ENGL 335: Creative Writing 1, section 002, Winter 2018  
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 10-11:20, St. Jerome’s (SJ1), room 3016

Course Outline

Instructor: Carrie Snyder  
Contact: ca2snyder@uwaterloo.ca  
Office hours: HH 369 by appointment  

Updates and reminders will be posted regularly on LEARN.

Course description: Aimed at encouraging students to develop their creative and collaborative potentials, the course consists of in-class exercises and workshops, group discussions of assigned readings to illustrate core concepts, and lots of opportunities to write, with units on poetry, short fiction, and creative non-fiction. Students will also submit work to a Canadian literary magazine.

Required materials: Courseware and A Poetry Handbook, by Mary Oliver. Composition notebook and black pen for in-class exercises. In-class exercises will be written by hand.

Attendance and participation: Attendance formula: No penalty for missing class for barfing/fever!, but you must EMAIL ME before class. All other excuses: You miss 1-2 classes, this is ok; You miss 3 classes, grade drops by ½ letter. You miss 4 classes, grade drops full letter & drops full letter with each additional absence until fail-out. Three x late = 1 absence. No cellphone or laptop use in class. Weekly out-of-class notebook work will also be assessed for participation. Please discuss extensions in advance of the deadline; late assignments receive penalties of a full letter grade for each day late. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me by email or make an appointment to meet me.

Mark breakdown: Participation, 25%. Includes in-class participation & notebook work (20%), plus cover letter for The New Quarterly submission (2.5%) and a formal reflection on participation (2.5%).
Portfolio work, 75%. Includes peer reviews. Poetry portfolio: Three poems + reflection (15%) + poetry peer reviews (7.5%) = 22.5%. Story # 1: One story + reflection (15%) + book report (7.5%) + story peer reviews (7.5%) = 30%. Story # 2: One story developed from your notebook work + reflection (20%) + in-class peer response (2.5%) = 22.5%.

Grading: Your final grade will be affected by attendance & punctuality, classroom participation & notebook work, and timely completion of assignments. All formally graded assignments will be assessed on the following criteria: Grammar and syntax: 25%; Style and voice: 25%; Structure and organization: 25%; Creativity and depth: 25%. To achieve an A to A+ you must spend more time on assignments, demonstrate active engagement with the work, and exceed expectation (this may include: making radical revisions to your own work; discovering something original; challenging yourself to leave your comfort zone; experimenting with a style different from your own). Those who spend more time on assignments and demonstrate engagement with the work will get a B- to A-. Those who do the minimum work required will get a C.
Course curriculum

Week 1, Jan. 4: Welcome
*What is creative writing? Why do you write? Discussion of course structure.*

Thursday, Jan. 4

Week 2, Jan. 9 & 11: Good poems/bad poems
*Why read poems? Why write poems?*

Tuesday, Jan. 9
Today’s reading: Lynda Barry excerpts from “What It Is,” in Courseware
In-class exercises: Lynda Barry exercise + discussion of an image. Meet poetry workshop groups. List poems.

Thursday, Jan. 11
Today’s reading: Mary Oliver’s *A Poetry Handbook*, pp 1-34
In-class exercises: Writing poems, talking about why we read & write poems.

Week 3, Jan. 16 & 18: Line breaks and listening
*Workshopping: line breaks & workshopping the workshop; choose book for Story # 1*

Tuesday, Jan. 16
Today’s reading: Mary Oliver’s *A Poetry Handbook*, pp 58-108
In-class exercises: Exploring the formal elements of a poem.

Thursday, Jan. 18
Today’s reading: Mary Oliver’s *A Poetry Handbook* on the line, pp 35-57
In-class exercises: Line break workshop—important: bring to class one original poem, written by you, in order to participate in workshop.
Due at the beginning of class: your selection of a short story collection for Story # 1.
**Due on Friday, Jan. 19, by midnight: three to five poems for portfolio submitted to workshop group on LEARN.**

**Reminder: Deadline for first notebook sample is on Sunday, Jan. 21, at midnight.**
Week 4, Jan. 23 & 25: Poetry peer reviews
Working together as a group, creating rather than destroying.

Tuesday, Jan. 23
In-class exercises: Workshopping the workshop—important: bring Courseware to class.

Thursday, Jan. 25
Poetry workshop: Come to class prepared to discuss your peers’ work. Participation in class is a required component of the peer review.
**Due: Submit poetry peer reviews on LEARN before class-time (7.5%)**

Week 5, Jan. 30 & Feb. 1: Intro to short story unit + character development
What is the short story? Exploring beginnings, setting and character development.

Tuesday, Jan. 30
In-class exercises: Writing about home
Meet new workshop groups.

Thursday, Feb. 1
Today’s reading: “Mother,” by Grace Paley. Bring Courseware to class for discussion on transitions and anchoring images.
In-class exercises: Windows & doors: fictional places, transitions, and anchoring images.
**Due on Friday, Feb. 2: Poetry portfolio + reflection (15%), submitted on LEARN by midnight.**

Week 6, Feb. 6 & 8: Writing “in the manner of …”
Book reports & anchoring images.

Tuesday, Feb. 6
In-class exercises: “One of the three who survived” exercise + Meet in new workshop groups to discuss short story collections & writing “in the manner of …”
**Due: Book report on short story collection, hand in hard copy at the end of class (7.5%)**

Thursday, Feb. 8
In-class exercises: Picture exercise.

**Reminder: Deadline for second notebook sample is on Sunday, Feb. 11, at midnight.**
Week 7, Feb. 13 & 15: The stages of editing

*Editing drafts. Storyboarding sequences.*

Tuesday, Feb. 13
Today’s reading: “Books and Roses,” by Helen Oyeyemi. Bring Courseware to class for discussion on plot and sequences.
In-class exercises: Storyboarding sequences.

Thursday, Feb. 15
Discussion of the stages of editing. Continuing discussion on plot and sequences.
In-class exercises: Editing exercises.
**Due on Friday, Feb. 16: Draft of Story # 1 (written “in the manner of …”), submitted to your workshop group on LEARN by midnight.

Study week, Feb. 19-23

Week 8, Feb. 27 & March 1: The details

*Finding the plot through the details. Writing as an insider or an outsider. Short story workshop.*

Tuesday, Feb. 27
In-class exercises: Story # 1 peer review workshop. Come to class prepared to discuss your peers’ work. Participation in class is a required component of the peer review.
**Due before class-time: Submit reviews to your workshop group on LEARN (7.5%)**

Thursday, March 1
Today’s reading: “Dance of the Happy Shades” by Alice Munro and “When We Were Nearly Young” by Mavis Gallant. Bring Courseware to class for discussion of the details.

Week 9, March 6 & 8: Playing

*Fairy tales & archetypes. Altering a reader’s sense of time.*

Tuesday, March 6
In-class exercises: Party exercise. Expanding a draft.
Meet new workshop groups.

Thursday, March 8
In-class exercises: Fairy tales & archetypes.
**Due on Friday, March 9, at midnight: Story # 1 plus brief reflection submitted on LEARN (15%).**

**Reminder: Deadline for third notebook sample is on Sunday, March 11, at midnight.**
**Week 10, March 13 & 15: Dialogue**
*Listening and recreating.*

**Tuesday, March 13**
Today’s reading: “Trap Lines” by Thomas King and “Repeat After Me” by David Sedaris. Bring Courseware to class for discussion on dialogue.
In-class exercises: Meet with group to discuss plans for Story # 2, based on notebook work; rough draft due to your workshop group on Tuesday, March 20.

**Thursday, March 15**
In-class exercises: Turning dialogue into story.

**Week 11, March 20 & 22: Creative non-fiction, in brief**
*Listening to each other’s stories; moral responsibility of writer. What’s true/what’s real?*

**Tuesday, March 20**
In-class exercises: Partner storytelling.
Important: Bring to class a story about yourself that you’re willing to share.
**Due: Rough draft of Story # 2, submitted to your workshop group on LEARN.**

**Thursday, March 22**
Guest speaker! Pamela Mulloy, editor of *The New Quarterly.*
In-class exercises: Writing a cover letter. Discussion of creative non-fiction.

**Week 12, March 27 & 29: Editing & publishing**
*Reflecting on the editing process. Who do our stories belong to?*

**Tuesday, March 27**
In-class exercises: Story # 2 peer review workshop. Come to class prepared to discuss your peers’ work. Peer responses will be presented orally in class (2.5%). Participation in class is a required component of the peer review.

**Thursday, March 29**
Today’s reading: “The Carver Chronicles” by D.T. Max and “Rana in Rien,” by Jana O. Al Khatib. Bring Courseware to class for discussion on editing/publishing.
In-class exercise: Endings.

**Last class, Tuesday, April 3: Poetry slam**
In class exercises: Poetry slam!
**Due in class: Bring cover letter and story submission for *The New Quarterly* (2.5%).
**Due on Wed., Apr. 4 at midnight: Story # 2 plus brief reflection, submitted on LEARN unless you’ve made other arrangements (20%); Formal reflection on participation (2.5%).**
**Reminder: Deadline for final notebook sample is on Wed., April 4, at midnight.**
Short story collections for book review
What Is Not Yours Is Not Yours, by Helen Oyeyemi (2016)
The Kindness of Enemies, by Leila Aboulela (2016)
These Were Their Faces, by Silvina Ocampo (2015)
Tenth of December, by George Saunders (2013)
Islands of Decolonial Love, by Leanne Simpson (2013)
Suddenly, a Knock on the Door, by Etger Keret (2012)
What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank, by Nathan Englander (2012)
This Is How You Lose Her, by Junot Diaz (2012)
Siege 13, by Tamas Dobozy (2012)
God Loves Hair, by Vivek Shraya (2010)
Gold Boy, Emerald Girl, by Yiyun Li (2010)
Memory Wall, by Anthony Doerr (2010)
A Visit from the Goon Squad, by Jennifer Egan (2010)
In Other Rooms, Other Wonders, by Daniyal Mueenuddin (2009)
Monstress, by Lysley Tenorio (2008)
Varieties of Disturbance, by Lydia Davis (2007)
No One Belongs Here More Than You, by Miranda July (2005)
Interpreter of Maladies, by Jhumpa Lahiri (1999)
Birds of America, by Lorrie Moore (1998)
The Elephant Vanishes, by Haruki Murakami (1993)
The Middleman and Other Stories, by Bharati Mukherjee (1988)
At the Bottom of the River, by Jamaica Kincaid (1983)
Home Truths, by Mavis Gallant (1981) or other Gallant collection
Will You Please Be Quiet, Please? by Raymond Carver (1976) or other Carver collection
Dance of the Happy Shades, by Alice Munro (1968) or other Munro collection
Little Disturbances of Man, by Grace Paley (1959)
A Good Man is Hard to Find, by Flannery O’Connor (1955)
Collected Stories, by Anton Chekhov (originally published between 1883-1903)

Mental Health Services
Students suffering from anxiety, depression, problems with sleep, attention, obsessions or compulsions, relationship difficulties, etc., may make an appointment by phone or in person. Appointments are usually available within 2 days of initial contact. All contacts are completely confidential. Contact Health Services: 519-888-4096 to schedule appointment. For free 24/7 help: 1-866-797-0000. Contact Counselling Services: 519-888-4567 x 32655 to schedule appointment, or counserv@uwaterloo.ca

Territorial Acknowledgement
We acknowledge that we are living and working on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron, Anishnaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, land promised to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.
Notes on assignments and important due dates for ENGL 335, Winter 2018

Notebook work: Each week you will be assigned out-of-class writing work on a topic or image related to what we’re discussing in class. Bring your notebook to class: work may be used in class. Outside of assigned work, you are encouraged to use your notebook to develop your individual writing practice: collect ideas, observations, snippets of overheard dialogue, descriptive passages, character studies, journal pages, etc.

Your notebook work contributes to your overall participation mark. You will be asked to submit four samples of notebook work, written outside of class, over the course of the term; these go toward your participation mark and will not be assessed for literary merit. You may type up your samples, or scan/photograph and upload them to LEARN. A dropbox will be open to collect each sample with a hard deadline every three weeks. You may submit your notebook sample at any point during each cycle.

Deadlines for notebook samples: Sunday, Jan. 21; Sunday, Feb. 11; Sunday, March 11; Wednesday, April 4.

Due dates for poetry portfolio

Friday, Jan. 19: Rough drafts of original poems for peer review due. You may submit between 3 to 5 poems. File on LEARN to your workshop group, midnight deadline. These poems may be of any length and style. You may submit poems you’ve written in class or for notebook work, or you may submit poems you’ve been working on outside of class; the only restriction is that these poems must be original and written by you.

Thursday, Jan. 25: Poetry peer reviews due. A dropbox will be opened on LEARN to collect your peer reviews, which are due before class. You are required to submit a formal review of ONE poem from each poet in your group, for a total of FOUR reviews. Please submit reviews in a single file. In class, workshop groups will spend roughly 10 minutes discussing each poet’s poems, so please read every poem, even those you don’t review formally. Come prepared with notes and comments on each poet’s work. I will upload examples of poetry peer reviews from past terms, to help you with the written portion of this assignment. (7.5%, includes in-class participation).

Friday, Feb. 2: Poetry portfolio + personal reflection due. File on LEARN, midnight deadline. Your poetry portfolio consists of THREE revised poems, plus a short personal reflection (250 words) on the exercise of writing and revising your work. The reflection is your chance to tell me about your writing and editing experience: helpful advice given, frustrations or difficulties, and what you hoped to achieve. (15%).
Due dates for Story #1 (written “in the manner of…”)

Thursday, Jan. 18: Select your short story collection on which to base Story #1, chosen from the collections listed in the course outline. Your selection is due at the beginning of class. Choose a style and voice that you are drawn to and interested in imitating, in some way. Most authors have published stories that are accessible online, if you want to sample their styles before making your choice. If you have difficulty tracking down a collection, you can ask to borrow the book from me.

Tuesday, Feb. 6: Book reports due. Oral report and written report due in class. This assignment is the foundation for Story #1. You will select and read a short story collection, and present your report on it to your workshop group. Your report will analyze the author’s style and technique, tone, central themes and images, strengths and weaknesses. I will provide a single-page guide to focus your analysis, and I will collect your reports at the end of class. Your report should be between 3-5 minutes in length. When everyone has presented, you will have the opportunity to discuss and brainstorm your plan for writing “in the manner of…” with your workshop group. (7.5%)

Friday, Feb. 16: Rough draft of Story #1 (written “in the manner of …”) due. File story (1500 word limit) on LEARN to your workshop group, midnight deadline. Story #1 is an imitative assignment, in which you write a story by building off a borrowed style, theme, character(s), plot-line, setting, or tone. You may interpret “in the manner of…” quite freely. Please talk to me before this deadline if you have any questions.

Tuesday, Feb. 27: Story #1 peer reviews due. File on LEARN before class. In class, each workshop group will spend roughly 10 minutes discussing each writer’s story, so you must also come prepared with notes and comments on everyone’s work. You will be writing the story peer reviews as editorial letters. I will upload examples of story peer reviews from past terms, to help you with the written portion of this assignment. (7.5%, includes in-class participation).

Friday, March 9: Story #1 + personal reflection due. File on LEARN, by midnight. Your portfolio for Story #1 consists of one revised story (1500 words), written in the manner of a short story collection of your choice, plus a short personal reflection (250 words). (15%)
Due dates for Story # 2

Tuesday, March 13: **Meet with workshop group in class to discuss Story # 2.** Story # 2 will be based on your notebook work from this term (in class and out of class), so you should re-read your notebook for ideas and inspiration before class today. This meeting with your workshop group is a relatively informal discussion to help you shape your ideas and state your goals for this open-ended project.

Tuesday, March 20: **Rough draft of Story # 2 due.** File story on LEARN to your workshop group, midnight deadline. Story # 2 is an open-ended project and you are invited to interpret it as creatively as you wish, incorporating drawing, poetry, fiction, and non-fiction, as you wish, into your story. No word limits.

Tuesday, March 27: **Story # 2 peer review workshop.** Come to class prepared to discuss your peers’ work. Bring notes on each story. Peer responses will be presented orally in class. For assessment purposes, writers will take notes on the editorial feedback they receive and submit their notes at the end of the workshop (2.5%). Participation in class is a required component of the peer review.

Wednesday, April 4: **Story # 2 + sample of original notebook work + personal reflection due.** File on LEARN, by midnight. Your portfolio for Story # 2 consists of a story developed from notebook work, a sample of the notebook work on which the story is based, plus a short personal reflection (250 words) on the experience of writing and revising your work. (20%) IMPORTANT: Please speak to me at least a week in advance if you require an extension. Last-minute extensions will not be granted.

Due dates for other participation assignments

Tuesday, April 3: **Cover letter and story/poetry submission for The New Quarterly due.** Bring a hard copy of your cover letter, submission form, and story submission to class. Follow the submissions guidelines found at tnq.ca. Your submission may be a story or poems you’ve written and revised this term, or it may be a story or poems you’ve been working on outside of class. I will collect the submissions and deliver them to The New Quarterly’s office on campus. (2.5%)

Wednesday, April 4: **Formal reflection on your participation in this class due** (2.5%). I will use your input in this reflection to help me assess your overall participation mark. File on LEARN by midnight.

IMPORTANT: Please speak to me at least a week in advance if you require an extension on any project. Last-minute extensions will not be granted.