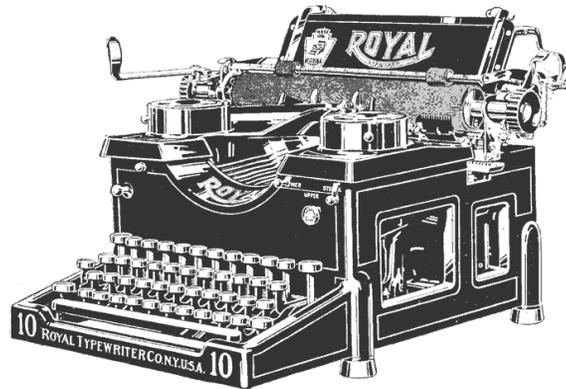


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Office Hours: TRF 12:30-1:30

**Craft of Fiction** ENG 452 (4 CREDITS)[click here for workshop schedule](#)**Description:**

This is primarily a writing course, and it means you will be doing a significant amount of writing throughout the semester. Although not all of the writing you do will be “finished,” you should be prepared write approximately 50 pages of narrative, not including what you will do in for your writing exercises. Writing, of course, is not done in a vacuum. You will also be doing a great deal of reading for this class -- close and careful reading -- which you will be expected to discuss intelligently and constructively. Through close readings of literary works from a range of sources, you will be learning to read “deeply” and to apply the insights you glean in your own writing. Because the exact nature and pace of this class will be determined by its particular make-up in any given semester, we will not have a formally scheduled syllabus. The primary timetable we will follow is the workshop schedule, which will be established after the first week. For the first part of this course, you will be doing writing exercises and assigned readings, both of which will be topics of discussion in class. During the second part of the course, the class will be run primarily as a writing workshop with supplementary lectures and discussions related to publishing and editing.

**Course Requirements:**

1. Attendance & Participation: It is absolutely essential for you to attend class and participate constructively in the discussions. Since this is a writing workshop, one of your primary roles will be to contribute your responses to the works of others, whether they be fellow students or famous writers. Five unexcused absences will result in a failing grade.
2. Writing Exercises: We will be doing several writing exercises throughout the semester, the exact number and nature to be determined by the specific needs of the class. You are expected to complete the exercises (some of which will be done in class) and submit them on time. Details about the exercises will be provided in class.

3. Writing Assignments: Towards the end of the semester, you will have one formal critical writing assignment in addition to your workshop pieces. You will write an analytic essay done in the form of a review or critical explication; the topic of this piece will be the work of one of your classmates. (This will count as part of your writing exercises grade.)

4. Workshop Pieces: These are the most important pieces of writing you will be doing for the semester, since they will represent the application of everything you've learned. Stories should be in the form of a narrative and be at least 1,200 words long (2,500 is preferable). (You should aim to do at least one longer story of at least 5,000 words also.) Format, subject matter, etc., will be discussed throughout the semester. Since these stories will determine the scheduling of the last few class sessions, it is absolutely imperative that you turn them in on time and be in class to discuss them.

5. Comment Sheets: During the workshop segment of the class, you are required to provide a page of written comments on each story being discussed. If the class is full, this means you will be writing close to 40 pages of comments throughout the semester, always in advance of the workshop session. One copy of the comment sheet goes to the student whose work is being workshopped on a particular day; another copy will be handed in to me. (Comment sheets will count as part of your participation grade.)

6. Midterm & Final Exam: We will have a midterm and final exam covering literary terms and concepts, basic editing, and required readings.

7. Reading: Although we will not have the time to discuss everything we read before the workshop sessions, you are expected to read everything assigned and to keep a record of informal responses in your class notebook. One or more of the readings you do for the course may be the topic of your analytic/review essay. NOTE: In addition to the texts currently in the bookstore for this course, we will be reading one or two additional texts in conjunction with the visits of writers for the department's annual writers series.

8. Conference: You will be required to have at least one conference with me, to be scheduled before the end of the semester. (The conference will count as part of your participation grade.)

9. One of the stories you write during the semester will be prepared for submission to a literary journal (electronic or paper to be determined). You will research various journals and familiarize yourself with submission policies before you proofread your story (following established rules) and pair off to copy edit your story before submitting it to the journal according to its policies. (This is part of your workshop grade.)

### **Course Goals:**

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. demonstrate their familiarity with the requirements of both conventional and some non-conventional forms of narrative fiction and be able to write narratives in a variety of short and longer forms;

2. name several online and print journals and their submission policies, and be able to prepare a manuscript for submission to both print and online journals;
3. demonstrate (verbally and/or in writing) a facility for the workshop process and be able to write a coherent and engaged critique of short fiction read in a workshop setting;
5. demonstrate their familiarity (verbally and/or in writing) with several representative works of narrative in a variety of forms and be able to describe and analyze them in essay or critique form;
6. demonstrate their command of a range of standard tropes in narrative writing and be able to describe and analyze them in representative works.

**Grades will be determined as follows:**

Participation & Attendance (25%)

Midterm (15%)

Final (15%)

Workshop Pieces (30%)

Writing Exercises (15%)

Final grades will be based on the following scale:

A	93% +
A-	90%-92%
B+	87%-89%
B	83%-86%
B-	80%-82%
C+	77%-79%
C	73%-76%
C-	70%-72%
D+	67%-69%
D	63%-66%
D-	60%-62%
F	59% -

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Bell, Madison, ed. *Narrative Design*

Other texts will be distributed in class or made available online.

Academic Integrity Policy:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty in their college work. Cheating, forgery, and plagiarism are serious offenses, and students found guilty of any form of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary action. For more information, see the Advising Handbook at

[http://www.newpaltz.edu/advising/policies\\_integrity.cfm](http://www.newpaltz.edu/advising/policies_integrity.cfm).

Plagiarism: The SUNY New Paltz Faculty Handbook defines plagiarism as "the representation, intentional or unintentional, of someone else's words or ideas as one's own." You must not summarize, paraphrase, or quote language, information, or ideas

from books, articles, or other sources without properly crediting that source. If you plagiarize all or part of a writing assignment, you will automatically receive an F on it. In severe cases, you may fail the course or be reported to the Dean of the College.

ADA Policy:

Students with documented physical, learning, psychological and other disabilities are entitled to receive reasonable accommodations. If you need classroom or testing accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center (SUB 205, X3030). The DRC will provide forms verifying the need for accommodation. The SUNY New Paltz Faculty Handbook suggests that students "self-disclose their disability or disabilities in an appropriate and confidential time and place" to their instructor. As soon as the instructor receives the form from the DRC, you will be provided with the appropriate accommodations.

## PROVISIONAL COURSE SCHEDULE

In general, after the first week of class, we will workshop four stories per week in two class sessions and devote the third class session to critical/analytic topics. Some of the time in our workshop sessions will be devoted to relevant readings assigned in conjunction with the stories to be workshopped. (Remember your story should be submitted to me at least 4 days in advance of your workshop session in order for it to be formatted and posted. Once you have picked a workshop date, it cannot be reassigned unless we need to reschedule for a snow day or other natural/divine intervention.)

### Week 1

Introduction to the course. Logistics of workshop.

Hemingway's "iceberg" theory; "Hills Like White Elephants" deconstruction.

Basic semiotics (the semiotic triangle, symbol, icon, reference, signification)

Primary tropes, layering

*Nomen est omen*—the physiognomy of names in characterization.

### Week 2

Introduction:

The prevailing models of short fiction (linear & modular design from Bell)

The story in parallel with the process of (auto)hypnosis

The historical trajectory of literary theory and its effect on short fiction

Fractal and holographic structure in Morrison and others ("dream logic")

Workshop #1 (2 student stories)

### Week 3

Workshop #1 (2 student stories)

Structure; plot; theme; motif  
Elementary vs. “deep” structure

Workshop #1 (2 student stories)

#### **Week 4**

Workshop #1 (2 student stories)

Genre: literary genre vs. marketing & bookselling genre  
The issue of length in short fiction (historical context)

Workshop #1 (2 student stories)

#### **Week 5**

Workshop #1 (2 student stories)

Literary fractal writing exercise  
Associative logic & modular design

Workshop #1 (2 student stories)

#### **Week 6**

Workshop #1 (2 student stories)

Literary “palimpsest” writing exercise  
What *subtext* really means/achieves (alluding to structure instead of element)

Midterm review

#### **Week 7**

MIDTERM

Workshop #1 (2 student stories)

Modular Design (nonlinear compositions)

#### **Week 8**

“Depth Charge” in Bell (linear)

“Little Red” in Bell (modular)

Workshop #1 (2 student stories)

#### **Week 9**

Publishing and the history of story length (flash, short story, novella, novel, etc.)  
Genre & YA literature

Workshop #2 (2 student stories)

Editing—proofreading, copy editing, formatting, submission formats

**Week 10**

Workshop #2 (2 student stories)

Paper journals and electronic journals

Review venues and review blogs

Workshop #2 (2 student stories)

**Week 11**

The business of submitting to journals (and dealing with journal editors)

Workshop #2 (2 student stories)

Workshop #2 (2 student stories)

**Week 12**

Publishing: the marketplace, editors, agents, packagers

Workshop #2 (2 student stories)

Workshop #2 (2 student stories)

**Week 13**

The publishing contract

Workshop #2 (2 student stories)

Workshop #2 (2 student stories)

**Week 14**

Line editing; your submission packet

Workshop #2 (2 student stories)

Results of line editing; submission packet

**Week 15**

Workshop #2 (2 student stories), Final exam

Time reserved for scheduling flexibility above

