

## INTRODUCTION TO FICTION WRITING ENGLISH 303

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### **Required Texts:**

Charters, Ann, ed. The Story and Its Writer, Compact 8<sup>th</sup> Ed. New York: Bedford/St. Martins, 2010.

Lamott, Anne. Bird By Bird. New York: Norton, 1995.

A good dictionary.

### **Course Description:**

This course will introduce the beginning fiction writer to the elements and craft of writing short fiction. To do this, we will study a wide range of published stories; we will also, through class workshops, examine the student's own work, in the form of exercises and short stories.

### **Requirements:**

1. **Original fiction.** You will be required to write at least two complete short stories, approximately 25-30 pages of fiction. One of these stories will be workshopped, and you will be required to revise that story based on the class comments. The second story will be due at mid-term and will be turned into the instructor. A third story may be turned in with your portfolio at the end of the semester in order to complete the thirty page requirement.

All stories submitted to the workshop must be cleanly typed, double-spaced and stapled. No late work will be accepted. ALL WORK SUBMITTED MUST BE ORIGINAL TO THE CLASS. ANY WORK THAT HAS BEEN RECYCLED FROM OTHER CLASSES WILL RECEIVE AN F. At the end of the semester you will be asked to turn in a portfolio consisting of all the work you have done for the class, including critiques, exercises, your open ended discussion questions and the required 30 pages of fiction. DO NOT THROW ANY WORK AWAY THAT YOU DO FOR THIS CLASS OR YOUR GRADE MAY BE AFFECTED.

Each story submitted will receive a numeric grade from 1 to 100, with grading criteria to be explained in class. Revisions will also be graded on a numeric basis. Percentage of final grade for original fiction/revision: 35%

2. **Exercises.** Writing exercises will be assigned on a weekly basis. Sometimes these exercises will be done in class; sometimes they will be assigned as homework. In class writing may be handwritten; take home assignments must be typed. Typically they will also need to be posted to Blackboard. These writing exercises are an integral part of learning the craft of fiction. Each writing exercise will receive a numeric grade from 1 to 10. Percentage of final grade for writing exercises: 20%.

3. **Critiques.** During the semester, you will read and annotate copies of the stories that are to be workshopped. You will then write a critique of each story in preparation for class discussion. More information on the format and expectations for these critiques will be presented in class. These critiques will either be posted to Blackboard or collected by the instructor on a weekly basis and will receive a numeric grade from 1 to 10. Percentage of final grade for critiques: 20%.

4. **Open ended discussion questions/responses to the reading.** Each week you will be assigned published stories in the Charter's anthology. You are required to respond to each story assigned with an open-ended question. These discussion questions will be graded as completed (credit) or not complete (no credit). You can handwrite these the day of class on a piece of notebook paper and turn them in with your name at the top. Percentage of final grade for discussion questions: 10%.

5. **Attendance.** Attendance in English 303 is mandatory. Because the class meets on a weekly basis, any absence seriously affects your ability to keep up in the class. Percentage of final grade for attendance: 15%.

6. **Blackboard.** All students must check the class area in Blackboard regularly for updates, etc.

**Workshopping:** By the beginning of week two (depending on our schedule) you will begin to submit your stories to the workshop. Two to three stories a session will be discussed. **No more than fifteen pages may be turned in to any one workshop.** You must have your stories finished and copied and distributed to the class at least a week before your story is discussed. You will be "up" in workshop at least once during the semester. You *may* have the opportunity to go up twice.