
FICTION WRITING WORKSHOP in Spring 2019 (CL3200)

Course Code	CL3200	Professor(s)	Amanda Dennis
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	G-111
Class Schedule	W: 13:45-16:40 in G-113	Office Hours	Tues. 10:30-11:30 & by Appointment
Credits	4	Email	adennis@aup.edu
Semester	Spring 2019	Office Tel. Ext.	N/A

Course Description

Everything depends on how relentlessly one forces from this experience the last drop, sweet or bitter, it can possibly give.

-James Baldwin

Part of the exhilaration of good literature is the way it can color our living—challenging us to look more closely, feel more fiercely. A powerful novel, novella or short story can amplify reality, invigorate our seeing, and illuminate things we've felt but haven't found a way to name. At the same time, literature enables us to inhabit worlds, bodies, and perspectives other than our own. In this course, students will learn the tools and techniques (craft) to build fictional worlds, translating experience into language through narrative and by other means.

Whether a story is an imaginative transformation of life experience or an invention, the writing must be well crafted and convincing, driven not only by plot and theme but also through characterization, conflict, point of view, and sensitivity to language. Students will produce and critique short stories and novel chapters while studying fiction techniques and style through examples. We will concentrate on what makes a strong sentence, paragraph and scene and what is needed to build a story from beginning to end, exploring all aspects of prose fiction (short story, novella, novel) from the inside out. There will be in-class writing exercises designed to expand our palette of sensations and breadth of observations, heeding Henry James's description of the writer as a person "on whom nothing is lost." In addition to writing exercises, students will learn what it means to read as a writer, and further cultivate their literary tastes. We will dissect prose fiction in a range of different styles, asking where and how it succeeds (or not). The course offers an opportunity to develop as a writer in relation to the wider social and literary context, to work under the pressure of deadlines, and to share the experience of writing in a supportive atmosphere.

Readings include work by Lydia Davis, Franz Kafka, Alice Munro, Yoko Tawada and others. Students will also submit a full-length piece for workshop and develop skills in sensitively critiquing the work of others. The course will include visits from international authors or

publishers (in person or video-link) to develop a connection with and understanding of the publishing and editing industries.

Course Learning Outcomes

To develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for the art of prose writing through practice and analysis.

To develop skills in editing and writing strategy

To explore the defining characteristics of the short story, novella and novel and where the borders between them blur.

General Education

Course Outline

Textbooks

This course doesn't have any textbook.

Attendance Policy

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

Grading Policy

Other
