

INTRODUCTION TO FICTION WRITING

ENG 225-02 TR 2-3:15

Kathryn Schreyer

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Office Hours: MW 12-1:30

Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course you will have:

-developed artistic abilities and ultimately produced a refined body of work by focusing intensively, under faculty guidance, on fiction.

-learned sophisticated models for revision: sharpened reading, editorial, and analytical skills; and cultivated the ability to articulate matters of craft and literary theory.

-become familiar with formal possibilities for writing and will have explored the historical development of prose through a close structure of fiction.

-developed a broader knowledge base of contemporary works and of the literary canon.

-enhanced professional development with the support of a community of faculty, fellow students, and distinguished visiting writers.

Required Texts:

The Anchor Book of New American Short Stories, ed. Ben Marcus. Anchor Books, 2004. ISBN: 1400034825.

The Art of Fiction: Notes on Craft for Young Writers, John Gardner. Random House, 2004. ISBN: 0679734031.

The Scribner Anthology of Contemporary Short Fiction: Fifty North American Stories Since 1970, ed. Williford. ISBN: 0684857960.

Course Work:

Class Participation: It's imperative that everyone come to each class prepared to discuss the assigned readings and workshop stories. Thoughtful and active participation is the most crucial aspect of any workshop and accounts for 25% of your final grade. Class participation is not only necessary, and generous to the other members of the workshop, it is the central way in which I will be evaluating your understanding of the readings, as well as your commitment and ability to comment thoughtfully on the stories produced by those in class with you.

Paper: You will write a 5-6 page paper on one of the anthologized readings, analyzing the story both thematically and in terms of craft, as well as focusing on its place within the context of other class readings. The paper will count for 25% of your final grade.

Stories/ Portfolio: The final project due at the end of the course will be the portfolio. It accounts for 50% of your final grade. It may include a title, notes, epigraphs, etc., but must include 3-4 stories, at least 2 of which have been workshopped in class, then revised, and the remainder of which you have written and revised on your own. Writing exercises completed in class may be included as long as they reflect extensive rethinking. The portfolio must include both original and revised copies of each story. Of course, I'd be more than happy to comment on any other stories you write this semester.

One Conference: During the course of the semester I will meet with each one of you individually in order to discuss your progress and your responses to the course. It's a time and an opportunity for me to suggest other writers who might be helpful to you, as well as another chance to discuss drafts, revisions, and writing exercises. I am always willing to discuss drafts during office hours as well.

Disability Services:

If you have any sort of disability that could affect your performance in the class or for which you need accommodation, please contact me and the Office of Disability Services. The Office of Disability Services can be reached at 334-5440 ods@uncg.edu.

Attendance Policy:

Please email me if you foresee that you will be missing a particular class. Four or more unexcused absences will lower your final grade by a letter. Six or more absences may be grounds for failure. I will excuse absences beyond the first three only if there is an extraordinary situation and I am provided with appropriate documentation. It is the student's responsibility to provide this documentation to me and discuss whether the absence will be excused. In case of prolonged absence due to illness or other problems please consult your advisor and/or dean.

Plagiarism:

I expect students to abide by the UNCG Academic Integrity Policy. Please consult the UNCG's Academic Integrity Policy (<http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/>). Any cases of suspected plagiarism will be reported to the Board of Academic Integrity. The same rules apply for stories as well as papers—you must cite any and all outside sources. If you have questions about how to cite sources in the context of creative work, I will be very happy to answer them in class, at office hours, or via e-mail.

Tentative Course Schedule: The following are **due dates** for having read or completed each assignment.

8/26 T: Discuss syllabus and course objectives.

8/28 TR: *The Art of Fiction*: “Aesthetic Law and Artistic Mystery,” and “Basic Skills, Genre, and Fiction as Dream.” *The Anchor Book*: “Everything Ravaged, Everything Burned.” *The Scribner Anthology*: “The Things They Carried.”

9/2 T: WORKSHOP. *The Art of Fiction*: “Interest and Truth.” *The Scribner Anthology*: “You’re Ugly, Too,” and “Taking Care.”

9/4 TR: WORKSHOP. *The Art of Fiction*: “Metafiction, Deconstruction, and Jazzing Around.” *The Scribner Anthology*: “The School,” and “Click.”

9/9 T: WORKSHOP. *The Art of Fiction*: “Common Errors.” *The Scribner Anthology*: “The Errand,” and “Rock Springs.”

9/11 TR: WORKSHOP. *The Art of Fiction*: “Technique.” *The Scribner Anthology*: “Fiesta 1980.” *The Anchor Book*: “Sea Oak.”

9/16 T: WORKSHOP. *The Art of Fiction*: “Plotting.” *The Scribner Anthology*: “The Shawl.” **Blackboard**: “Greasy Lake.”

9/18 TR: WORKSHOP.

9/23 T: WORKSHOP. *The Anchor Book*: “Short Talks,” and “Letters to Wendy’s.”

9/25 TR: WORKSHOP.

9/30 T: WORKSHOP. *The Scribner Anthology*: “In the Cemetery Where Al Jolson is Buried,” and “Ghost Girls.”

10/2 TR: WORKSHOP.

10/7 T: WORKSHOP. *The Scribner Anthology*: “This is What it Means to Say Phoenix, Arizona.” *The Anchor Book*: “People Shouldn’t Have to Be the Ones to Tell You.”

10/9 TR: WORKSHOP.

10/14 T: WORKSHOP. *The Anchor Book*: “Girl in the Flammable Skirt” and “Brief Interviews with Hideous Men.”

10/16 TR: WORKSHOP.

10/21 T: FALL BREAK

10/23 TR: WORKSHOP.

10/28 T: WORKSHOP. *The Anchor Book*: “The Old Dictionary,” and “All American.”

10/30 TR: WORKSHOP.

11/4 T: WORKSHOP. Papers due.

11/6 TR: WORKSHOP.

11/11 T: WORKSHOP. *The Scribner Anthology*: “Meneseteung,” and “The Mail Lady.”

11/13 TR: WORKSHOP.

11/18 T: WORKSHOP. *The Anchor Book*: “The Caretaker.” *The Scribner Anthology*: “Cold Snap.”

11/20 TR: WORKSHOP.

11/25 T: THANKSGIVING BREAK.

11/27 TR: THANKSGIVING BREAK.

12/2 T: WORKSHOP. *The Scribner Anthology*: “Brokeback Mountain.” **Blackboard**: “In Dreams Begin Responsibilities.”

12/4 TR: Final Workshop.

12/12 F: Final Exam Meeting Time 3:30–6:30 P.M.: Revision Discussion. Portfolios Due.