# COURSE CALENDAR AND WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

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<td>All writing assignments should be completed and submitted to Blackboard by 11:30 pm on the day they are due.</td>
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**Week 1**

**Tues 1/20:** Introduction. In-class writing using interruptions.

**Reading Assignment** complete by the beginning of class 1/22:

Introductions in *Crafting* and in *What If*. In-class discussion of readings and definition of fiction.

**Writing Assignment** due at beginning of class Thursday 1/22:

Typed Writing Exercise 7, p. 25 in *What If (WI)*. Write the exercise numbers on your submissions. Please bring this exercise to class.

**Instructions:** Lose yourself in the writing--accept the notion that it is not a story but a brain flush—desensitize yourself to the fear that your writing will not meet expectations. "Let it go, let it go..." You should not care if this turns out to be a bad story--in fact try to make it "bad" to face the fear of embarrassing yourself later. It should be a liberating exercise.

**Thur. 1/22:** Discussion of readings and the writing process. We will go over Exercise #7 in class.

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**Week 2**

**1/27**

**Tues. 1/27:** Discussion of Beginning. In-class writing exercise using poetry from a poetry book of your choosing (bring a book of poetry to class).

**Thurs 1/29** Reading Assignment for 1/29

- Tobias Wolff “Powder” p. 430
- Nadine Gordimer “Is There Nowhere Else Where We Can Meet?” p. 129.

Writing Exercise 6, p. 23 in *WI*. Due in submission folder in Blackboard before 11:30 pm.

- For an example of the way you should approach this assignment, look at the second student sample that starts with the song. **Be sure to include the same amount of detail as the sample.**
- Use specific nouns and details throughout.
- Writing should be spontaneous.
- **Without stopping to think**, type one page or more, double-spaced, on each such prompt that I will assign throughout the semester.
- **Put in as many minute details as possible** in this quick, unedited writing.
Please do not stop if you find that you have reached a flow. Keep writing for ten more minutes if that magical thing happens.

Your first and second stories for the class grade (100 points each) must be based on these exercises.

Set aside time for this writing. Read the student samples provided in the W/I exercises to help you understand the goal of the exercise.

Slow down your thinking and re-imagine the character acting in a particular place with particular objects and talking to someone. Do not worry about plot direction. Still your mind and listen, look, touch, taste, smell the smallest detail possible. Include the annoying click of metal against metal as something rolls around with each turn of the steering wheel. You may want to include Exercise #10 on p. 33 (W/I) for ways to develop the main character with revealing detail.

**Week 3**

**Tues 2/3:** On Tuesday bring a small object about which you can tell a compelling story, true or not. In class, students will take notes, writing down words they recall from your narrative.

**Class Discussion:** Development; Showing and Telling

**Writing Exercise** #5, p. 20, W/I due Thursday in Blackboard by 11:30 pm.

Write freely, making sure to use objects (repeat one object three times) and bring in another character with whom the first actor interacts. You may use the interruptions introduced in class to vary your narrative (e.g., weather, animal, etc.). Don’t worry about an ending. Write at least 30 minutes without stopping, more if you can arrange the time. READ THE STUDENT EXAMPLE.

If you write with a pen, type up what you have handwritten for submission in Blackboard no later than 11:30 pm on 2/5

**Thurs 2/5:** Discussion of the following readings:

**Reading assignment for Thursday 9/11:** Crafting Villiers de L’Isle-Adam pp. 390-393; Jonis Agee pp. 1-3, Raymond Carver pp. 56-61. 

**Review journal assignments** found on pp. 261-272 in W/I. Over the semester you should use at least five of these exercises in your creative writing journal. The rest of your entries should be of similar writing quality. Your journal is not a diary but a journal. For all entries use detail (use nouns and verbs—rarely use adjectives or adverbs—to describe what you see). For one entry you may want to use “A Vision” in Crafting. Pages 213-214 as an example.

**ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK, Tues. 2/10. BRING YOUR COMPLETED WRITING ASSIGNMENT TO CLASS on Tuesday NOTE THE CHANGE--**

Separate the two writings by several days.

Start with an incident that happened in real life. Write it in first person (I), in the form of a kind of summary, in one sentence. For
example, “My dad and I were driving to his shop to ride my dirt bike for a little father/son bonding time when...” Or “Jake’s name popped up on my cell phone, and it freaked me out.”

Next, write a sentence that is a total lie—a big one; e.g., “My dad was a former trick motorcyclist, and he’s never been quite right since he landed on his head in an unbelievable accident.” Or “He’d been gone for six months working on a pipeline in Alaska, and they told me he was dead.” The lie should be a big one—even fantastical. But make it convincing. So you start with a fact and then fictionalize the story. You can bring in any real life details you wish, but the story is entirely fiction (with one foot rooted in reality). Get specific, sensory details in your writing. Don’t worry about an ending (from “Writer’s Workbook” in *Writer’s Digest* p. 67.

**Second part of the writing assignment:** After the first writing has grown cold, return to introduce a new character to the writing assignment you have completed. Introduce this character solely by his/her actions. Don’t tell us a word about him or her; let us judge for ourselves. It could be one action or it could be ten. Then have that character reveal something about the original character in your beginning exercise (use dialogue). (Taken from *The First Five Pages*).

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**Week 4**

**Tues 2/10:** Discussion of Character. Workshop of Writing Assignment (see assignment above)

**Thurs 2/12:** Discussion of following Readings:
- Alice Walker, pp. 402-407; Eudora Welty, pp. 409-416;
- Helena Vivien Veramontes pp. 394-398 in *Crafting*.

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**Week 5**

**Tues. 2/17** Conflict, action and narrative, and plot comparison.  
On Tues, 2/17, **bring a library book of photographs**. Exercise using photographs (in class).

**Writing Assignments:** **Writing Exercise** due Thurs. 2/19 in Blackboard by 11:30 pm.

Choose an object that you observe on someone you encounter during the week. You will expand that object to build a character. Begin writing about that character (use specific detail) and keep writing for 20 minutes. Then, using Exercise #11, pp. 36-39 in *WI*, flesh out that character that you have created (based on the observed object).

**First workshop participants:** submit your story (type the number of the exercise on which the story is based at the end of the story). You should post your story in Blackboard using the
Discussion board (find the Discussion tool on the left side of the opening screen). Look ahead to Week 6 for help in refining your story for the workshop.

**Thurs. 2/19** Discussion of the following readings: *Crafting* Sadat Hasan Manto, pp. 220-222; Dorothy West, pp. 417-420; “The Prodigal Son,” pp. 204-205; Shirley Jackson, pp. 160-168. Also read about Plot in *WI* pp. 111-113.

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**Week 6**

**Tues 2/24:** Discussion of Interior Landscape of Your Characters.

**Writing Assignment** due Tues. 2/24 Exercise #32, pp. 96-98 in *WI*. Use this exercise to flesh out your story or enhance your character. Discuss following readings:

*Crafting*, Ann Beattie, pp. 25-29; Julio Cortazar, ____________

**Writing Assignment** due Thur. 2/26

**STORY DUE FROM REMAINING MEMBERS OF THE CLASS.**

Pages 197-212 in *WI* will help you refine your story. Submit your story on Blackboard under Discussions in the folder there. Due by Thursday, 2/26, no later than 11:30 pm. You will receive five points off your final story grade for each day your story is late.

**Thurs. 2/26:** Workshop #1

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**WEEK 7**

**Tues 3/3** Discussion of Showing and Telling. Read *What If* "Sheep" p. 363-376 for discussion. Exercise #53 in class (if time)

**Writing Assignment** due Thurs. 3/5 in Blackboard, no later than 11:30 pm. Exercise #24, pp. 69-70 in *WI*. In this exercise, create one character—implying background, place, setting and milieu; develop into a scene. Use details that will reveal the character, the setting, and the emotion. AVOID A STEREOTYPE in the example that you choose.

**Thurs. 3/5** WORKSHOP #2.

**LONG-TERM ASSIGNMENT:** To prepare for your final story, read *WI* pp. 247-260 “Learning from the Greats.” Type out one of the stories from your chosen author’s work (you should now choose the author you wish to study for your second/final story. Read #100 on p. 255 to get the general idea). To be completed by Week 11.

**SPRING BREAK!** ☀
WEEK 8

Tues. 3/17: Discussion of Style and Language. Read for discussion Crafting Italo Calvino pp. 51-53; Jorge Luis Borges pp. 34-37; Monica Ware, p. 408; Voltaire, pp. 399-401.

**Writing Exercise** due in Blackboard on Thurs. 3/19 before 11:30 pm: #52, p. 141. This work lets you know how strong your own work can be if you use the right words [notice that I just used one-syllable words].

Thurs., 3/19: WORKSHOP #3.

**JOURNAL WILL BE DUE WEEK 12.** Bind your individual entries in an attractive folder. Make it look appealing.

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WEEK 9

Tues. 3/24: Discussion of Dialogue. Read for discussion: Crafting Tennessee Williams, pp. 422-425; WI pp. 73-83 on dialogue.

**Writing Exercise** due in Blackboard on Thurs. 3/26 #29, p. 84 in WI.

Thurs. 3/26: WORKSHOP #4.

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WEEK 10


**Writing Exercise due in Blackboard Thu. 4/2 #70, p. 179.** Read the student example.

Thurs. 4/2 WORKSHOP #5.

**TYPED STORY BY YOUR CHOSEN AUTHOR WILL BE DUE next week in Blackboard.**

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WEEK 11

Tues. 4/7: Discussion of Point of View. Read for discussion: Pam Houston, p. 340-343 in WI; Ursula K. Le Guin, pp. 189-201 in Crafting.

**Writing Assignment due in Blackboard Thur 4/9:** (Exercise handout to be turned into Blackboard).

Thurs. 4/9 Workshop #6
Reminder: Prepare your journal.
Typed story of your chosen author due in Blackboard

WEEK 12

Tues. 4/14: Read WI on revision, pp. 197-212.
Review Exercise #85 in WI.
Handout on how to revise.

Writing Assignment due in Blackboard on Thur. 4/16 Exercise #89, p. 229-231 in WI. Excellent exercise to help you in restructuring your sentences as you revise your final stories. You may use either story as the material for this exercise.

Thurs. 4/16: Flash Fiction. Read WI pp. 273-286. Prepare to discuss the story you like the best. Why?
Journal Due

WEEK 13

Tues. 4/21 Presentation on Author

Thurs. 4/23 Presentation on Author

WEEK 14

Tues. 4/28: Storyboard final story

Thurs. 4/30 Read revised workshop story
Submission of Revised Workshop Story due on Blackboard

WEEK 15

Tues. 5/5: Publishing

Thurs. 5/7: Read second (Final) non-workshoppedstory