

University of Victoria, Department of Writing

Writing 100 – Introduction to Writing – 2009

Fiction: Course Outline

**Please note: Valuable information about this course is available online.
From the Department of Writing's home page
– <http://finearts.uvic.ca/writing/> –
please go to Frequently Asked Questions for WRIT 100.**

Instructor: John Gould

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Office: FIA (Fine Arts) 223

Class Time: Monday and Thursday, 10:00 am - 11:30 am

Office hours:

- Thursday, 11:30 am – 12:30 pm
- or by appointment

Course Materials – Required (Please bring to all classes)

- Schoen, Steven. *The Truth About Fiction*, Prentice Hall, 2000 (bookstore)
- Writing 100 Fiction Coursepack (bookstore)
- A notebook or binder (8 1/2 X 11) with removable pages

Course Description

The main goal of this first-year overview course is to improve your skills and confidence as a writer by applying your creativity across four different genres. In this section you will be introduced to the fundamentals of writing short fiction through the following activities:

- *Listening*. This is primarily a lecture course, so attentiveness in class will be crucial to your success.
- *Reading*. Three sources will prepare you for the lectures, and for class discussion: the Schoen textbook, Coursepack stories, and class handouts. All this material is eligible for inclusion on the final exam. You are also encouraged to continue reading fiction widely and adventurously on your own.
- *Discussing*. I will want to hear your questions, and your thoughts about the stories we encounter. We will examine the stories from the point of view of writers, rather than of critics or literary historians; the focus will be on how the stories are constructed, and how they achieve their effects.
- *Writing*. You will write one exercise and one story.
- *Workshopping*. Your exercise and your story will be workshopped – edited by classmates during class time. You will receive insightful, respectful critiques, and offer the same to others.
- *Revising*. Based on input from your peers, on what you've learned in class, and on your own instinct and ability, you will revise and rewrite all your material so that what you hand in is your best.

Course Requirements

1. (10% of your grade.) **Participation.** This mark will be based on the following:
 - *Attendance.* Please bear in mind that missing classes won't just hurt you here, but on your exercise, story and exam as well.
 - *Contribution to discussions.*
 - *Contribution – written and oral – to workshops.*
 - *Any in-class writing.*
2. (5% of your grade) One writing **exercise**, which will allow you to put into practice some of the ideas and techniques we talk about in class, and sharpen your skills in preparation for tackling your short story. Your work must be double-spaced and printed in an easily readable 12-point font, and must include your name, the name of the assignment, and a word count.
3. (55% of your grade.) An original **short story** of 2,000 – 2,500 words, written by you during this course. What you hand in will be an edited, revised, expanded, and rewritten draft, polished and complete. Your story will be workshopped before the due date; if you do not wish your story to be workshopped, then it is due on the workshop date. Stories will be evaluated according to the following parameters:
 - *Presentation.* Your story must be double-spaced and printed in an easily readable 12-point font. It must conform to the assigned length. The pages must be numbered and paper-clipped together. Your name, the story's title, and an accurate word count must appear on the first page.
 - *Prose.* From the basics – spelling, grammar, punctuation, diction, sentence construction, paragraphing – to qualities such as clarity, vigour, originality, freshness, and the suitability of language to the characters and subject.
 - *Literary Elements.* How effectively and creatively have you applied the elements of fiction discussed in this course to the construction of your story? Consider use of detail, character development, plot, scene, structure, point of view, dialogue, setting, etc. How well have you combined these elements to achieve unity and coherence – to capture, stimulate, and satisfy your reader's attention?
 - *Conception.* Is there an original, compelling story here? Is there something at the core of this story that matters to you, its author? Have you arrived at a form that effectively communicates this experience or insight?
4. (30% of your grade.) A **final exam** which will test your grasp of concepts and materials presented in this course.

Expectations

As a Writing 100 student, you are expected to...

- Prepare for, attend, and participate in every class. In the event of a personal or family illness, please provide written documentation (such as a doctor's letter) and consult with me concerning missed classes.
- Arrive on time.
- Complete all work on time.

- Inform me about any problems that are hampering your success in this course.
- Inform me of any special needs that might have an influence on your learning in the classroom. Please consult with the Resource Centre for Students with a Disability, and provide me with documentation. I will happily work with you and the Centre to respond appropriately to special needs requests.
- Save regularly when you're working on computer.
- Treat your classmates and me with **courtesy and respect** at all times. Any student engaging in disruptive behaviours such as intrusive chatting, sleeping in class, inattention, or chronic lateness will be subject to formal procedures as defined by the University's Policy on Disruptive Behaviour.

Policies

- For the purposes of your participation grade, a late arrival at class will be considered an absence.
- Due dates are subject to change at my discretion. Changes will be announced in advance.
- Missing assignments will receive a grade of zero.
- You must participate in workshops and peer edit groups.
- You must submit all assignments on time, at the beginning of class.
- Late assignments will not be accepted unless accompanied by a doctor's note.
- All writing to be workshopped or handed in to me must be presentable: double-spaced and printed in an easily readable 12-point font.
- All writing to be workshopped or handed in to me must conform to the assigned length, and include a word count.
- You must not plagiarize. Plagiarism is defined as any unacknowledged use of sources, whether intended or not. See the Calendar for clarification.

Special Note on Attendance

It is departmental policy that any student who misses the second class without notifying the instructor in advance will be taken to have dropped the course, and will be removed from the class list. If you need to miss our second session but do not wish to drop the course, please make sure to communicate with me.

Email

Please feel free to use email for information, clarification, or other brief messages. Please do not use email for sensitive matters with the potential for conflict, such as extension requests, grade concerns, etc. These are best handled face to face – not at class time, but during my office hours. Think of email messages to me as writing assignments. Please make them clear, concise, and courteous.