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Office Hours: Monday 12 Noon to 1:50 pm by appointment
Wednesday 12 Noon to 1pm by appointment

Syllabus Fall 2018

ENGLISH 405 FICTION WRITING

Required texts:

1. *Who's Irish*, Gish Jen
New York: Vintage Contemporaries, 1999
2. *The Assassination of Margaret Thatcher*, Hilary Mantel
New York: Picador, 2015
3. *Tenth of December*, George Saunders
New York: Random House, 2013
4. *Drinking Coffee Elsewhere*, ZZ Packer
New York: Riverhead Trade, 2004
5. Access to the OED or another very good dictionary

Please note that computers and other electronic devices are not allowed in class, so you will need *physical* copies of all texts.

Course Description: An intermediate workshop for fiction writers who have completed English 303 or 302. This course will focus on revision as the cornerstone of good writing. How can one become a good editor of one's own work? How does one differentiate and select from the criticism received in the workshop in order to improve one's own fiction? We will be concentrating on exploration of literary fiction both in our own work and in close readings of published short stories. Students will be expected to work intensively on at least three complete short stories in the course of the semester, and submit at least two of them to be workshopped by their colleagues. They will also be expected to participate in workshop discussions of their colleagues' work.

Requirements: You will be required to write at least 40 pages of original fiction. These 40 pages should include at least three completed short stories. All work submitted must be written for this class. **Any work that has been written for or recycled from another class will be considered a failure.** At least two of these stories will be workshopped, and at least one of these stories must be extensively revised.

In addition to your original writing, you will read and annotate copies of the stories that are to be workshopped and write a one-page critique of each workshopped story in preparation for class discussion. These critiques will be checked and periodically collected by the instructor. You will also be responsible for discussion of published stories. Each week a student will choose or be assigned a story from the collections and will be responsible for leading class discussion about that story. You will also respond to published stories on Blackboard. You are expected to meet with your instructor in office hours to discuss your work that hasn't been workshopped. You may also be assigned periodic writing exercises. These are to be completed, typed and handed in when they are due, unless otherwise instructed. Lastly, you are expected to participate fully in class discussions of workshopped stories and assigned readings—this is a big percentage of your grade.

All stories submitted to the workshop must be cleanly typed, with one-inch margins, double-spaced and stapled. **NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED**—this includes original writing as well as critiques. 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 exercises, critiques, and the required three stories, along with a complete revision of one of those stories. **DO NOT THROW ANY WORK AWAY THAT YOU DO FOR THIS CLASS OR YOUR GRADE MAY BE AFFECTED.**

Attendance: English 405 is a writing workshop, and in order to “workshop” you must be present and engaged. On-time attendance is mandatory and an integral part of the participation grade (though not the only criterion). As we only meet once a week, missing one class is equivalent to missing a full week of classes. Absences due to religious holidays or illness are excused only if I am notified in advance and may require documentation. If you have other commitments during class time that may result in multiple absences, this may not be the semester to take this class. Two unexcused absences is cause for failing the class, as are three excused absences. Note that three absences is the equivalent of missing six classes in a course that meets twice a week; that is a full fifth of our class. Excessive lateness is equivalent to absence, as is consistently not bringing required books and texts to class.

In all cases, students are responsible for all missed work. I require a physical copy of all critiques one week after the absence, and another must be given to the student author. Please do not send via email.

<u>Grading:</u>	Original Work	35%
	Story Presentation	15%
	Critiques	15%
	Participation/Exercises/Responses	35%

Original work will be assessed holistically on style, structure, story, grasp of fictional elements, and attention to the revision process. Critiques will be checked for credit. If a critique is missing or fails to meet the minimum standards of analysis, the writer will be given no credit. More

than two no credits may result in a lowering of your grade. Writing exercises will be graded with a check, check plus or check minus grade.

Workshopping: By the second week of class you will begin to submit your stories to the workshop. Two to three stories a session will be discussed. You must have your stories finished and copied and distributed to the class at least a week before your story is discussed. **NO MORE THAN FIFTEEN AND NO LESS THAN TEN PAGES MAY BE TURNED IN TO ANY ONE WORKSHOP.**

You will be up in the workshop at least twice during the semester and may have the opportunity to go up more than twice. Critiques will be checked off by the instructor and occasionally collected. Student writers are responsible for letting the instructor know if they fail to receive or receive incomplete critiques.

Anyone who is absent is responsible for getting copies of the stories to be read the next week; I will try to put any extra copies in my box, but if they are not there, you will need to contact the author.

USC Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Support Systems:

Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: sarc.usc.edu

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class.
equity.usc.edu

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations.
dsp.usc.edu

USC Support and Advocacy (USCSA) – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students.
diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.

Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu

**English 405/Fiction Writing
Class Schedule and Reading Assignments**

Please note that this schedule is subject to change.

Week One August 22

Course introduction

Week Two August 29

Readings due: “Who’s Irish” Gen

Week Three September 5

Readings due: “Every Tongue Shall Confess” Packer

Week Four September 12

Readings due: “Victory Lap” Saunders

Week Five September 19

Readings due: “The Long QT” Mantel
“The Water Faucet Vision” Gen

NO CLASS—responses due on BB

Week Six September 26

Readings due: “Drinking Coffee Elsewhere” Packer

Week Seven October 3

Readings due: “Puppy” Saunders

Week Eight October 10

Readings due: “Winter Break” Mantel

Week Nine October 17

Readings due: “In the American Society” Gen

Week Ten October 24

Readings due: “Brownies” Packer

Week Eleven October 31

Readings due: “The Semplica Girl Diaries” Saunders

Week Twelve November 7

Readings due: “The Heart Fails Without Warning” Mantel

Week Thirteen November 14

Readings due: “Duncan in China” Gen

Week Fifteen November 28

Readings due: “The Assassination of Margaret Thatcher” Mantel

FINAL December 5 4:30 p.m.

THIRD STORY/REVISION/PORTFOLIO DUE