

INTERMEDIATE FICTION WORKSHOP WITH ELIZABETH GAFFNEY  
NYU – Fall 2017  
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917-716-3401

## THE SHORT STORY AND THE WRITER'S PROCESS

My advice to you as we begin a semester of intensive writing and rewriting is to: Carry a pen and paper at all times (and use them often). Make sure you care about what you are writing (or who will?). Experiment wildly (and then evaluate coolly). Read your work aloud (with a pencil in hand). Revise ruthlessly (again and again). Have fun.

Our goals are:

to learn the writer's process through studying a dozen masters of the form, write a page of new prose every day (or edit two pages) and, drawing from those pages, to create and revise one new short story (or section of a novel).

In this class:

you will write — in class and out. You will read short stories — yours and those of a dozen renowned short story writers. You will analyze the writer's process — both yours and that of our writers, through reading — and conducting — interviews with authors.

Required books & materials:

Notebook and pen to be carried always.

Student manuscripts. Selected handouts. Author interviews, available for free on [theparisreview.org](http://theparisreview.org) website or at the links provided. *THE ART OF THE TALE*, ed. Daniel Halpern, isbn 0140296387

Writing requirements:

You will submit three manuscripts to the workshop, one for each round of workshopping, and send a fourth manuscript – your final revised and complete draft — just to me. The first two submissions should be 6-10 pages. The third, 10-20 pages, should be a complete draft of your piece, beginning to end. Your final manuscript, also 10-20 pages, should be an edited version of the third submission, reflecting feedback from me and from your final workshop, and is due **12/12**, one week after our last class.

Grading: Your submissions will not be graded individually. This class will be graded on participation in class discussions and workshops and on the quality and, in particular, on the careful and thorough subsequent editing of the fiction submitted to the workshop. If you do all the required writing in a timely fashion and attend and participate in all workshop sessions, you should receive an A. However, missing class (especially your own workshop) or failing to engage regularly in workshop critiques or discussions about the reading will seriously impact your grade.

All written work must be original and written expressly for this class.

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### Schedule of Readings

- 9/5 Introductions/ in-class writing  
Edward P. Jones, "The First Day," p. 349,  
Paris Review interview
- 9/12 Tobias Wolff, "The Night in Question," p. 637  
Paris Review interview
- 9/19 Tatyana Tolstaya, "On the Golden Porch," p. 567  
interview available by pdf or at  
<https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/bl/article/view/24927/28882>
- 9/26 Lorrie Moore, "Willing," p. 411  
Paris Review interview
- 10/3 Zoë Wicomb, "You Can't Get Lost in Capetown," p. 591  
interview at  
<http://aerodrome.co.za/worklife-zoe-wicomb-novelist/>
- [10/10] no class / fall recess
- 10/17 Richard Ford, "Optimists," p. 279  
Paris Review interview
- 10/24 Ingo Schulze, "The Ring," p. 527  
interview at  
<http://bombmagazine.org/article/6431/ingo-schulze>
- 10/31 Luisa Valenzuela, "Who, Me a Bum?" p. 578  
Paris Review interview
- 11/7 John Edgar Wideman, "Doc's Story," p. 602  
Paris Review interview
- 11/14 Margaret Atwood, "Wilderness Tips," p. 42  
Paris Review interview
- 11/21 Melanie Rae Thon, Xmas, Jamaica Plains
- 11/28 Salman Rushdie, "The Free Radio," p. 513  
Paris Review interview
- 12/5 Bharati Mukherjee, "The Management of Grief," p. 435  
Paris Review interview