Office: 418 Carlisle, Office Hours: T-TH 2-3:30

Fall 2014

available via E-mail: [laurak@uta.edu](mailto:laurak@uta.edu) (a note on e-mail: please allow at least 24 hours response time)

**Texts**:

Please Note: Be sure to buy the correct editions for each text

1.    *Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft, 9th Edition* (Burroway)

2.    *The Scribner Anthology of Contemporary Short Fiction, 2nd Edition (Williford, Martone)*

**Overview**:             This advanced workshop class centers around the writing of creative, fictional short stories.  Prior to the commencement of this course, all students must have taken 3375 (Intro to Creative Writing) since the class assumes basic knowledge of literary devices. In this class, we will look in more particular detail at the basic qualities of a short story that you learned about in 3375. Since better readers make better writers, we will read several of the best contemporary short stories, discuss them, then use them as inspiration for our own works.  Stories from our anthology will be chosen as the semester progresses, based on topic recommendations that the class makes.  For example, if the class decides that we should discuss story beginnings in more detail than our textbook reading allows, I will choose a few stories from our anthology that I believe offer excellent examples of story introductions. We will discuss language, structure, narration, and, most importantly, deal with the “So What?” factor (more on this factor as the semester progresses).  Our goal is to become better writers, yes, but also to become more confident of our writing strengths and more aware of our weaknesses.  **Please note that this is a reading and writing intensive class. Please consider this when evaluating your course load for the semester.** We will learn that writing is often a collaborative process, which leads me nicely into the policies of this course:

**Policies:               \*\***Since we will approach writing in a collaborative way (through group activities, workshops, and class discussions), class attendance is required.  I’m here every day; so why shouldn’t you be here also? I enjoy teaching, so I see no reason why you shouldn’t enjoy learning.  Attendance is, therefore, mandatory, and cutting classes will lower your final grade. See the attendance points below for how missing class will affect your grade.  **Please note: More than 4 absences will automatically result in a failing grade for this course.**

\*\***Late papers or assignments (unless you have made arrangements with me in advance) will incur a penalty of half a letter grade per day.** **Important! If you miss an assigned workshop date (if you do not have copies of your story ready to distribute in class on the assigned date) you will miss your workshop opportunity for that story and your final grade for that story will be reduced by a full letter grade as a result.** If you will not be in class on the assigned date to distribute copies of your story, you must make arrangements with me in advance for me (or a fellow classmate) to distribute copies for you.

\*\*If you do miss class, copies of any assignments or workshop stories can be picked up in the metal box next to my office door.  This is your responsibility, not mine.

\*\*All stories handed in to me for grading must be typed and double-spaced. Use basic fonts, no larger than 12 pt.  Margins should be one inch (or one-half inch) all around. Titles are mandatory and fun.  Be original and inventive. Do not use plastic binders or notebooks to enclose your stories.  Staples are best.  Always, always keep an extra hard copy of your work.  If you’d like to save paper and photocopying expenses when making copies of your workshop stories for the class, feel free to space and a half (NO single spacing) and print on both the front and back of the paper.

\*\*You are not allowed, under any circumstances, to reuse papers from prior classes in this course.  Reusing papers does not demonstrate any advance in knowledge or skill, and so would not be helpful for you either in terms of your learning this semester, or for me in terms of assessing this learning.  If you feel your situation constitutes a clear or significant exception to this rule, you must discuss this with me prior to the due date of the first draft. **Your work is to be your own, and it is to be prepared originally for this course and section. It is considered Academic Dishonesty to present any portion of work prepared by someone else and to claim it as your own. It is also unacceptable to submit work or portions of work you have written for another class or section. This includes work prepared for high school and college courses you have taken or in which you are currently enrolled and any previous sections of this course.**

\*\*Plagiarism will result in immediate failure.

\*\***Check your UTA e-mail account often. I will need to get in touch with you during the course of the semester and this is the only way I have to do so.**

**Grades:** Your final course grade will be based on the following:

60% : 3 revised short stories, 8-10 full pages each (each paper 20%). Story revisions are due to me for grading one week after they have been workshopped in class. Each student will have the opportunity to workshop 2 stories in full class, and one story in small group.

40% : Participation: (A-F, figured below. Please note: these points are approximates.  You will be kept up to date during the semester with your cumulative participation grade):

*Takehome Assignments: 20 points (4x 5 points each)*

*Pop Reading Quizzes: 30 points (approximately 7 or 8 x 4-5 points each)*

*Full Class Workshop Evaluation Comments: 15 points (approximately 5 spot checks x 3 points each)*

*Small Workshop Group Letters: 15 points (3 x 5 points)*

*Attendance: 20 points (maximum):0-1 absence=20 points*

*2 absence=10 points*

*3 absences=5 points*

*4 absences=0 points*

**Story Grading:** (A parenthetical insertion: I am much more concerned about your learning something in this class than I am about the final grade you earn.  I have much to teach you and I’d rather not waste our limited time together “arguing” about why I gave you a certain grade and why you’re sure I was horribly off the mark.  I’d much rather spend office meeting time helping you with your writing.  I know, however, that you have a somewhat different perspective.  That’s why I’ve included the following section in my policy statement.)

Generally, does the story make **easy** sense to me? Are the characters well-developed? Is the plot coherent? Can I trace the rational development of ideas leading to a logical end?  Have you supported these ideas with **specific detail** and/or sound reasons?  Where is your personal commitment?  Is it an interesting read?  Is the story marred by grammatical blunders so horrible I’ll want to run for a red pen?  Does the story take into account the “so-what?” factor? How much effort went into the revision process? Does the revision take into consideration the comments offered in workshop?

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE (please note: unscheduled reading pop quizzes can—and will!—take place.  Often. Come to class having already read the chapters and/or stories scheduled for discussion on each class day). CHECK THIS SCHEDULE OFTEN.**

**1. Characterization**

8/26 wk 1    *What we're discussing in class this week:* Course Introduction.  Everybody gets to know each other [in-class pair up exercise](https://mavspace.uta.edu:443/people/l/la/laurak/4330%20writing%20prompts/Letsgettoknoweachother.docx).  *Here’s an Assignment handed out, explained in class today, then due NEXT class:* writing exercise #3 on p. 19.

9/2   wk 2     *What we're discussing in class this week:* ch. 1 (pp. 1-19) and ch. 2 (pp. 21-62). Distribute [workshop guidelines](https://mavspace.uta.edu:443/people/l/la/laurak/4330%20writing%20prompts/fictionworkshopnotes.pdf.doc). Do “naming” exercise on the board (full class). Distribute 2 stories for workshop next class. 4 volunteers needed to bring stories next week. *What we’re handing in today:* writing exercise #3 pg. 19 (read out loud for use in [Tolstoy exercise](https://mavspace.uta.edu:443/people/l/la/laurak/4330%20writing%20prompts/Tolstoy.docx)).

9/9 wk 3      *What we're discussing in class this week:* ch. 3 (pp. 67-83 and pp. 94-114). Workshop 2 stories. Bring a want ad or interesting item for sale on ebay today. Discuss  and do group exercise with ebay ads. Distribute workshop stories for next class. 4 volunteers to bring stories next week. *Here’s an Assignment handed out, explained in class today, then due NEXT class:* Take one of the characters from our ebay in-class exercise and write an opening scene with that character and the object.  *What we’re handing in today:* written comments on 2 workshop stories.

9/16 wk 4     *What we're discussing in class this week:* ch. 4 (pp. 116-152). Workshop 4 stories. 4 volunteers to bring stories next week. *What we’re handing in today:* ebay 2-pg writing exercise (some read out loud), written comments on 4 workshop stories.

**2. Characterization/Setting**

9/23 wk 5   *What we're discussing in class this week:* ch. 5 (pp. 156-184) and "Sea Oak" by Saunders, pg. 547 (Scribners). Do full-class dorm room for character exercise on board (showing v. telling). Workshop 4 stories. 4 volunteers to bring stories next week. *What we’re handing in today:* written comments on 4 workshop stories.

9/30 wk. 6   *What we're discussing in class this week:* "Pilgrims," Orringer, pg. 489 and TBA in Scribners*.* Workshop 4 stories. 4 volunteers to bring stories next week. *What we’re handing in today:* written comments on 4 workshop stories. Go over 2-pg examples of attention-grabbing story openings, [found HERE](https://mavspace.uta.edu:443/people/l/la/laurak/4330%20writing%20prompts/A%20Few%20Story%20Openings.docx).   *Here’s an Assignment handed out, explained in class today, then due NEXT class:* [Scenic detail.](https://mavspace.uta.edu:443/people/l/la/laurak/4330%20writing%20prompts/In%20Class%20Writing%20assignment%20on%20scenic%20detail.docx) Use all 5 senses and keep the language active.

10/7 wk. 7   *What we're discussing in class this week:* ch. 6 (pp. 193-207), ch. 7 (pp. 230-251), and story in Scribners TBA.  Workshop 4 stories. 4 volunteers to bring stories next week. *What we’re handing in today:* written comments on 4 workshop stories and  2-page typed writing assignment on place (some read out loud).

**3. Plot, Narrative POV**

10/14 wk. 8      *What we're discussing in class this week:* ch. 8 (pp. 276-305)Workshop 4 stories. 4 volunteers to bring stories next week. In-class plot group exercise (house burning, plot backward). *What we’re handing in today:* written comments on 4 workshop stories.

10/21 wk. 9    *What we're discussing in class this week:*"Jealous Husband Returns In Form Of Parrot," pg. 103 and TBA (Both in Scribners). Also--In class fun write competition!!  Workshop 4 stories.4 volunteers to bring stories next week. *Here’s an Assignment handed out, explained in class today, then due NEXT class:*[narrative tension assignment](https://mavspace.uta.edu:443/people/l/la/laurak/4330%20writing%20prompts/4330tension%20assignment.docx). *What we’re handing in today:* written comments on 4 workshop stories.

**4. Tips on Revision**

10/28 wk. 10   *What we're discussing in class this week:* ch. 9 (pp 316-340). Workshop 4 stories. 4 volunteers to bring stories next week.  *What we’re handing in today:* written comments on 4 workshop stories.  Also, your [narrative tension assignment](https://mavspace.uta.edu/people/l/la/laurak/4330%20writing%20prompts/4330tension%20assignment.docx) (some read out loud).

11/4 wk. 11    *What we're discussing in class this week:* Bring 10 index cards to class today for in-class revision exercise. Workshop  4 stories. 4 volunteers to bring stories next week. *What we’re handing in today:* written comments on 4 workshop stories. *Here’s an Assignment handed out, explained in class today, then due NEXT class:* Notecard revision exercise--finish up and then type up a LENGTHY paragraph about how it helped you to better understand your story.

11/11 wk. 12   *What we're discussing in class this week:* Workshop 4 stories. *What we’re handing in today:* LENGTHY paragraph about how the notecard exercise helped you to better understand your story. Also, written comments on 4 workshop stories.

11/18  wk. 13  *What we're discussing in class this week:* Workshop 4 stories. *What we’re handing in today:* Everyone MUST bring 4 copies of story draft #3 today. If you do not bring these copies to class, ready to distribute, you will NOT be put into a small workshop group. Written comments on 4 workshop stories.

11/25 wk. 14      *What we're discussing in class this week:* Small group workshops.  Distribution of final portfolio guidelines.  *What we’re handing in today:* TYPED written comments on small group workshop stories.

12/2 wk. 15     *What we're discussing in class this week:* Last Day of Class (hold back the tears!). Discussion of publication tactics, submission guidelines, etc. In-class Reading. **Final Fiction Story (#3) portfolio Handed in to me.**