

## Intermediate Creative Prose ENGL3133: Syllabus and Course Schedule

**Course:** ENGL 3133

**Instructor:** John Schulze

**Section:** 201

**Office:** BW 212

**Place:** BW-226

**Office Phone:** (940) 397-6249

**Time:** TR 2:00 - 3:20

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**Office Hours:** Monday thru Thursday-10:00 AM to 2:00 PM, or by appointment

“Writing has laws of perspective, of light and shade, just as painting does, or music. If you are born knowing them, fine. If not, learn them. Then rearrange the rules to suit yourself.”

--Truman Capote

### Goals and Prerequisites:

ENGL 3133 is designed for students who have successfully completed ENGL 2133 or a similar introductory fiction writing course. If you have never written fiction before, this course may be too challenging. I will assume that you have a knowledge and mastery of the basic techniques of fiction writing. For example, I will assume that you are able to:

- Write a scene from first-person POV and the same scene from a third-person POV
- Write a scene that includes a flashback
- Write a scene that includes both dialogue and gesture, with quotation marks and other punctuation used correctly
- Develop believable and interesting fictional characters
- Use setting effectively in a story
- Analyze published stories in terms of craft and technique

This class is intended to help you further hone and polish basic skills in narration, characterization, plot, theme, dialogue, point of view, revision, etc; and to explore experimental forms such as flash fiction. It is also intended to help you become a more perceptive and sophisticated reader of fiction. And finally – maybe most importantly – its goal is to help you explore your creativity and develop your imagination.

### Required Texts:

*Flash!: Writing the Very Short Story (F!)*, John Dufresne, Norton, 2018

Reading Pack (RP) posted on D2L

### Recommended:

A notebook that you keep **only** for fiction writing. This can be as plain or fancy as you like — some writers get inspired by a blank book with a beautiful cover and expensive paper, some swear by

yellow legal pads. Carry it around with you to write down ideas as they come to you; keep it by your bedside to write in at night or first thing in the morning – whatever works for you. Bring it to class for in-class writing exercises we'll do.

### **Written Assignments:**

1. One full-length story (1500 to 3000 words)
2. One Flash story (1000 words max)
3. One micro Flash story (500 words max)
4. One Myth
5. Written critiques of your classmates' stories
6. A one to two page response to a local literary event

### **My attendance policy:**

The only way to pass this class is to attend the scheduled class meetings. You are allowed three (3) absences. After that, each absence will drop your final grade by half a letter grade (5 out of 100 points). Tardiness is also unacceptable. Class begins at the scheduled time, and if you arrive after roll has been called, you will be counted absent. I do have a heart, however, and will make exceptions to this rule on days when the weather might affect your punctuality.

### **Workshop Participation:**

In order to earn a quality Workshop Participation grade, you are expected to provide specific and detailed notations (*no smiley faces or check marks*) on your peers' manuscript. You are also required to provide a thorough and balanced written criticism: What is working and What still need work. A one or two sentence critique is simply inadequate. Failure to follow these instructions will adversely affect your Workshop Participation grade.

### **Class Participation:**

Your Class participation grade will be determined by how thoughtfully and constructively involved you are in any discussion or course related activities. This includes reading all assigned material in preparation for class and considering all seed-questions meant for discussion. As a habit, you will need to be prepared to examine and reflect upon all the stories in class. In so doing, you will hone your reading skills as both a reader and writer.

### **Reading Response to a Local Literary Reading:**

You will be required to attend any public literary reading in the area and write a 1-2 page single-spaced response detailing your impressions. This assignment may be turned in at any point in the semester, though I do recommend that you complete it sooner rather than later. I will provide a list of readings as they are announced, but please feel free to seek out events on your own.

### **Grades:**

Your grade in the course will be based on the effort and quality of your creative work, your thoughtful and analytical responses to your peers' stories, your verbal participation during discussions, and your written response to a local literary event. Although I loathe to place a grade on a short story, please know that submitted stories will not receive full credit if they are missing a

major component (beginning, middle, or end); are lacking in character development, plausible plot, or consistent POV; or are presented with significant textual errors. If at any time during the semester you would like to talk about where you stand in the class, don't hesitate to ask me.

**How your grade will be determined:**

Full Story	20%
Flash Story-	15%
Micro Story-	10%
Myth-	05%
Workshop Participation-	40%
<u>Response to Literary Event</u>	<u>10%</u>
Total	100%

**Letter-grade System**

90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
0-59	F

**Formatting guidelines:**

All submitted work must be typed, printed on one side, double-spaced (except when noted), and using a 12 pt. Times New Roman font and standard margins. Every assignment must have a title, your name, class and section, date, and my name, all in the upper left-hand corner. Assignments that are longer than one page are expected to have page numbers in the lower right-hand footer and the title in the lower left-hand footer beginning on the second page. All assignments that are printed out and are longer than one page must also be stapled in the upper left-hand corner.

**Workshops:**

Stories must be submitted to the class at least one class meeting prior the scheduled workshop date. All pieces must be typed, follow the prescribed formatting guidelines, and the student writer must upload their story to the dropbox on D2L. All class members (except the writer whose work is under consideration) will read the work and then write a typed response to each submission. During the workshop, the writer whose work is under consideration will remain silent. After everyone has weighed in on the piece, the writer will have the opportunity to ask questions and/or make clarifications about the piece. Writers can also ask questions of their readers by placing queries on the manuscripts itself (last page). If you desire focused feedback on particular aspect of your story, this might be a good course of action.

**Commenting on Your Peers' Work:**

As a member of the workshop, you will serve as Reader (by expressing your reaction and impression of your peers' work), Critic (by considering the overall success and quality of your peers' work), and Editor (by offering constructive criticism and suggestions for improving the written elements of your peers' work). For each workshopped piece of writing, please make comments in the margins and type end comments meant to summarize your thoughts, concerns, etc. on a separate piece of paper. A balanced approach is best: *what is working* and *what needs work*. All written responses will pass through me so that I might ensure that everyone in class is providing thoughtful commentary. Comments like "This story rocks!" or "I don't get it," do not allow writers to grow; they lack thought, insight, and engagement with the work. On the other hand, a comment like "the imagery in the third paragraph really created an emotional response in

me” is pointed and lets the writer know what is working. A simple line or two will not be adequate to receive full credit.

### **Academic Integrity/Intellectual Property/ Plagiarism Policy:**

Any student found submitting work other than his or her own will fail the course. There are no exceptions to this policy. Plagiarism is the use of someone else's thoughts, words, ideas, or lines of argument in your own work without appropriate documentation (a parenthetical citation at the end and a listing in "Works Cited") whether you use that material in a quote, paraphrase, or summary. It is a theft of intellectual property and will not be tolerated, whether intentional or not.

### **Student Honor Creed**

"As an MSU Student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else do so."

As students at MSU, we recognize that any great society must be composed of empowered, responsible citizens. We also recognize universities play an important role in helping mold these responsible citizens. We believe students themselves play an important part in developing responsible citizenship by maintaining a community where integrity and honorable character are the norm, not the exception. Thus, we, the Students of Midwestern State University, resolve to uphold the honor of the University by affirming our commitment to complete academic honesty. We resolve not only to be honest but also to hold our peers accountable for complete honesty in all university matters. We consider it dishonest to ask for, give, or receive help in examinations or quizzes, to use any unauthorized material in examinations, or to present, as one's own, work or ideas which are not entirely one's own. We recognize that any instructor has the right to expect that all student work is honest, original work. We accept and acknowledge that responsibility for lying, cheating, stealing, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty fundamentally rests within each individual student. We expect of ourselves academic integrity, personal professionalism, and ethical character. We appreciate steps taken by University officials to protect the honor of the University against any who would disgrace the MSU student body by violating the spirit of this creed.

-- Written and adopted by the 2002-2003 MSU Student Senate

### **Students with Disabilities**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Support Services in Room 168 of the Clark Student Center, 397-4140.

### **Safe Zones Statement**

I consider this classroom to be a place where you will be treated with respect as a human being - regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Additionally, diversity of thought is appreciated and encouraged, provided you can agree to disagree. It is my expectation that ALL students consider the classroom a safe environment.

## Course Schedule

(I reserve the right to change this schedule as needed)

### Week 1: Introductions

1/17 – Introductions and syllabus distribution

1/19 – **Read:** Chapter 1- Briefly (F!)  
Bring your myth to class

### Week 2: The Flash form

1/24 – **Read:** Ch. 2- Stories, Short Stories, and Very Short Stories (F!)  
Bring in your response to one of the suggested exercises in the chapter

1/26 – **Read:** Ch. 3- The Lure of Short Stories (F!)  
**Read:** Ch. 4- Points of View (F!)  
**Due:** Micro Flash piece in dropbox by midnight 1/27

### Week 3: Micro Flash Workshop

1/31 – 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_

2/2 –  
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
6. \_\_\_\_\_

### Week 4: Micro Flash Workshop and Flash Fiction

2/7 – 7. \_\_\_\_\_  
8. \_\_\_\_\_  
9. \_\_\_\_\_

2/9 – **Read:** Ch. 5- The Qualities of a Good Short-Short Story (F!)  
**Read:** Ch. 6- Writing a Short Story; Writing a Very short Story (F!)

### Week 5: Flash Fiction

2/14 – **Read:** Ch. 7- A Formal Feeling Comes (F!)  
In-class writing exercise

2/16 -- **Read:** Ch. 8- The Art of the Glimpse (F!)  
In-class writing exercise

**Week 6: Flash Fiction**

2/21- **Read:** Ch. 9- The Way of All Flash  
In-class writing exercise

2/23 – **Listen:** *New Yorker* Fiction Podcast Joshua Ferris Reads Robert Coover’s “Going for a Beer”  
**Due:** Flash Fiction Piece in dropbox by midnight 2/24

**Week 7: Flash Fiction and Flash Fiction Workshop**

2/28 – 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_

3/2– No Class. I’ll be at the Elmer Kelton Writers Conference in San Angelo

**Week 8: Flash Fiction Workshop**

3/7– 4. \_\_\_\_\_  
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
6. \_\_\_\_\_

3/9– 7. \_\_\_\_\_  
8. \_\_\_\_\_  
9. \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 9: Spring Break 3/13-3/18 No class**

**Week 10: The Short Story**

3/21 – Markets for Micro and Flash Fiction  
Story Structure and Irony  
**Read:** “A Good Man is hard to Find” by Flannery O’Connor (RP)

3/23 – Voice and the Unreliable Narrator  
**Read:** “Why I Live at the P.O.” by Eudora Welty (RP)

**Week 11: The Short Story**

3/28- Setting and Place  
**Read:** “Ice” by Thomas McGuane (RP)

3/30- No class, I’ll be attending CEA in San Antonio

**Week 12: Short Story**

4/4 – Character  
**Read:** “Roy Spivey” by Miranda July (RP)

4/6 – No class--Easter Break- 4/5-4/10

**Week 13: Short Story Conferences- 20-minute one-on-one meetings**

4/11 – 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_

4/12 – 4. \_\_\_\_\_  
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
6. \_\_\_\_\_

4/13 – 7. \_\_\_\_\_  
8. \_\_\_\_\_  
9. \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 14:**

4/18– Markets for Short Stories  
Revision: The Ultimate Do-Over  
**Read:** “Rabbit Run” by Penn Stewart

4/20 – **Listen:** “Chicxulub” by T. C. Boyle *New Yorker Fiction* podcast  
**Due:** Short Story in dropbox by midnight 4/21

**Week 15: Short Story Workshop**

4/25- 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_

4/27-  
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
6. \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 16: Short Story Workshop**

5/2- 7. \_\_\_\_\_  
8. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

5/4- Course evaluations  
Last Words

**Final Exam-** Submit one of your pieces from this course to a market, and then forward your confirmation email to me.