ENGLISH 335 Section 01

Writing Workshop

Fall 1993

Times/Place: 2:30-4:00 TR in HH 139
Instructor: David A. Wade
Office Hours: HH 260 (885-1211, ext.2462) 2:00-2:30 & 4:00-4:30 TR
I shall try to be available for individual consultations both immediately before and after each class, but we can arrange for a meeting at any other mutually convenient time.

Required Texts:

Kathleen Adams, Journal to the Self
Ray Bradbury, Zen in the Art of Writing
Pat Kubis and Bob Howland, Complete Guide to Writing Fiction and Nonfiction
Writer's Digest. This monthly magazine is available from the Campus Bookstore and many other local book and magazine outlets (including Smiths at Westmount, Wordsworth, the KW Book Exchange, etc.)

Course Objectives:

This section (01) differs markedly from the second section (02) of ENGL 335. While the other class is goal-directed and product-orientated (specifically focussing on how to write a first novel in a popular fiction genre), Section 01 is far more experiential and experimental since you will be encouraged to try your hand at a variety of literary tasks: biography, script writing, poetry, non-fiction articles, and short stories (or passages from a longer work)—it is, in short, a voyage of discovery for yourself as a writer. However, this is not to suggest that it is a do-whatever-you-feel-like free-for-all, ENGLISH 335 remains a university course at a third-year level, with all the attendant requirements, readings, assignments, due dates and grades.

We will be taking what is fundamentally a WORKSHOP approach, which means presenting your writing efforts in class and listening to the responses and suggestions of your colleagues (although, as instructor, I will be responsible for grading each piece). You will be required to keep up a WRITER'S JOURNAL, and to complete a series of EXERCISES (every other week) that are designed to stimulate your imagination and development as a writer.

The workshop will follow an organized format. We meet every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon from 14 September to 2 December inclusive. On Tuesdays, I will start the ball rolling with a short talk which more or less (in a few cases, rather less than more) ties in with the appropriate exercises, after which we will read, respond to, and discuss the progress of our journals. The class will be divided into two approximately equal workshop groups (each completing their assignments every other week) and so, on Thursdays, the whole period will given over to your presentations of the writing exercises and to the reactions of the rest of the class.

By the end of the course, you will have experimented with several different writing strategies and a range of techniques and it is hoped that you will have discovered or uncovered much about yourself and your writing.

The total mark and final grade will be made up from a mix of the best four out of five writing exercises, the quality of your journal (a copy of which is due to be handed in toward the end of term), and a final piece that represents you at your best as a writer (this is not due until toward the end of the exam period). See separate sheet on marks and grades for more complete details.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Tuesdays</th>
<th>Thursdays</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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</table>
| WEEK 1     | **Introduction(s)**  
            Getting ready to write: tools & resources                                 | Starting & keeping a writer's journal                                         | Start reading Ray Bradbury's  
            Zen in the Art of Writing                   |
| 14/9 & 16/9|                                                                          |                                                                           |                                               |
| WEEK 2     | **Writers and audiences: different strategies**  
            Journals: readings and discussion                                        | Discussion of first journal entries                                          | Finish reading Bradbury  
            JS pp 1-68  
            CGW Chap 18                              |
| 21/9 & 23/9|                                                                          |                                                                           |                                               |
| WEEK 3     | **Getting ideas and brainstorming techniques**  
            Journals: readings and discussion                                        | Workshop Group A presents BIOGRAPHY                                         | JS pp 71-93  
            CGW Chaps 1.2, & 4                         |
| 22/9 & 30/9|                                                                          |                                                                           |                                               |
| WEEK 4     | **Fundamental structures: novels aren't the only things that need a 'plot'**  
            Journals: readings and discussion                                        | Workshop Group B presents BIOGRAPHY                                         | JS 93-122  
            CGW Chaps 4 & 5                             |
| 5/10 & 7/10|                                                                          |                                                                           |                                               |
| WEEK 5     | **Characterization**  
            Journals: readings and discussion                                        | Workshop Group A presents SCRIPTWRITING                                    | JS pp 123-166                                 |
| 12/10 & 14/10|                                                        |                                                                           |                                               |
| WEEK 6     | **Thoughts on thoughts and dialogue**  
            Journals: readings and discussion                                        | Workshop Group B presents SCRIPTWRITING                                    | JS pp 167-199                                 |
| 19/10 & 21/10|                                                       |                                                                           |                                               |
| WEEK 7     | **A sense of place: the importance of settings**  
            Journals: readings and discussion                                        | Workshop Group A presents POETRY                                           | CGW Chaps 6 & 7                               |
| 26/10 & 28/10|                                                     |                                                                           |                                               |
| WEEK 8     | **Exposition, description, and action**  
            Journals: readings and discussion                                        | Workshop Group B presents POETRY                                           |                                               |
| 2/11 & 4/11|                                                          |                                                                           |                                               |
| WEEK 9     | **Beating 'writer's block'**  
            Journals: readings and discussion                                        | Workshop Group A presents NON-FICTION ARTICLES                             |                                               |
| 9/11 & 11/11|                                                      |                                                                           | CGW Chaps 13-17                               |
|            |                                                          |                                                                           |                                               |
| WEEK 10    | **The 3 Rs: restructuring, rewriting, and revision**  
            Journals: readings and discussion                                        | Workshop Group B presents NON-FICTION ARTICLES                             | JS 203-240                                    |
| 16/11 & 18/11|                                                   |                                                                           |                                               |
| WEEK 11    | **The writer, the reader, and the marketplace**  
            Journals: readings and discussion                                        | Workshop Group A presents SHORT STORIES/NOVELS                             | CGW Chaps 3, 8-10, & 19-22                     |
| 23/11 & 25/11|                                                     |                                                                           |                                               |
| WEEK 12    | **What have we discovered about ourselves as writers?**  
            Journals: final readings and discussion                                     | Workshop Group B presents SHORT STORIES/NOVELS*                            |                                               |
| 30/11 & 2/12|                                                       |                                                                           | Workshop Group A hands in their finished exercises                        |
|            |                                                          |                                                                           |                                               |

* Workshop Group B's final exercise can be handed in before or with the final assignment (due Friday 17 December)
ENGLISH 335 Section 01

Writing Workshop

Marking & Grades

A note on participation

Attendance will be noted, as will your contributions to the various discussions. Although no mark has been formally allotted for such participation, your enthusiasm and involvement in our workshop could help colour your final grade.

JOURNAL (20%)

Each of you will be responsible for keeping a writer’s journal. Suggestions for entries will be given in class, and many more ideas can be found in the text Journal to the Self, and, of course, you will be free to include any other entries appropriate for a writer’s ideas log or notebook. You will be expected to share some of your journal writing during our Tuesday afternoon discussions (although it is understood that there may be some entries you would rather keep private). Your journal, or a copy of it, will be handed in for grading by or on Friday 12 November.

WRITING EXERCISES (15% X 4 = 60%)

The class will be divided into two roughly equal groups so that each week only half of the class is responsible for bringing in their completed exercises, while the other half will play a leading role in registering their responses. There will be a series of five exercises set throughout the term, covering the areas of biography, script writing, poetry, nonfiction writing and a fiction project (either a short story or parts of a novel).

The exercises will be distributed at least a week in advance of their presentation date. After your work has been read in the workshop session, and you have noted the various responses, you will then have a further week to revise the piece before handing it in for marking. Each of the five exercises will be marked out of 15%, but only the best four marks will count toward your final grade.

A schedule has been drawn up for the whole term. Please make very sure that you know when you are expected to bring in each assignment, and when you must hand it over for marking.

FINAL CONTRIBUTION (20%)

Your last assignment will be a piece that you feel best represents you as a writer. I will give you a couple of suggested themes but you will be free to follow your own inspirations. You may also rework or expand upon an earlier assignment; however, if you choose to do so then you will have to submit the original item, plus a short summary of the responses to it and your intended strategies for revision, and the finalized version. This last submission is due to be handed in no later than Friday 17 December.
ENGLISH 335 (02)

— Writing Popular Novels —

Fall 1993

Times/Place: 2:30-4:00 MW in HH 139
Instructor: David Wade
Office Hours: HH 260 (885-1211, ext.); 2:00-2:30 & 4:00-4:30 MW
I shall try to be available for individual consultations both before and after class, but we can always arrange for a meeting at any other mutually convenient time.

Readings
Tom Clark et al, eds. Handbook of Novel Writing.
Writer's Digest. This monthly magazine is available from the Campus Bookstore and many other local book and magazine outlets (including Smiths at Westmount, Wordsworth, the KW Book Exchange, etc.)

Course Objectives

This semester the focus of ENGL 335 (Section 01) will be on the writing of popular or genre fiction, the kind of paperbacks you read on a plane or at the beach, and not because someone else dictated that they were 'required reading'. Too often these so-called 'category novels' are dismissed as merely formulaic--this need not be the case at all. While it's true that all commercially successful genres (thrillers, romances, heroic fantasies, and so on) do have a shortlist of required ingredients, writers of such popular stories also have a surprising freedom to exercise their own ingenuity and inventiveness.

During the next few weeks we will explore an organized and methodical approach to constructing a marketable novel--a writing plan that relies far more on sure and steady application on your part than on the benign whim of some nebulous muse.

The goals of ENGL 335 this fall are:

1. to build up your confidence for tackling any lengthy and involved writing project,
2. to give you hands-on practice at creating imaginative and commercially acceptable fiction, and
3. to provide a wide-ranging survey of exactly what is involved in producing a saleable manuscript for today's market (we'll examine the whole process of novel writing from "Where do you get all your ideas?" to "Don't I have to have an agent?")

The class will be divided onto small teams for one presentation assignment later in the term but the main concentration will be on each individual's fiction project.
Marks
20% Popular Fiction Analysis (in-class presentation as a small team)
80% Individual project, broken down as follows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Task Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct 18-21</td>
<td>Private presentation of proposal for a novel</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 8</td>
<td>Opening chapter/sample (10-12 pages)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 15</td>
<td>Subsequent scene/part-chapter (10-12 pages)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plot synopsis (2-3 pages)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cover letter (1 page)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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You will note that there is no specific percentage allocated for participation, however your enthusiasm for and contributions to the in-class discussions could certainly help colour your overall grade.

Late delivery of these assignments will result in a penalty of one full letter grade per week (in other words, a sample delivered one week late cannot earn more than a B-range mark).
ENGLISH 335 Section 02  
— Writing Popular Novels —  
Fall 1993

Instructor: David Wade  
Times/Place: 2:30-4:00 MW in HH 139

COURSE OUTLINE

WEEK 1  Sep. 13/15  Overview of course/requirements/grades etc.  
Useful resources for writers  
Getting ready to write: the time and place, the proper tools,  
and the 'write' attitude

WEEK 2  Sep. 20/22  The popular fiction marketplace  
Brainstorming and maintaining a writer's 'ideas-base'  
Building ideas into stories—a methodical approach

WEEK 3  Sep. 27/29  The cybernetic process of constructing a novel  
Plotting—working up a rough outline  
The most effective tense and point-of-view

WEEK 4  Oct. 4/6  Developing believable and appealing characters  
Supporting players and walk-ons  
Keeping your cast in line

WEEK 5  Oct. 13  The importance of setting  
Getting the details right: fiction and research  
Putting all the pieces of a project together

WEEK 6  Oct. 18/20  No Classes: Individual presentations of project proposals.  
Each student will make an appointment for a twenty to thirty  
minute meeting at which they will present written notes of their  
project
WEEK 7  Oct. 25/27  Making your word processor work for you
Openings: hooking the reader’s interest
Action, exposition, and flashbacks
Presentations 1 & 2

WEEK 8  Nov. 1/3  Characterization: the use of telling details
Dialogue: tricks and traps
The grand finale: knowing when to stop
Presentations 3 & 4

WEEK 9  Nov. 8/10  Opening sample (worth 20%) due on Monday 8 November
Keeping going--what to do about writer’s block
The big 3 Rs: rearranging, rewriting, and revising
Polishing and preparing the manuscript
Presentations 5 & 6

WEEK 10  Nov. 15/17  The business of writing popular fiction
Copyright, plagiarism, and protecting yourself
Agents, editors, publishers
Presentations 7 & 8

WEEK 11  Nov. 22/24  ‘Selling’ yourself isn’t the same as selling out
Royalties, writing for hire, and other financial matters
Coping with rejection, dealing with success
Presentations 9 & 10 (only if necessary)

WEEK 12  Nov 29/Dec 1  Tailoring a methodical approach to work for you
Summary of key points

Dec. 6  No class--individual meetings with any students who want to
discuss the progress and prospects for their project

Dec. 15  Second sample, plot synopsis, and covering letter due
(worth 20%, 10%, 5% respectively)
ENGLISH 335 (02)
Writing Popular Novels
Fall 1993

Instructor: David Wade
Times/Place: 2:30-4:00 MW in HH 139

REQUIRED READINGS AND SUGGESTED WORKPLAN

HNW = Writer's Digest Handbook of Novel Writing
CGW = Complete Guide to Writing Fiction and Nonfiction

WEEK 1  Check out books in your area of interest
Focus on a potential project (complete questionnaire)
HNW: 2-12, 204-216, 250-252
CGW: Preface and Chaps 10 & 18

WEEK 2  Jot down as many ideas & story elements as possible
HNW: 37-44, 56-61, 176-177

WEEK 3  Start to work seriously on the 'jigsaw puzzle' of the plot
HNW: 45-55, 75-83
CGW: Chaps 1 & 2

WEEK 4  Continue to enrich the plot
Work on biographies of all the leading characters
HNW: 62-74
CGW: Chap 4

WEEK 5  Holiday: no class on Monday
Notes on backgrounds: times & places
Fill out the 'cast' list
Rework the plot structure
HNW: 17-22, 95-100
CGW: Chaps 7 & 11

WEEK 6  Individual meetings to present the package of material
you have prepared thus far

WEEK 7  Draft opening chapter
HNW: 113-139, 149-153, 159-163
CGW: Chaps 3, 6, 8 & 9
WEEK 8  Revise the opening chapter  
      *HWN*: 84-94, 140-145  
      *CGW*: Chap 5 (and re-read 4)

WEEK 9  **HAND IN FIRST SAMPLE** on Monday 8 November  
      Make rough notes towards the second sample scene  
      *HWN*: 146-148, 190-195

WEEK 10 Draft second sample  
      *HWN*: 217-224, 245-249  
      *CGW*: Chap 21

WEEK 11 Revise second sample  
      Rework plot synopsis  
      *HWN*: 225-244, 253-255  
      *CGW*: Chaps 19 & 20

WEEK 12 Polish second sample  
      Fine tune plot synopsis  
      Plan and write cover letter  
      *HWN*: 196-203  
      *CGW*: Chap 22

WEEK 13 No class meeting--but I will be available to discuss  
      the progress of your project

**HAND IN COMPLETED PACKAGE** (second sample, plot synopsis, and covering letter;  
worth 20%, 10%, & 5% respectively) NO LATER THAN WEDNESDAY 15  
DECEMBER
ENGLISH 335 (02)
— Writing Popular Novels —
Fall 1993

Instructor: David Wade
Times/Place: 2:30-4:00 MW in HH 139

DETAILS OF ASSIGNMENTS

In-class Presentations of a Genre Analysis (20%)

Students will choose a specific genre to work on, or be assigned to the most suitable category, and the class will then be sub-divided into small teams (say, three people per team) to analyze the particular segment of the market that interests them. Teams will present their findings in class on Thursday afternoons during the second half of the term.

The presentation should not last more than twenty-five minutes—therefore, each speaker should plan an eight-minute talk. You may choose to ‘stage’ your presentation in any way that you feel appropriately enhances your subject matter—however, the following format should be followed:

(1) Genre report  What are the defining characteristics of this category? What’s happening in this particular genre today? What are the market prospects in the foreseeable future? Who are the key players (the leading publishers, the best-selling authors) that we should watch out for in this area?

(2) Author profile  Focus on a popular writer, the one you feel best represents the genre, and introduce us to their career, a quick overview of their works, and the reasons for their success at attracting a devoted readership. You may want to mention a secondary author for the purposes of comparison or contrast.

(3) Tips, tricks, and traps  Using a recent paperback title(s), by the author discussed by the previous speaker, show the class how and why a certain technique in the book(s) contributes to its success; for example, the way the author grabs your attention with the opening, the use of dialogue, the handling of action scenes, the appeal to the reader’s emotions, and so on. Illustrate your presentation of these details of the writing craft with reference to the appropriate passages from the book (don’t forget that most of your audience will not have read this title).

As you can plainly see, this is not an exercise in highfalutin Literary Criticism. It should be approached as a revealing and yet easy-to-listen-to analysis of the craft and the business of creating popular fiction. It is not an empty ‘make-work’ sort of assignment but rather an integral component of the course—we should all learn something from each of these presentations no matter what our own particular project is focussed on.

Each group should discuss their assignment with me at the earliest opportunity, so that we can arrive at an understanding as to your approach, a suitable author, and an apt title to analyze. The exact order of presentations will be drawn from a hat during the second or third week of classes. This assignment will be worth 20% of the final grade; the class can vote (by a simple majority) whether they prefer to be marked individually or as teams.
18-21 October: PRESENTATION OF PROJECT PROPOSAL (20%)

We will not meet in class during Week 6, that is, on Oct. 18 or 20; instead, each of you will make an appointment to meet with me in my office. You will have twenty to thirty minutes to present your work and ideas as you have developed them so far.

This work-in-progress or proposal ‘package’ should include the following:

1) **Title** Something by way of a working title, which you should have checked out in Books in Print (found in any library or the campus bookstore) to make sure there are no other books currently published under the title you hope to use.

2) **Objective** A short statement of purpose, pin-pointing exactly what it is you hope to achieve. Note any specific guide-lines (for example, manuscript length) you must follow.

3) **Marketing Plan** Notes on the marketing niche you’re aiming at, including a shortlist of the top three or four publishers in this category. Check them out in one of the marketing guides like Writer’s Market (again, found in most libraries). Get the publisher’s addresses, phone and fax numbers, and the appropriate editor’s names if you can.

4) **Outline** Rough outline of the plot in point-by-point form, or one short paragraph per chapter, or a straightforward prose synopsis.

5) **Character biographies** Background details on the major characters, either in ‘fact sheet’ or thumb-nail sketch form. Shortlist of the secondary characters.

6) **Settings** The extent of the notes you make on the story backgrounds and other essential details is up to you, but I do want to see some evidence that these areas are being considered.

7) **References** List of key sources (books, magazine articles, personal contacts, location scouting, etc.) you will probably need to tap for this project.

8) **Queries** Questions to answer and problems to solve (ranging, for example, from story structure to research difficulties)

8 Nov: SAMPLE OF OPENING CHAPTER (20%)

This sample is to be a revised draft of all, or the greater part, of the opening chapter of your story. It should run no less than ten and no more than twelve pages in length which, properly formatted (1 - 1½ inch margins, double spaced, Courier 12pt), contains approximately 2400 to 2750 words.

15 Dec: SECOND SAMPLE, SYNOPSIS, COVER LETTER (25%, 10%, 5%)

The second sample can be the continuation of your first sample or a subsequent and contrasting scene/chapter; the same length and formatting requirements apply. The plot synopsis, which should have been more finely tuned since our midterm meeting, must be condensed into no more than three or four pages. The details of your one-page covering letter, the ‘sales pitch’ for your manuscript, will be discussed in class.

This major ‘package’ of your writing is due two and a half weeks after the term ends. Please note that, as with all other requirements for this course, late completion will result in a costly penalty.

*NOTE: All of the above assignments must be typed or computer printed.*