted to Sara, with notes about editing. Journal assignments due.

Dec 8: Final class. Class reading and party.