



Course Title: The Craft of Short Story Writing: Awakening the Imagination

Course Code: FICT 86

Instructor Name and Bio: Valerie Miner, www.valerieminer.com

Class Sessions and Recording

Meeting days and times: Wednesdays, 5:00 - 7:50pm PT

Meeting location: Zoom

The class sessions will be recorded, however, live, weekly attendance is required and crucial for artistic development. Active participation is the heart of the class.

Course Features:

- Live session
 - Lecture, discussions, and Q&A
 - Requires interaction and active participation
 - Guest speakers
- Assignments & Coursework
 - Assignments and course materials posted in Canvas
 - Participants will submit final 8 page workshop piece
 - Instructor will provide feedback on assignments
 - Participants will give presentations
 - Participants will work on a group assignment
- Instructor will hold office hours
- Individual conferences available by request

Course Summary

The course is designed for people who enjoy reading short stories and who want to improve their literary skills. Previous writing classes are not required. It is important that participants are familiar with literary short stories.

**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)
 - Participants must attend at least 9 course sessions
- Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)

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- Participants must attend at least 9 course sessions and read all assigned stories. One page weekly written exercises are required for the first half of the class. The final term project is an eight page story.

Evaluation will be as follows: Class attendance and active participation: 50%. (This includes weekly exercises and oral class contributions.) Final story: 50%. Please see me at any time if you have concerns about your grade.

**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.*

Textbooks/Required Materials

We Should Never Meet, Stories, by Aimee Phan, Picador (paperback, not ebook)

Let The Dead Bury Their Dead Stories by Randal Kenan, Harvest (paperback, not ebook)

Individual Stories by Julia Alvarez, Brett Lot, Jamaica Kincaid, Larry Fondation, Mary Robeson, Rich Chiappone, Wang Ping, etc.

First Assignment

Before the first class, please think about your personal goals. What do you hope to learn and accomplish in the ten-week quarter? What are your writing strengths and challenges? Please write 2 sentences or a short paragraph about this. Before the first class, read one or two stories from the Phan or Kenan book or re-read some favorite short stories.

Please answer these three questions on Canvas for the instructor:

Why are you taking this class (what you do hope to learn)?

What, if any, is your previous writing experience?

Who are 2 or 3 of your favorite fiction writers?

Tentative Weekly Outline

WEEK ONE INTRODUCTION AND PRACTICE

5 April Introduction of the class and to each other, course texts, and instructor.

Discussion of course learning objectives and individual goals.

Writing Exercise.

WEEK TWO VIVID CHARACTERIZATION

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12 April Discussion of several stories from *We Should Never Meet*
Discussion of participant stories
Class tutorial on characterization and writing exercise.

WEEK THREE AIMEE PHAN VISIT

19 April Discussion of other stories in *We Should Never Meet*.
Meeting with author.

Writing Exercise

Please bring two questions for Aimee Phan

Class Lunch Sometime This Week (for those who can come).

WEEK FOUR STORY SHAPE AND PLOT

26 April Discussion of assigned micro-fictions
Tutorial on engaging, dynamic plot
Writing Exercise

WEEK FIVE EVOCATIVE SETTING /LET THE DEAD BURY THEIR DEAD

3 May Discussion of settings in Kenan Book
Tutorial on setting
Writing Exercise

WEEK SIX POINT OF VIEW AND LOOKING BACK/LOOKING AHEAD

10 May Discussion of micro-fictions.
Tutorial on Point of View
Writing Exercise
Planning the Final Story—small groups.
Midterm Discussion--Making the most of the rest of the quarter
Discussion of “To Look Again”

WEEK SEVEN DIALOGUE/RICH CHIAPONNE VISIT

17 May Tutorial on Authentic Dialogue.
Draft notes on final story—small groups.

Read 2 Chiaponne stories

Discussion with Rich Chiaponne about stories and his career.

Bring two questions for guest.

Group I—Post stories by 17 May

WEEK EIGHT SHARING OUR STORIES

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24 May Review of Critique guidelines
Story introductions.
Discussion of Six Stories (Group 1)
Review of what we've learned from this work.
Group II—Post stories by 24 May

WEEK NINE
31 May **SHARING OUR STORIES**
Story introductions.
Discussion of Nine Stories (Group 2)
Review of what we've learned from this work.
Group III—Post stories by 31 May

WEEK TEN
7 June **SHARING OUR STORIES/CONTINUING TO WRITE**
Story Introductions.
Discussion of Six Stories (Group 3)
Review of what we've learned from this work.
Where do we go from here?
Bring one paragraph assignment.

PLEASE NOTE THAT SOME CHANGES IN THE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS MAY OCCUR DURING THE QUARTER TO ALLOW FOR FLEXIBILITY AND SPONTANEITY WITHIN THE ONLINE FORMAT.

ASSIGNMENT EXPLANATIONS:

WEEKLY EXERCISES: These micro-fictions are meant to help you prepare for class by focusing on an aspect of craft. The length is one page (no more, please). Follow instructions for each paper as given the previous week in class. Post these by 1pm the day before class. *We will be reading some of these aloud.*

EDITORIAL PARTNERSHIPS: Each participant should choose one editorial partner in the class. You'll be asked to share your own written work with your partner each week. Editorial partners will be particularly helpful with reading drafts of weekly stories and final story.

TERM PROJECTS: These 8 page (max) stories will give you a chance to practice what you've learned. Participants are welcome to come to office hours to discuss these projects. Give yourself enough time to plan, write, and revise (several times) your paper. Three drafts recommended before submitting the final paper.

SAMPLE PAPERS: Copies of excellent papers from previous classes are available.