

Syllabus, Summer 2023

Writers in New York: Fiction Workshop

CRWRI-UA.818.001 (2251)

Credits: 8

Professor: Saïd Sayrafiezadeh

Schedule: Weeks 1 & 4, Wednesdays & Fridays
Weeks 2 & 3, Mondays & Wednesdays

Time: 2:00-4:30 PM

Location: TBD

The Art of the Short Story: From Opening Line to Publication

Our fiction workshop will cover some of the essential techniques of the short story. It will be a combination of writing, reading and analysis, and it will be conducted seminar style with discussion as its primary component. Together we'll examine ways to handle dialogue, information, tension, and details. Class material might also include film, songs, plays, poems, memoirs, newspaper articles and anything else that can inform us about how storytelling works. We'll put what we're learning into practice by writing our own short story, and seeing what elements are coming to life and what might need a little more shaping. And finally—perhaps most importantly—what should a writer do with a story once it's done? Does it stay inside a drawer or does it get published? In other words, how exactly does one end up in, say, *The New Yorker*? This class may be able to come up with a roadmap.

Course Objectives:

1. Establish an understanding of various fiction techniques.
2. Create an artistic discipline.
3. Form and articulate confident and authentic opinions on a wide variety of stories and genres.
4. Achieve insight into the publishing industry and what steps to take toward a literary career.
6. Show an awareness of narratives in other artistic mediums and how to employ them in fiction writing.
7. Develop an ability to incorporate factually accurate material into fictional work.

Reading Schedule:

Class 1, Wednesday, May 31: No assigned reading.

Class 2, Friday, June 2: Selected poems by Ocean Vuong. *Parent's Morning Epiphany* by Zadie Smith. *Escape from New York* by Zadie Smith. *No workshop submissions due.*

Class 3, Monday, June 5: *Something Nice* by Mary Gaitskill. *Omission* by John McPhee. *Workshop submissions TBD.*

Class 4, Wednesday, June 7: *Big Bear, California* by Rebecca Curtis. *My Parade* by Alexander Chee. *Workshop submissions TBD.*

Class 5, Monday, June 12: *Vandals* by Nicole Haroutunian. *That Crafty Feeling* by Zadie Smith. *Workshop submissions TBD.*

Class 6, Wednesday, June 14: *The Thousands* by Daniel Alarcón. *A Christian in Union Square* by Eunice Pak. *Workshop submissions TBD.*

Class 7, Wednesday, June 21: *A Different Kind of Imperfection* by Thomas Beller. *Garlic in Fiction* by Shirley Jackson. *Workshop submissions TBD.*

Class 8, Friday, June 23: *Doris is Coming* by ZZ Packer. *On Writing* (excerpt) by Stephen King. *Workshop submissions TBD.*

Course Information:

1. Office hours: By appointment.
2. Class readings: Reading assignments will be emailed as PDFs after each class.
3. Grading: Class participation will count for **50%** of your grade, this includes contributing to discussion on a consistent and constructive basis and coming to class on time. (Workshop instructors are responsible for assigning one final grade for the semester incorporating input from craft instructors.) On time completion of your short story, adherence to the narrative parameters, and polished writing that appears to have been carefully considered, will count for the other **50%**.
4. Participation: This is a writing workshop, so consistent participation is required.
5. Fiction writing: You will be writing one original short story (approximately 3-5 pages) based on specific parameters. You'll email your submission to your classmates (and me) no later than 11:59 PM on the day it's due (we'll figure out the schedule on the first class). It's each student's responsibility to make sure they've received the story submissions, so be sure to check your spam folder. Please be aware that your submission dates can't be rescheduled, so if your submission comes in late you may run the risk of not having your work discussed. Editorial comments and suggestions are only given for work that has been submitted on time. Late work is not guaranteed feedback.
7. Editorial notes: You'll be sending your classmate at least two hundred words of your overall thoughts, suggestions, impressions, compliments. Email this to the author (and cc me) before 1:59 PM the day of class that we're scheduled to discuss your classmate's piece.
9. Extra credit disclaimer: Unfortunately, there won't be opportunities for extra credit, so be sure to submit your strongest work on all of the assignments.
10. Workshop etiquette: In workshop, each writer has the opportunity to have their work read and considered. Be honest while giving your thoughts and responses to your fellow writers, and bear in mind that workshop is meant as a space for each writer to grow and expand and learn. Please be a good workshop member and clearly communicate story concerns to your fellow writer. There are a lot of ways to craft a meaningful critique. Remember, it's not easy for any writer to put words on the page (including your professor!). The general expectation is that we expect each member of the workshop to be courteous, listen to others, and treat their fellow classmates with respect.

Course Policies:

1. Attendance and Tardiness: Please come on time for class, come back from break on time, and stay for the duration of class. NYU policy is that students are expected to attend all class sessions for courses in which they are enrolled.
2. Late Assignments: Extensions can't be given due to the limited semester schedule.
3. Academic Honesty/Plagiarism: New York University takes plagiarism very seriously. I'm required to report any case of suspected plagiarism.
4. Disability Disclosure Statement: Students requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities as early as possible in the semester for assistance.
NYU's Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities
Telephone: 212-998-4980
Website: <http://www.nyu.edu/csd>
Email: mosescsd@nyu.edu

This syllabus may be modified as deemed appropriate. Any changes will be announced in class.