ENGLISH 4363.001
ELEMENTS OF CRAFT
Spring 2024, Ferguson 177
Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 9-9:50AM

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Office hours: 110-11AM (MWF), 11-Noon (TTH), and by appointment.

OFFICIAL COURSE DESCRIPTION (from the General Bulletin):
Analysis of selected examples (either prose or poetry) with emphasis on technical, generic, and aesthetic features.

OFFICIAL CREDIT HOUR JUSTIFICATION
ENGL 4363 “Elements of Craft” (3 credits) typically meets twice each week in 75-minute segments, three times a week in 50-minute segments, or one night a week in 150-minute segments, for 15-weeks, and includes a 2-hour final examination. Students are assigned substantial readings in contemporary published creative writing, either prose or poetry. They are required to write two craft analysis papers (roughly 10 pages total), give a presentation on one of the assigned texts, write two short stories or essays (2000-4000 words each, roughly 30 pages) or a body of original poetry (approximately six-ten poems), and participate in both a midterm and final exam, which may be critical or creative. These activities average at a minimum 6-9 hours of work each week to prepare outside of classroom hours.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:
We Ride Upon Sticks, Quan Barry
This is How You Lose the Time War, Amal El-Mohtar and Max Gladstone
The Office of Historical Corrections, Danielle Evans
Gutshot, Amelia Gray
Bad Girls Never Say Die, Jennifer Mathieu
Last Night at the Lobster, Stewart O’Nan
Olympus Texas, Stacey Swann
Beasts of the Earth, James Wade

You should also have no hesitation with using dictionaries, guides to literary terms, and other reference resources. A writer who doesn’t love words is a musician who doesn’t love notes.

OBJECTIVES:
This course is designed to help fiction writers improve their craft by reading novels and story collections by established writers. Creative writing, like any art form or sport, is based on mastering a host of skills. In this course you will read...

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like a writer—looking at elements such as (but not limited to) setting, dialogue, point of view, and characterization. We will primarily analyze literary fiction, but we will also be looking at the limitations and freedoms authors face when working in a genre (such as fabulism or comedy). You may not like every book you read for this course—odds are you won’t—but you will see a range of strategies for storytelling which will help you develop your own skills as fiction writers. Assignments include a presentation, two craft analysis papers, and two short stories. There will also be a midterm and a final. When you leave the course, you should be a more attentive reader, a more precise writer, and fully appreciative of the choices that fiction writers are faced with on every page. This will, I guarantee, make your own fiction stronger.

Here are the official Program Learning Outcomes for this course. Your Student Learning Outcomes (beautiful bureaucratic language, isn’t it?) are based on these goals:

1. The student will demonstrate close reading skills and recognize strategies used by professional creative writers.
2. The student will employ techniques and strategies for crafting carefully composed, competent creative work.
3. The student will articulate useful, critical editorial advice for peer writers.
4. The student will demonstrate strategic revision on completed creative work.

GRADING:
Your grade in this course will be broken down like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Grading Scale:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>100-90 = A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>89-80 = B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft Analysis</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>79-70 = C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>69-60 = D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>59-0 = F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story #1</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story #2</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION (10%)
Attendance and active participation in this course are essential. I take attendance every class period and expect you to be here on time. After more than two absences, your grade will drop precipitously.

Class participation is incredibly important in a course designed like this. I prefer to conduct my classes as an open conversation. I will ask questions and you will be expected to respond. That should launch us into a discussion about the works. I hope that you will engage not only with me but also with others in the class. I grade class participation in 2 main ways:

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Discussion: Be prepared to talk about the readings on the day we discuss them in class. If you do not understand the readings, feel free to ask questions about what they mean. Let me stress that I’m not looking for "right" answers. I want you to tell me what you think and defend it with reasonable examples from the text. If you do not wish to talk in class, know that your grade (as long as you appear attentive) will be no higher than a C. Try to talk at least once a discussion.

Active Listening: I expect you will listen to your classmates when they are discussing aspects of the literature we read. There is always a chance that you will think that the person talking is a complete idiot, but then again, they may say something brilliant. Always treat people with respect and try to gain the most from what they are saying and you will be treated in the same way.

EXAMS (40%):
There will be two exams in the course, one covering the first half of the course and the other covering the remainder of the readings. You will have an hour and fifteen minutes for the mid-term exam and two hours for the final. There may be a creative option on the last exam.

PRESENTATION (10%)
Each of you will choose an author and work and give a five minute presentation for the class about some aspect of the work you have researched outside of class discussion. I’m not looking for biographical information here unless it directly relates to a specific technical choice the author makes. We’ll talk more about this assignment as the semester progresses. You may have the option of posting your presentation as a video to D2L, but we’ll talk more about that later.

PAPERS & STORIES (40%)
You will write 1 Analysis Paper this semester and 2 Short Stories. The essay will analyze a single or closely related group of elements or techniques employed by the author for a particular effect which you will explain clearly and succinctly. 4-5 pages is ample for those assignments. The stories will be anywhere from 2000-4000 words and you will be expected to write a brief preface to your fiction which explains how the reading you have done in the course has affected the decisions you made as an author. I expect you to use techniques that you see in action in the readings or you may react against an author and employ a polar effect. It’s up to you to determine the choice, but you must explain your choice and I must see your choice at work in the fiction you create for the course. This is not a workshop course, so only I will be reading your fiction.

The essay must be typed, double-spaced in MLA format, which will be explained in class. You will be required to use parenthetical citation any time you cite anything from any text. It should have a standard heading on the top left corner of the page (your name, class title, my name, the date).

Stories will also have strict format requirements: double-spaced, appropriate font, with left header and word count. I expect professional presentation of your

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ACADEMIC INTEGRITY (10.4)

The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outlines the prohibited conduct by any student enrolled in a course at SFA. It is the responsibility of all members of all faculty, staff, and students to adhere to and uphold this policy.

Articles IV, VI, and VII of the new Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outline the violations and procedures concerning academic conduct, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and misrepresentation. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) Copying from the test paper (or other assignment) of another student, (2) Possession and/or use during a test of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, (3) Using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of a non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or using a test that has been administered in prior classes or semesters without permission of the Faculty member, (4) Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one’s self, to take a test, (5) Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work offered for credit, (6) Using any sort of unauthorized resources or technology in completion of educational activities.

Plagiarism is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one’s own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements.

Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam.

Misrepresentation is providing false grades or résumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual or to injure another student academically or financially.

WITHHELD GRADES Semester Grades Policy (5.5)
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the coursework because of unavoidable
circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course to compute the grade point average. For additional information, go to https://www.sfasu.edu/policies/course-grades-5.5.pdf.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
To obtain disability-related accommodations, alternate formats, and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services promptly may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

STUDENT WELLNESS AND WELL-BEING
SFA values students’ overall well-being, mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, emotional well-being, alcohol and other drugs, identities, finances, etc.

If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help, SFA provides a variety of resources to support students’ mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

ON CAMPUS RESOURCES:

The Dean of Students Office (Rusk Building, 3rd floor lobby)
www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents
936.468.7249
dos@sfasu.edu

SFA Human Services Counseling Clinic Human Services, Room 202
www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp
936.468.1041

The Health and Wellness Hub “The Hub”
Location: corner of E. College and Raguet St.
To support the health and well-being of every Lumberjack, the Health and Wellness Hub offers comprehensive services that treat the whole person – mind, body and spirit. Services include:

- Health Services
- Counseling Services
- Student Outreach and Support
- Food Pantry
- Wellness Coaching
- Alcohol and Other Drug Education

www.sfasu.edu/thehub
936.468.4008
thehub@sfasu.edu

Crisis Resources:

- Burke 24-hour crisis line: 1.800.392.8343
- National Suicide Crisis Prevention: 9-8-8
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.TALK (8255)
- Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741

ACCEPTABLE STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

SOME COMFORTING LAST WORDS...

If you don't know, ask. If you can't remember, ask. If you panic, talk to me before the night before. Most importantly, relax.
Tentative Syllabus

WEEK ONE
1/19  Introduction to the course.  
      Explain the rules and structure of the course.  
      HOMEWORK: Review course policy statement, syllabus.

WEEK TWO
1/22  Discuss handouts.  
      HOMEWORK: Read Evans
1/24  Begin Evans discussion.  
      HOMEWORK: Read Evans.
1/26  Discuss Evans  
      HOMEWORK: Read Evans

WEEK THREE
1/29  Discuss Evans  
      HOMEWORK: Read Evans
1/31  Discuss Evans  
      HOMEWORK: Read Evans
2/2   Last day on Evans.  
      HOMEWORK: Read El-Mohtar & Gladstone

WEEK FOUR
2/5   Begin discussing El-Mohtar & Gladstone  
      HOMEWORK: Read El-Mohtar & Gladstone
2/7   Discuss El-Mohtar & Gladstone  
      HOMEWORK: Read El-Mohtar & Gladstone
2/9   Discuss El-Mohtar & Gladstone  
      HOMEWORK: Read El-Mohtar & Gladstone

WEEK FIVE
2/12  Discuss El-Mohtar & Gladstone  
      HOMEWORK: Finish El-Mohtar & Gladstone
2/14  Discuss El-Mohtar & Gladstone  
      HOMEWORK: Read Swann
2/16  Last day on El-Mohtar & Gladstone  
      HOMEWORK: Read Swann

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>HOMEWORK</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/19</td>
<td>WEEK SIX</td>
<td>Discuss Swann.</td>
<td>HOMEWORK: Read Swann.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/21</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss Swann.</td>
<td>HOMEWORK: Read Swann.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/23</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss Swann.</td>
<td>HOMEWORK: Finish Swann.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/26</td>
<td>WEEK SEVEN</td>
<td>Discuss Swann.</td>
<td>HOMEWORK: Read Swann.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/28</td>
<td></td>
<td>Stacy Swann Visit</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/1</td>
<td></td>
<td>No Class.</td>
<td>HOMEWORK: Write Craft Analysis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>WEEK EIGHT</td>
<td>Discuss Craft Analysis.</td>
<td>HOMEWORK: Prepare for Midterm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/6</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Craft Analysis Due.</strong></td>
<td>Discuss midterm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/8</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>MIDTERM</strong></td>
<td>HOMEWORK: Read all of Mathieu</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/11</td>
<td>WEEK NINE</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td>3/13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3/18</td>
<td>WEEK TEN</td>
<td>Discuss Mathieu.</td>
<td>HOMEWORK: Review Mathieu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/22</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss Mathieu.</td>
<td>HOMEWORK: Read Barry. Work on Story.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**WEEK ELEVEN**

**3/25**  
*Story 1 Due.* Last day on Mathieu. Start Barry.  
Homework: Read Barry.

**3/27**  
Discuss Barry.  
HOMEWORK: Read Barry.

**3/29**  
*No Class.*  
HOMEWORK: Read Barry.

**WEEK TWELVE**

**4/1**  
Discuss Barry  
HOMEWORK: Finish Barry.

**4/3**  
Finish Barry/Start Gray  
HOMEWORK: Read Gray. Write Story 2.

**4/5**  
Discuss Gray  
HOMEWORK: Read Gray

**WEEK THIRTEEN**

**4/8**  
Discuss Gray  
HOMEWORK: Read Gray

**4/10**  
Discuss Gray  
HOMEWORK: Finish Gray. Write Story 2.

**4/12**  
Discuss Gray.  

**WEEK FOURTEEN**

**4/15**  
*Story 2 due.* Discuss O’Nan  
HOMEWORK: Read O’Nan

**4/17**  
Discuss O’Nan  
HOMEWORK:Read O’Nan

**4/19**  
Discuss O’Nan.  
HOMEWORK: Finish O’Nan

**WEEK FIFTEEN**

**4/22**  
Last day on O’Nan  
HOMEWORK: Read Wade.

**4/24**  
Discuss Wade.  
HOMEWORK: Read Wade
4/26 Discuss Wade.
    HOMEWORK: Read Wade

WEEK SIXTEEN
4/29 Discuss Wade.
    HOMEWORK: Finish Wade.

5/1 Last day on Wade
    HOMEWORK: Finish Wade.

5/3 Last Discussion of class.
    HOMEWORK: Prepare for Final.

Final Exam on Wednesday, May 8th from 8-10AM in this room.
Happy Summer!