Course Title: Getting Closer: The Art of Intimacy in the Short Story
Course Code: FICT 59 W
Instructor: Rachel Smith

Course Summary:
Welcome to Getting Closer: The Art of Intimacy in the Short Story! This course explores the ways that short fiction is always intimate and considers how the writer can use intimate moments to shape and give meaning to stories. We’ll place special emphasis on dissecting, constructing, and understanding intimate scenes in the context of short fiction. How does a particular scene establish a seductive intimacy with the reader? A genuine moment of closeness between characters? Why might those things be critical to the success of a story as a whole? How can the idea of making contact with something “intimate” help us write scenes that move a story forward while also pulsing with their own magic? Weekly written lectures will consider these questions and many others in depth, examining specific stories from The Best American Short Stories 2016 eds. Junot Diaz and Heidi Pitlor.

Students will be expected to write consistently throughout the course, producing an original story (7-10 pages) that turns on an intimate scene or detail. If you write a longer story, you may workshop a 7-10 page excerpt of your choice. Each week, writing exercises will be offered to support idea generating and progress on your manuscript, and every other week you’ll have the opportunity to receive peer and instructor feedback on your writing-in-progress. Additionally, each week’s class discussion will focus on a collaborative dissection of an individual scene from the week’s published story.

The emphasis in this course will be on your writing and on careful reading of the exceptional published stories in our anthology. You’ll leave the course having gotten closer to the bone of what’s important in your work and knowing how to make your stories better at the intersection of technique and heart.

This is an online course. For more information about the Online Writing Program, visit continuingstudies.stanford.

*Please see course page for full description and additional details.*
Grade Options and Requirements:

- **No Grade Requested (NGR)**
  - This is the default option. No work will be required; no credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided.

- **Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)**
  - Score will be determined by student participation. Credit is given with completion of a workshop manuscript and 70% response to classmates' workshop stories.

- **Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)**
  - Creative work and peer feedback will largely determine your grade for this course. If you choose to receive a grade for this course, it will be calculated as follows.
    - 40% Completion of a short story for workshop (7-10 pages, double-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman)
    - 30% Response letters to your peers’ workshop manuscripts
    - 30% Participation in Zoom Sessions, Discussions, and Writing Exercises

*Please Note: If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose either the Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.

**Tentative Zoom Schedule**:  
**Tuesdays at 1 PM PT**  
*Please note that the Zoom schedule is subject to change.*

Zoom sessions in this course will not be additional lectures. They will be casual, investigative discussions, guided by both student and instructor questions and comments.

**Tentative Weekly Outline:**

In the first three weeks of class, students will draft the first rough pages that will form the spine of a new story. Weeks 4-10 we continue to write and revise while beginning review of drafts in workshop. Workshopping a previously completed draft (or excerpt) will be welcome, as long as it does not exceed the 7-10 page limit (2500 words). You’ll sign up for your workshop date in Week 2. This schedule is subject to change.
**Week One: It Was Not What You Thought**  
"Apollo," Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie  
*What is intimacy in fiction?, Exercise: An intimate scene*

**Week Two: Close for Convenience**  
"Garments," Tahmima Anam  
*Considering motivation, Exercise: A change of mind*

**Week Three: When They Shut You Out**  
"Cold Little Bird," Ben Marcus  
*Love and loss, Exercise: Tying it together*

**Week Four: Secrets**  
"For the God of Love, For the Love of God," Lauren Groff  
*Creating intimacy between characters, Workshops 1 & 2*

**Week Five: The Private Life**  
"The Politics of the Quotidian," Caille Millner  
*Creating intimacy between character and reader, Workshops 3 & 4*

**Week Six: Voyeurism**  
"The Bears," Sarah Shun-Lien Bynum  
*The urge to know others, Workshops 5 & 6*

**Week Seven: Betrayal**  
"Wonders of the Shore," Andrea Barrett  
*We hurt the ones we love, Workshops 7 & 8*

**Week Eight: I Want to Know You**  
"The Letician Age," Yalitza Ferreras  
*What draws characters together?, Workshops 9 & 10*

**Week Nine: Blurry Lines**  
"On This Side" Yuko Sakata  
*Intimacy v. Romance, Workshops 11 & 12*

**Week Ten: Endings**  
Reading TBA  
*Workshops 13 & 14*