Course Description

This will be a practical workshop-based course in creative writing in three genres: poetry, short fiction, and one-act playwriting. It will be evaluated by portfolio, consisting of writing across the genres chosen by the students, as well as samples of their peer critiques. In addition to in-class writing and creative and critical work outside class, students will participate in a variety of improvisational exercises designed to foster awareness of the many dimensions of language. These will be critical to the workshop experience and will be evaluated in the participation mark. A number of visiting speakers will be appearing throughout the course, doing presentations and participating in the workshop: authors in various genres, and magazine and small press editors. Attendance at, and participation in, these sessions will likewise be evaluated in the participation mark.

Course Objectives

The aims of the course are to improve students’ writing, both creative and critical; to foster experiment; to encourage mutual critique that is both supportive and rigorous; to gain an initial idea of both the stakes and the practice of being a creative writer.

Work Required and Mark Breakdown

Midterm portfolio submission (two poems; two responses; two peer critiques) 20%
Participation (discussion; improv exercises; interaction at guest talks) 30%
Final portfolio submission (six creative pieces; three peer critiques) 50%

Lateness Policy, Due Dates and Critique Practice

Work must be submitted to the instructor on the portfolio due dates on time, for the midterm submission by the end of week 4, either in class or at office hours, and for the final submission, at the end of week 13, in class or in office hours. If these deadlines are missed without a doctor’s note, 10% (a letter grade) will be taken off the top of the submission in question.

Likewise, peer critiques are the responsibility of all students and must be completed in a timely manner. This means within five days of the posting or other distribution date for
the work under discussion. Students who are late with critiques are subject to a 1% penalty on each occasion: these marks will be taken from the participation mark. Critiques must also be undertaken in the spirit of friendly advice. Flaming will not be tolerated. Aggression or inappropriate language may result in the loss of the entire participation grade (30%).

Workshop Schedule (tentative)

Week 1
Poetry: the word, sound and sense, parts of speech, syntax

Week 2
Poetry: line, verse, quatrain, the beginnings of narrative
Workshop Demonstration: S. Tolmie, Claire Pella, Sarah Dillon

Week 3
Poetry: freedom and constraint, fixed forms, the sonnet
Workshop Group 1 (40 minutes)

Week 4
Poetry: free verse — “To live outside the law you gotta be honest.” (Bob Dylan)
Class visit from a professional poet TBA

Week 5
Prose fiction: twitter fiction, paragraphs and postcard stories, short-short fiction
Workshop Group 2 (40 minutes)
Class visit from the editor of The New Quarterly literary magazine

Week 6
Prose fiction: magazine lengths, pop genres, 1000-6000 words
Class visit from Marcy Italiano, horror writer

Week 7
Prose fiction: managing longer lengths, the novella, the novel
Workshop Group 3 (40 minutes)

Week 8
Prose fiction: still managing longer lengths, err, not?
Teleconference with a small press editor TBA

Week 9

Drama: what’s different?
**Workshop Group 4** (40 minutes)

Week 10

Drama: monologuing
Class visit from Rob Corbett, playwright, actor, drama teacher

Week 11

Drama: interaction on the page and in real time
**Workshop Group 5** (40 minutes)

Week 12

Getting a grip on the portfolio

Week 13

Individual meetings in office hours

University Policies

**Academic Integrity:** in order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm)

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students
should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline,  
http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm

**Appeals:** A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals,  
http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm

Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities
The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities. If you require academic accommodations please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term and inform the course instructor.