

## ENG 3130 – Fiction Workshop Spring 2019

Bret Nye – banye@bgsu.edu

Class Times – Tuesday and Thursday 1:00-2:15PM

Class Location – Eppler Center 302

Office Hours – Tuesday and Thursday 11:00-12:45 (or other times by appointment)

Office Location – East Hall 318

This fiction workshop will be focused on your writing and the practice of commenting on your peers' writing. We *will* be reading a wide array of stories and probably a novella and some craft essays as the semester class goes along, and we *will* spend ample class time discussing those readings and the craft concerns they bring up, but the focus here will be in giving you a chance to submit polished pieces of fiction writing and have your peers and me provide commentaries on those pieces.

The key thing here is to buy in for the length of the semester. All I ask, as your teacher, is that you come to each class ready to discuss your classmates' writing and whatever readings were assigned, and that you take seriously your opportunity to spend a bunch of time this semester writing fiction and having people who care about fiction read it with attentiveness.

### Assignments

Our class will be structured around three workshops and some class periods devoted to craft-related issues in fiction and important styles/formats of published fiction that we'll investigate as a group. You will be turning in three stories, written commentaries for your peers' stories, and a revision project at the culmination of the semester.

- Stories
  - You will submit three stories to workshop this semester. Two of these workshops will be class-wide (everyone in class will be involved) and one will be a group workshop (workshopping in groups of three during a class period). I don't want to enforce a length minimum or maximum for your pieces, but regarding a "soft maximum" know that it will be next to impossible for us to give proper attention to pieces longer than 25 pages. As for a minimum length, I'll leave that entirely up to you. If you like to write flash fiction or very short pieces, I'd suggest you including perhaps 3 or 4 pieces per submission so that we have a decent chunk of your fiction to look at each time.
  - Stories are due the class session before they are supposed to be workshopped. This gives everyone plenty of time to read them, make notes, and write formal responses to them.
  - Please email your stories to the whole class, using Canvas.
  - Please double-space all stories you submit and format them in a standard, readable 12-point font (Times New Roman or something similar will work).
- Workshop Responses

- Each workshop we hold in class will consist of each of us presenting commentary and suggestions on our classmates' fiction and then fostering discussions amongst the group on points of interest and debate within people's stories. We will go through the particulars of the workshop format in class before we dive in, but know for now that you will be expected to annotate your classmates' pieces (through Microsoft Word or by hand, if you print their stories out) and write a full page of double-spaced commentary on their piece before each workshop. I want to see line edit suggestions and at least a page of summative critique at the end of the document when you submit your responses before each workshop. Email your responses to both your classmate and to me for each workshop. If you prefer to hand in paper copies to the writer and to me, that's fine, too – just don't forget to provide line edit suggestions to the writer as well as your page of commentary. Know that critiquing the work of others will prove to be extremely beneficial in learning how to go about revising your work, and it should also help you to bolster your shorthand and vocabulary for talking about creative writing in general.
- Revision Project
  - As a capstone project for the class, at the end of the semester you will be required to majorly revise one of your submissions. In addition, you must attach a 500 word minimum cover letter to this revision, explaining what changes the piece underwent and why you chose to revise that piece in particular. I will read these cover letters as your last statement of the semester on what you altered in your writing process in general and what you've discovered about writing fiction from the work, readings, and discussions we completed in this class. The final part of the revision project will be to send these revised stories out to literary magazines: this is a process that we'll spend the last weeks of class discussing in-depth.

## Required Materials

- readings I will link/upload to our Canvas site
- a laptop or other device that you will use to complete in-class writing and response each day
  - A note on course readings - you should make comprehensive notes for each reading we do for class. Have these notes/thoughts with you for class discussion, for they will help you prepare to add to the conversation and will inevitably allow you to get more out of each class. It's up to you if you wish to print the readings out, which may be easier, but you can also simply use your laptops in class to access them. I will also ask for reading responses via the Canvas forum throughout the semester.

## Grading Breakdown

Stories/Pieces – 30%

Workshop Responses – 30%

Revision Project – 25%

Participation – 15%

\*Note for Creative Writing Majors: You MUST earn a "B" or better in this class in order to enroll in ENG 4120 or ENG 4130.

## Participation

Your participation grade makes up 15% of your overall grade for this course. This is because I believe that the learning that happens in a course like this occurs in the “doing:” that is, in the completion of activities and assignments, in writing and reading and writing some more and then commenting on each others’ writing. You will not be graded according to aesthetics or talent in this class: you will be assessed according to the time you put into the course and how this is reflected in the work you turn in each week.

Your participation grade will be comprised of a number of activities in the course, all of them designed to assess your engagement with the class. These graded facets include in-class writing activities, homework writing activities and reading responses, involvement in class discussion, and involvement in class and group workshops.

## Class Policies

### Attendance

This class is based entirely around your writing and the modes by which we will learn to talk about it in the classroom; we will develop our abilities to write creatively and talk about creative writing through in-class writing activities, course readings, class discussions, and workshops. For these reasons, your attendance at every session is crucial. Please also arrive to class on time: steady tardiness will result in a downgrade of participation points.

At my discretion, and dependent upon each individual situation, students with excessive absences —more than four—will fail the course.

You should always let me know when/if you’ll be missing class so that you can stay caught up on in-class work and announcements. Most in-class work and homework can be made up (essentially everything but in-class workshops, which require you to be present to earn the participation points).

Do let me know if you’ll have any university-related absences (athletic events, music events, club/group events, etc.): they will be excused but you must let me know about them ahead of time.

### Turning Stuff In

We will be using email to provide our story submissions to the rest of the class and to submit all of our workshop responses to each other (and to me, remember). For all of our writing assignments and workshop responses, please attach a Microsoft Word document when possible so that none of us will have an issue opening your documents.

If the Canvas messaging system provides you with trouble, you can email stories to me directly ([banye@bgsu.edu](mailto:banye@bgsu.edu)) and I can forward them along to the rest of the class. If all technology fails you, we can figure something out, like paper copies. However, know that issues with Canvas or email or technology in general will not be accepted as an excuse for things not being turned in.

In-class work, reading responses, and homework assignments can be turned in late for full credit if you submit them within 7 days, and for half credit if you submit them beyond 7 days late. The same goes for workshop responses (full credit if submitted within 7 days, and half credit after that).

### Technology Use

Since we will be writing and referring to electronically available course readings every day in class, you must bring your laptop or device with you to each class period. Please have it charged up when you come in, as there may be a lack of electrical outlets in our classroom.

It being a rule of the course that you have your laptop with you, I trust that you are adults and are able to give due respect to our class discussions and your classmates and won't spend each class period on social media or browsing the internet. This sort of thing will have a negative effect on your participation grade.

#### **Academic Honesty**

Please refer to BGSU's current Student Handbook and its Code of Academic Conduct for information regarding BGSU's academic honesty policies. These policies and penalties apply to our class in addition to all other classes at BGSU.

## Resources

<b>Writing Support at the Learning Commons</b>	<p>Located on the first floor of Jerome Library, the Learning Commons is a valuable resource that provides you with individual tutoring assistance in writing, reading and study skills, math and stats, and content courses – free of charge. Writing consultants work with writers collaboratively, rather than serving as a proofreading or editing service. Because the Commons will be very busy, you should call ahead at 419-372-2823 or visit their website <a href="http://www.bgsu.edu/learning-commons/writing.html">http://www.bgsu.edu/learning-commons/writing.html</a> to make an appointment well in advance.</p> <p>You can visit the Learning Commons at any stage in your writing. Remember to bring questions and the assignment sheet.</p> <p>You may also submit your writing to an online writing consultant by following this link: <a href="http://www.bgsu.edu/learning-commons/writing/owl-submission-form.html">http://www.bgsu.edu/learning-commons/writing/owl-submission-form.html</a> There, you will be given directions for submitting your questions or your entire draft. Once again, though, plan ahead. An email response may take up to 72 hours, and writing consultants are not available on weekends or evenings to give immediate feedback.</p>
<b>Accessibility Statement</b>	<p>If you have a documented disability that requires accommodations in order to obtain equal access for your learning, please make your needs known to me, preferably during the first week of the semester. Please note that students who request accommodations need to verify their eligibility through the Office of Disability Services, 38 College Park (phone: 372-8495; TTY: 419-372-9455). For more information, please visit <a href="http://www.bgsu.edu/disabilityservices.html">http://www.bgsu.edu/disabilityservices.html</a>.</p>

**Title IX  
Statement**

Sexual misconduct and relationship violence in any form violate university policies and may also violate federal and state law. Faculty members are considered "Mandatory Reporters" and are required to report incidents of sexual misconduct and relationship violence to the Title IX Coordinator. If you or someone you know has been impacted by sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, please visit [www.bgsu.edu/TitleIX](http://www.bgsu.edu/TitleIX) to access information about university support and resources.

## Course Schedule

### Important Dates & Deadlines:

January 28	First Day of Classes
February 3	Last Day to Add Classes without College Permission
February 10	Last Day to Drop Classes without College Permission
April 19	Last Day to Drop Classes with College Permission
May 13-17	Final Exam Week

Please note: The course schedule may change due to cancellations, advanced or slowed progress through material, or the class's needs. Changes will be announced during regular class meetings with plenty of time for you to adjust.

Date	In Class We Will...	Due in Class Today
Week One Tue., Jan. 29	Mesha Maren leading the class/workshop Mackenna's story; syllabus	Response to MacKenna's story
Thurs., Jan. 31	Canvas and course schedule; intro to the course; negotiate workshop schedule; discuss workshop goals; in-class writing/discussion	
Week Two Tue., Feb. 5	No Class – Bret Sick	
Thurs., Feb. 7	Some Classics: Flannery O'Connor and Raymond Carver	Flannery O'Connor, "A Good Man is Hard to Find"; Raymond Carver, "Cathedral"
Week Three Tue., Feb. 12	Some Classics: Jhumpa Lahiri and Annie Proulx	Jhumpa Lahiri, "A Temporary Matter"; Annie Proulx, "The Half-Skinned Steer"
Thurs., Feb. 14	Some Classics: Kafka and Saunders; "Getting Started"	Franz Kafka, "A Hunger Artist"; George Saunders, "The Semplica-Girl Diaries"; Anne Lamott, "Getting Started"
Week Four Tue., Feb. 19	Workshop 1: Connor, Drew, Emily	Story Submission 1
Thurs., Feb. 21	Workshop 1: Holley, Andrew A., Victoria	Story Submission 1
Week Five Tue., Feb. 26	Workshop 1: Christina, Mackenzie, Andrew W.	Story Submission 1
Thurs., Feb. 28	Workshop 1: Jayce, Abbie, Julie	Story Submission 1
Week Six Tue., Mar. 5	Workshop 1: West, Olivia, Melissa	Story Submission 1
Thurs., Mar. 7	Craft Talk	Charles Baxter, "Stillness"; Michael Martone, "Ruining a Story"
Week Seven Tue., Mar. 12	Flash Fiction and Prose Hybrids	

Thurs., Mar. 14	Workshop 2 (everyone in groups)	Story Submission 2
Week Eight Tue., Mar. 19	NO CLASS – Spring Break	
Thurs., Mar. 21	NO CLASS – Spring Break	
Week Nine Tue., Mar. 26	The Story Cycle	
Thurs., Mar. 28	Genre Fiction	
Week Ten Tue., Apr. 2	Readings	
Thurs., Apr. 4	Readings	
Week Eleven Tue., Apr. 9	Workshop 3: Connor, Drew, Emily	Story Submission 3
Thurs., Apr. 11	Workshop 3: Holley, Andrew A., Victoria	Story Submission 3
Week Twelve Tue., Apr. 16	Workshop 3: Christina, Mackenzie, Andrew W.	Story Submission 3
Thurs., Apr. 18	Workshop 3: Jayce, Abbie, Julie	Story Submission 3
Week Thirteen Tue., Apr. 23	Workshop 3: West, Olivia, Mackenna	Story Submission 3
Thurs., Apr. 25	Workshop 3: Melissa; readings	Story Submission 3
Week Fourteen Tue., Apr. 30	Readings; revision project; publishing talk	
Thurs., May 2	Readings; revision project; publishing talk	
Week Fifteen Tue., May 7	Revision Project talk; publishing, lit mags, the submission process	Anne Lamott, "The Last Class"
Thurs., May 9	Revision Project talk; publishing, lit mags, the submission process	

Revision Project Due – Friday, May 17 by 11:59pm