Course Description

This is a hands-on workshop class. It is probably going to be unlike any university course you have taken before, no matter what your core discipline is. The class time will be taken up with diverse kinds of exercises, many of them improvised, as well as a series of guest speakers talking about a variety of topics. From this basis, students will work up a portfolio of short pieces in poetry and prose, upon which they will receive instructor feedback, as well as critique from their specific critique groups and from the whole class. Work for this class will therefore consist of two parts, equally important: active participation in the class and the composition and editing work you do outside of class and online in LEARN.

Course Objectives

The subtitle of this course for this year is Made You Look (Again). Its purpose is to make us, as readers and as writers, look closely and with fresh eyes at the basic resources we use in the acts of reading and writing. These will include words, as graphs and phonemes; sentences and syntactical ordering; mnemonic patterning, aural and visual; the constituent parts of narrative and its function of constructing events or processes. The two basic pedagogical processes or teaching tools that we will rely on are what the modernists called estrangement — rendering ordinary things noticeable by dramatically changing their contexts — and imitation, a method of learning how to write that has been extolled since classical rhetoric. Many in-class exercises will be based on estrangement and many writing assignments will be based on imitative response to other writers, including parody and palinode.

Assignments and Mark Breakdown

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in class</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation in online critique</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm portfolio</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final portfolio</td>
<td>30%</td>
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What does this mean?

**Participation in class** means keeping your game face on. It means attending regularly, following instructions, collaborating creatively, achieving a balance between responsibility and risk, and offering constructive criticism to works presented to the class.

**Participation in the online forum** means logging on to LEARN regularly, keeping up with general class discussions, and posting your own works for critique to your critique
group on a regular basis, as well as providing comments on their works on an ongoing basis, and editing your own work according to their recommendations as you see fit. This work will culminate in a group presentation from each crit group that brings the whole process to the class in a half-hour overview.

**The midterm portfolio** will consist of three original works in whatever format, three crits of other people’s works, and one process document that shows edits/interventions or responses to others’ critique of your work. It will also require a one-page summary/justification explaining your choices. It can be submitted in hard copy or in the dropbox in LEARN.

**The final portfolio** will be the same format as the midterm portfolio, due in the final class of term, either in hard copy or via LEARN.

**Tentative Class Schedule**

Please note that these dates may change depending on speakers’ availability. Any changes will be flagged under *Events* in LEARN.

**Week 1: Word, Words, Words**

**Tuesday Jan 8** introduction to the course; what is a word, and what do words do for us?

**Thursday Jan 10** some words; words as parts of speech; grammar; sound; homonyms

Guest speaker: Karen Collins, Canada Research Chair in Interactive Audio, on the physics of sound

Guest speaker: Randy Harris, Professor of English, on the phoneme

**Week 2: Words in the Wild**

**Tuesday Jan 15** seeing into words: etymology; context; nonsense words

Guest speaker: Adam Bradley, PhD Candidate in English and Systems Design, on his “etymological engine” program

**Thursday Jan 17** the one-word test; captions

**Week 3: Description**

**Tuesday Jan 22** describing things: ekphrasis
Guest speaker: Mark Hancock, Asst. Professor of Management Sciences, on mathematical description

Thursday Jan 24 describing events: narration

Week 4: Memory

Tuesday Jan 29 writing as extension of memory; mnemonic aids

**Group Presentation**: Crit Group 1

Thursday Jan 31 salience, or “God is in the details” (Mies van der Rohe)

Week 5: Versification

Tuesday Feb 5 keeping it together: scansion

Guest speaker: Andrew Faulkner, Assoc. Professor of Classics, on Latin meter

Thursday Feb 7 things fall apart: free verse

Week 6: Translation

Tuesday Feb 12 moving content across forms: a poem as a set of instructions/ a set of instructions as a poem

**Group Presentation**: Crit Group 2

Thursday Feb 14 tone: a current event as a limerick/ a current event as a sonnet

Guest performer/ facilitator: Adam Euerby, contact improv dancer, Desire2Learn designer, on quality of expression

**Midterm Portfolio** due in class or on LEARN 8 pm

Week 7: READING WEEK FEB 18-22
**Week 8: Imitation**

Tuesday Feb 26  
**homage**: imitation in good faith

**Group Presentation**: Crit Group 3

Thursday Feb 28  
**palinode**: parody, retraction, dissing

**Week 9: Story**

Tuesday Mar 5  
beginnings, middles and ends

Thursday Mar 7  
figuring out what happens

**Week 10: Metaphor**

Tuesday Mar 14  
talking through your hat: the operation of metaphor

**Group Presentation**: Crit Group 4

Thursday Mar 16  
talking about things that resist being talked about: enigma

Guest speaker: Jeffery Donaldson, poet and Assoc. Professor of English, McMaster University, on metaphor

**Week 11: Variation**

Tuesday Mar 19  
the *Orlando* effect: changing the gender of the protagonist

**Group Presentation**: Crit Group 5

Thursday Mar 21  
an exercise from Ursula Le Guin: three versions of a story with the same constraints on authority

**Week 12: Time**

Tuesday Mar 26  
*Now, Voyager*: past, present and future tenses

Guest speaker: Frédérique Arroyas, Assoc. Professor of French, Guelph, on the temporal resources of the French language

Thursday Mar 28  
Speculation: the future of the past and the past future
Week 13: Full Circles

Tuesday Apr 2  Quotation: Self-Reflexivity

Thursday Apr 2  Recursion: Starting Again

**Final Portfolio** due in class or on LEARN 8pm

The Rest of It

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, now at [http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/student-grievances-faculty-arts-processes](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/student-grievances-faculty-arts-processes)

**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, which can be found here [http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/faculty-staff/index#ai](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/faculty-staff/index#ai)

**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, also at [http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/faculty-staff/index#ai](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/faculty-staff/index#ai)

Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities

The AccessAbility Office (AO), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities. If you require academic accommodations (such as alternate test and exam arrangements) please register with the AO at the beginning of each academic term and inform the course instructor.