

# ENGL A121: SHORT STORY WRITING I

Item	Value
Curriculum Committee Approval Date	12/04/2024
Top Code	150700 - Creative Writing
Units	3 Total Units
Hours	54 Total Hours (Lecture Hours 54)
Total Outside of Class Hours	0
Course Credit Status	Credit: Degree Applicable (D)
Material Fee	No
Basic Skills	Not Basic Skills (N)
Repeatable	No
Open Entry/Open Exit	No
Grading Policy	Standard Letter (S), • Pass/No Pass (B)
Associate Arts Local General Education (GE)	• Area 3 Arts and Humanities 3B Active Participation (OC2)
Associate Science Local General Education (GE)	• Area 3A Arts (OSC1)

## Course Description

Formerly: Short Story Writing. An introductory class in writing short fiction, centered on discussing and evaluating students' original work. Includes practical strategies for generating strong prose, based on techniques of published writers. This is a course for beginning writing students. ADVISORY: ENGL C1000 and ENGL A119. Transfer Credit: CSU; UC.

## Course Level Student Learning Outcome(s)

1. Analyze and compare published short stories in order to identify various conventions of the genre to understand how those conventions help support and develop the stories' goals, and utilize those conventions in the completion of a writing portfolio containing a finalized short story.

## Course Objectives

- I Reading skills:
  1. Identify the fundamental features of the short story, such as theme, plot, characterization, conflict, setting, dialogue, and point of view.
  2. Identify fundamental writing techniques in various works of fiction, such as three-act structure, denouement, foreshadowing, unreliable narrator, point of view, rising action, stakes, suspense, etc.
  3. Identify and analyze the use of connotation and symbolism in figurative writing in order to understand implied ideas in a work of fiction.
  4. Analyze writers' strategies in various genres, such as science fiction, mystery, young adult, fantasy, magical realism, and speculative fiction in order to understand different writing conventions.
- II Writing skills:

- II. 1. Utilize techniques such as journaling, quick drafts, and freewriting, to generate raw material to be shaped into original short stories.
- II. 2. Write a series of original short stories.
- II. 3. Understand audience and how to adapt the work to their expectations and the writer's intentions.
- II. 4. Generate written evaluations of the original short stories of peers in a workshop setting, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of works-in-progress.
- II. 5. Apply critical skills to successfully identify the strengths and weaknesses of their own original work.
- II. 6. Gain mastery in basic revision techniques and apply those techniques during their own revision process.
- II. 7. Edit original work to eliminate surface errors and to meet basic publication standards.
- III Ancillary skills:
  1. Develop ability to appreciate short stories through literary analysis of both themes and writing techniques.
  2. Apply research skills, as appropriate, in preparation for writing.

## Lecture Content

The outline below covers foundational course content for the beginning short story writer. Writing Basics: Lectures in and Practical Application of: Plot: Traditional structure: exposition, trigger, rising action, turning point, falling action, denouement. Set-up and payoff, reversal, epiphany. Character: Lectures in and Practical Application of: Round vs. flat characters. Sympathetic vs. unsympathetic characters. Character sketches exercises in character development. Conflict: Lectures in and Practical Application of: Understanding a character's goals and obstacles. Giving a character's internal and external conflict. Where to Begin a Story: Lectures in and Practical Application of: Opening lines. Opening beats. Writing exercise for generating opening beats. Showing Telling: Lectures in and Practical Application of: Distinguishing between explicit and implicit ideas. Concrete imagery. Inference. Dialogue: Lectures in and Practical Application of: Formatting and punctuation of dialogue. Creating natural sounding dialogue. Setting: Lectures in and Practical Application of: Practice writing concrete and detailed setting. Understanding what to include/not to include in the description of a setting. Writing Different Points of View: Lectures in and Practical Application of: Write in first person. Write in second person. Write in third person. Identify first, second, and third person in published short stories. Revision: Lectures in and Practical Application of: Practice basic style and content revision techniques. Learn how to be an effective peer reviewer of other's works during peer-editing of student manuscripts. Identify common sentence and punctuation errors. Close Reading: Lectures in and Practical Applications of: Identifying writing styles, tone, technique in various genres of published short stories. Identifying and understanding metaphors and symbolism and their connection to style and theme. Practicing annotating fictional texts to improve comprehension and critical analysis.

## Method(s) of Instruction

- Lecture (02)
- DE Live Online Lecture (02S)
- DE Online Lecture (02X)

## **Instructional Techniques**

Lecture, demonstration, modeling, and in-class writing exercises pertaining to the topic under discussion, weekly workshop sessions, weekly readings of assigned materials, written peer responses, individual conferences, occasional videos to reinforce learning.

## **Reading Assignments**

Published short stories, peer stories, essays on theory and craft. 1 hour a week

## **Writing Assignments**

Students perform a range of writing tasks on a weekly basis. In addition to generating a minimum of three short stories and one competent revision, students evaluate each others stories in writing each week, respond critically to published writers works, and perform regular writing exercises. 5 hours a week

## **Out-of-class Assignments**

Students read and analyze published stories and essays on theory and technique in preparation for class discussion. They also read and respond in writing to fellow students' work. Students will produce 30-40 pages of original fiction and will revise their most promising stories. 6 hours a week

## **Demonstration of Critical Thinking**

The quality and quantity of their original fiction. Their ability to effectively revise their work. The quality of their participation in peer review and in-class writing exercises. The thoroughness of their written responses to published works.

## **Required Writing, Problem Solving, Skills Demonstration**

Students perform a range of writing tasks on a weekly basis. In addition to generating a minimum of three short stories and one competent revision, students evaluate each others stories in writing each week, respond critically to published writers works, and perform regular in-class writing exercises.

## **Eligible Disciplines**

English: Master's degree in English, literature, comparative literature, or composition OR bachelor's degree in any of the above AND master's degree in linguistics, TESL, speech, education with a specialization in reading, creative writing, or journalism OR the equivalent. Master's degree required.

## **Textbooks Resources**

1. Required Lauren, G., Pitlor, H.. The Best American Short Stories 2024, ed. New York: Harper Collins, 2024 2. Required LePlant, Alice. Write Yourself Out of a Corner, ed. Norton, 2023 3. Required Elgrably, Jordan. Stories from the Center of the World: New Middle East Fiction, ed. City Lights, 2024