

Short Story Writing

WRTG-306, Spring 2024, LBIS, 3 credits

Instructor Julie Hensley

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**Course Meeting
Days and Time** T/TH, 1:00-2:15

Office Hours T 2:30-4:30

Catalog Description:

Students will further develop their understanding of short fiction, honing their voice and aesthetic through generative exercises, close reading of contemporary short stories, and extensive round table workshop. The course will also prepare students to submit revised stories for publication in literary journals. Prerequisite: Writing 207 or permission of instructor.

Credit Hour Policy Statement:

Standard lecture:

“This class meets the federal credit hour policy of 1 hour of class with an expected 2 hours of additional student work outside of class each week for approximately 15 weeks for each hour of credit, or a total of 45-75 total hours for each credit.” (Def 1)

Course Learning Objectives:

- To broaden understanding of genre as well as literary market
- To improve skills through creative exercises and varied approaches
- To craft at least two original short stories
- To develop individual voice/aesthetic and prepare for revision through round table workshops.

Methods of Instructions:

Lecture, discussion, creative exercises, round table workshop

Textbooks and Required Reading:

The Scribner Anthology of Contemporary Short Fiction (ISBN 978-1416532279)

Course Schedule:

T Jan 16: Syllabus and introductions--Lorrie Moore's "How to Become a Writer"

<https://anandacollege.org/wpcontent/uploads/2021/02/Moore-How-to-Become-a-Writer-1.pdf>

Th Jan 18: Character—Tim O'Brien's "The Things They Carried" (469), Amy Tan's "Two Kinds" (599); **Exercise #1: One Good Sentence**

T Jan 23: Point of View—Amy Bloom's "Silver Water" (72), Ernest Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants"

(<https://faculty.weber.edu/jyoung/English%202500/Readings%20for%20English%202500/Hills%20Like%20White%20Elephants.pdf>),

and Lorrie Moore's "The Kid's Guide to Divorce"

(<https://www.northernhighlands.org/cms/lib5/NJ01000179/Centricity/Domain/115/The%20Kids%20Guide%20to%20Divorce.pdf>);

Exercise #2: Pet Shop

Th Jan 25: Voice—Junot Diaz's "Nilda" (144), Jamaica Kincaid's "Girl" (319), and Jane Martin's "Twirler"

(<https://books.google.com/books?id=eEY0wIVuYdIC&pg=PA37&lpg=PA37&dq=twirler+jane+martin&source=bl&ots=j3TaB3IIPH&sig=5larIdEoRNmPo1wK1cE5tOphlSM&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewiMk7OboPDFAhVNmuAKHUsuCicQ6AEwAXoECAIQAQ#v=onepage&q=twirler%20jane%20martin&f=false>); **Exercise #3: POV Switcheroo**

T Jan 30: Plot—Jack London's "To Build a Fire" (https://americanenglish.state.gov/files/ae/resource_files/to-build-a-fire.pdf) and Sandra Cisneros' "Never Marry a Mexican" (109); **Exercise #4: Dramatic Monologue**

Th Feb 1: Concretion and Sensory Details—Ron Hansen's "Wickedness" (253) and Carmen Maria Machado's "Inventory"

<https://lithub.com/inventory/>; **Exercise #5: Tabloid/News**

T Feb 6: Setting—Rick Bass' "The Hermit's Story" <https://www.theparisreview.org/fiction/1120/the-hermits-story-rick-bass> and

Gabriel Garcia Marquez's "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings"

(<https://www.ndsu.edu/pubweb/~cinichol/CreativeWriting/323/ MarquezManwithWings.htm>); **Exercise #6: Inventory**

Th Feb 8: Workshop Round 1 (_____, _____)

T Feb 13: Workshop Round 1 (_____, _____)

Th Feb 15: Workshop Round 1 (_____, _____)

T Feb 20: Workshop Round 1 (_____, _____)

Th Feb 22: Workshop Round 1 (_____, _____)

T Feb 27: Workshop Round 1 (_____, _____)

Th Feb 29: Workshop Round 1 (_____, _____)

Mar. 1-11: *Midterm Break*

T Mar 12: Dialogue—Jhumpa Lahiri’s “A Temporary Matter” (321)

Th Mar 14: Loaded Language—Louise Erdrich’s “Saint Marie” (<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1984/03/saint-marie/376314/>), and Susan Minot’s “Lust” (397); **Exercise #7: Embodied Skit**

T Mar 19: Symbolism and Objective Correlative—A. M. Homes’ “A Real Doll” (266), Tatyana Tolstaya’s “Unnecessary Things” <https://www.newyorker.com/books/flash-fiction/unnecessary-things> and Alice Walker’s “Everyday Use” (hand-out); **Exercise #8: Siphoned simile**

Th Mar 21: Time and Distance—Stuart Dybek’s “We Didn’t” (181), Bharati Mukherjee’s “The Management of Grief” (417), and Rick Moody’s “Boys” (413); **Exercise #9: Found Object**

T Mar 26: Concision—Sajal Shah’s “Curriculum” <https://www.conjunctions.com/online/article/sejal-shah-02-26-2013> , “Sarah Gerkenmeyer’s “Ramona” <https://americanshortfiction.org/ramona/> , and Lydia Davis’ “The Visitor” <https://mastersreview.com/featured-fiction/the-visitor-by-lydia-davis/> ; **Exercise #11: Perch**

Th Mar 28: The Literary Market for Short Stories—**Exercise #12: Shrinky Dinks**

T Apr 2: Workshop Round 2 (_____, _____)

Th Apr 4: Workshop Round 2 (_____, _____)

T Apr 9: Workshop Round 2 (_____, _____)

Th Apr 11: Workshop Round 2 (_____, _____)

T Apr 16: Workshop Round 2 (_____, _____)

Th Apr 18: Workshop Round 2 (_____, _____)

T Apr 23: Workshop Round 2 (_____, _____)

Th Apr 25: Final Revisions and Journal Presentations

Grading Criteria:

Your final grade will reflect both your abilities as a writer and your commitment to the writing process.

Creative Exercises (20%)

These assignments are meant to clarify technical aspects of craft. They are also meant to combat writer's block since any exercise could be fodder for your next manuscript. Exercises (1-2 pages, double-spaced, typed) will be graded credit/no credit. Essentially, each exercise is worth two points of your final grade. My hope is that this will give you the freedom to experiment and take risks.

I understand that some weeks, it may just not be happening. I also understand that an exercise can lead you into a narrative that is valuable from a creative standpoint but which you really don't want even your instructor to see. You may skip up to two exercises over the course of the semester.

Reading Quizzes (10%)

Occasional reading quizzes are provided to assess your completion/comprehension of the assigned stories. These quizzes, which are unannounced and comprised of 3-5 questions, are credit/no credit. If you correctly answer more than half the questions, you will earn credit for the reading.

Short Story Manuscripts (30%)

Given the goals of the course, the bulk of your semester grade will be determined by two pieces of original fiction. These manuscripts should be comprised of either a traditional-length short story (6-20 pages) or two pieces of sudden fiction (each under 4 pages). Novel chapters are acceptable only if they truly stand alone and come in 20 or fewer pages. All out of class writing must be typed in *reasonable* (Times New Roman, Garamond, Courier) 12 point font. Include a heading (name, professor, class, assignment) in the corner of the first page. You will be responsible for submitting your manuscript a minimum of a full week before the class is scheduled to workshop it.

Workshop (20%)

Workshops will be run in a round-table discussion format. The author will read an excerpt of their story and "introduce" it to the class. During the critique session, the author will silently take notes. At the end, the author will have an opportunity to comment or ask questions. Your written responses to your peers' stories should include line edits, marginalia, and end notes. Your grade will be assessed based on both your written feedback and your verbal participation in the workshop process.

Revision and Literary Journal Presentation (10%)

In lieu of an exam, you will revise one of your short stories. You will also research the current literary market, finding a journal to which it will be appropriate to submit this story. You will prepare a brief presentation highlighting this journal's aesthetic and submission guidelines.

Discussion/Participation (10%)

You should come to class prepared to discuss the reading and occasionally share your exercises.

Withdrawal and Attendance policies:

Harlaxton College expects regular class attendance by all students. Students are considered sufficiently mature to appreciate the necessity of regular and punctual attendance, to accept this personal responsibility and to accept the consequences of failure to attend. When absences occur due to emergency or medical reasons, students are expected to notify their instructors of the absence prior to class or to seek the assistance of the College nurse or a member of the Student Experience Team for help in notifying instructors.

Instructors have the authority to grant excused absences for medical, psychological, or personal reasons upon review of appropriate documentation and professional recommendation supporting such a request. In the event of long-term illness, reasonable accommodations will be made to allow a student to complete a course. In these cases, the Dean will need to approve the long term nature of the accommodation.

The Dean of Harlaxton College has the authority to grant excused absences for medical, psychological, or personal reasons.

Each instructor is expected to maintain an attendance policy in keeping with the nature of the Harlaxton program and may consider it in evaluating performance in their courses.

Policy Governing Unexcused Absences:

Harlaxton College operates an attendance policy that is binding on all faculty and students. The number of unexcused absences that are allowed before incurring a penalty is related to the number of times a class meets each week. For courses which meet three times a week, students are allowed a maximum of three unexcused absences during the semester without attracting penalty points. For courses meeting twice a week two such absences are permitted, and for courses meeting once a week a single absence is allowed. Additional unexcused absences will attract a grade penalty. More than two unexcused absences will result in a full-letter grade deduction (i.e., A to B).

Policy Governing Excused Absences.

- Excused absences are not given to facilitate student travel independent of College-sponsored travel.
- Students may be permitted to miss class because of participation in academic field trips.
- Instructors must co-ordinate and confirm academic fieldtrips with the Dean, prior to the commencement of the Semester to ensure their inclusion in the Semester timetable.

- Where authorization for an academic fieldtrip is requested after the commencement of the semester, the request must be submitted to the Dean.

The following information is required:

- Purpose and brief description of the official Harlaxton event or academic fieldtrip.
- Dates, location, and times (as applicable).
- Alphabetical list of students involved [Last Name/First Name] along with their student identification number.

If approval is granted:

- Instructors affected will be notified at least one week prior to the class period during which absence is anticipated, or as soon as possible.
- Missed class time due to student participation is to be considered an excused absence.
- The grade of a student may not be lowered in any class due to excused absences.
- It is the student's responsibility - to take the initiative by consulting with their instructors before the absence occurs, and - to do what is required by the instructor to make up all missed assignments and/or examinations.
- Instructors are required to assist students in these occasional situations of excused absences.

Honor Code:

All students at the University of Evansville agree to the University honor code: *I will neither give nor receive unauthorized aid, nor will I tolerate an environment that condones the use of unauthorized aid.*

Disability Policy:

It is the policy and practice of the University of Evansville to make reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. Students should contact Disability Services within the Office of Counseling Services by calling 812-488-2663 to seek services or accommodations for disabilities. Written notification to faculty from Disability Services is required for academic accommodations.

The University of Evansville Disability Services office will share the request for academic accommodations with the Academic Support team at Harlaxton College. Staff members at Harlaxton will meet individually with students to discuss needs and provide additional information related to examinations or other assessments.

Students from partner institutions should provide the appropriate letter of accommodation from their institution to the Academic Support team at Harlaxton College.

Non-Discrimination Statement

The University of Evansville expects all members of its community to treat each other with respect and civility. Harassing behaviors directed towards any member of our community will not be tolerated. As part of its commitment to non-discrimination, the University specifically prohibits harassment based on any other characteristics set forth in its nondiscrimination statement as follows: including race, color, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, creed or religion, national origin, age, disability, veteran status and all federally protected groups/classes. Any form of harassment undermines the mission of the University and negatively impacts the University community as a whole.

Prohibited Conduct and Confidentiality

The University of Evansville is committed to fostering an atmosphere free from harassment and discrimination. This commitment includes identifying problems that may lead to sexual harassment and misconduct, as well as other forms of harassment and discrimination, by creating an atmosphere in which the entire University community is sensitive to preventing prohibited conduct. Additionally, the University is committed to providing support and resources to individuals who have experienced prohibited conduct. This commitment includes effectively responding when a student, visitor, guest or program participant is the victim of prohibited conduct.

All campus employees, students, and guests are required to abide by the Title IX and Other Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Policy, the Harassment and Discrimination Policy, and the Consensual Sexual or Romantic Relationships Between Employees and Students Policy. Violation of these policies could result in disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion for students and termination for employees.

Faculty members at the University of Evansville are considered "Responsible Employees" under the applicable federal guidelines and the University's policies. This means that I am unable to offer you confidentiality if you report any incidence of prohibited conduct to me as defined by Title IX statute. If I am made aware of a violation, I am required to report any known information to the Office of Institutional Equity.

You may choose to report the violation yourself the following ways:

Email: · Annie Sills, Assistant Director of Institutional Equity and Title IX Coordinator: cs175@evansville.edu ·

Keith Gehlhausen, Executive Director of HR and Institutional Equity: kg77@evansville.edu ·

Title IX: titleix@evansville.edu

Phone: 812-288-5261

Online: <https://www.evansville.edu/safety/report.cfm>

You may also choose to speak with a Confidential Resource. Confidential Resources are required to maintain confidentiality and cannot report violations to the Office of Institutional Equity:

University of Evansville

- Counseling Services: counselingservices@evansville.edu, 812-488-2633
- Health Center Professionals: healthcenter@evansville.edu, 812-488-2033
- University Chaplain: chaplain@evansville.edu, 812-488-5262

Harlaxton College

- College Nurse: Lesley Selby, RGN, +44 01476 403027, lselect@harlaxton.ac.uk
- Counselling Services: counselling@harlaxton.ac.uk