

SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

Colorado State University, Academic Partner

Voyage:	Fall 2022
Discipline:	English
Course Number and Title:	E 311A Intermediate Creative Writing—Fiction
Division:	Upper
Faculty Name:	Zandra L. Jordan
Semester Credit Hours:	3

Prerequisites One (1) beginning creative writing course with a minimum grade of B-.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What inspiration can travel offer fiction writers? Much in fact! Visiting new places, immersing yourself in the people and cultures, exploring the geographical and sociopolitical landscapes, absorbing the colors, textures, voices, tastes, aromas, and rhythms, enriches the literary imagination. In this fiction writing workshop, you will leverage the benefits of travel, finding inspiration in the world around you for creating short fiction. As you journey from one country to the next, reading fiction set in many of the places that you visit, you will keep a journal of the sights and sounds that intrigue you. Writing exercises on setting, characterization, plot, point of view, and other narrative features will sharpen your understanding of the elements and craft of fiction writing. You will also consider the politics and ethics of representation as you determine how to incorporate your observations into your writings. Drawing on your journal, insights gleaned from exemplary fiction writers, and techniques learned in the workshop, you will produce two short stories, one of which you will workshop and revise in response to peer review and professor feedback. You will build your stories over the course of the voyage, allowing your travels to lend authenticity to the fictionalized narratives that you create.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Analyze the techniques that exemplary fiction writers use to craft stories
- Identify strategies to employ in your own writing as you “read like a writer”
- Enrich your literary imagination through the art of conscientious observation and journaling
- Understand the ethics and politics of representation and their bearing on how you see, read, and write about other cultures
- Provide thoughtful, principled, constructive critiques of your peers’ writings
- Employ revision as an iterative part of the writing process
- Craft two short stories with careful attention to literary technique, peer feedback, iterative revision, ethical representation, and writerly voice

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS AND SUPPLIES

AUTHOR: Janet Burroway
TITLE: *Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft*
PUBLISHER: University of Chicago Press
ISBN: 978-0226616698
DATE/EDITION: 2019, 10th edition

AUTHOR: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
TITLE: *The Best Short Stories 2021: The O. Henry Prize Winners*
PUBLISHER: Anchor
ISBN: 978-0593311257
DATE/EDITION: 2021

AUTHOR: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Jhumpa Lahiri
TITLE: *One World: A Global Anthology of Short Stories*
PUBLISHER: New Internationalist
ASIN: B007A2VXKC
DATE/EDITION: 2009

A portable journal, whether print or digital, that you will carry to record observations during travel and will reference during in-class and other writing exercises.

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

Embarkation Day – September 9

1: Introductions and Course Overview

Review the course structure, assignments, and expectations
Discuss “The Writing Process,” Ch. 1 in *Writing Fiction*
In-class Reading: Chimamanda Adichie’s “The Danger of a Single Story,” TED Talk (transcript), 2009
In-class Writing Exercise

2: It’s in the Details

Discuss “Seeing is Believing: Showing and Telling,” Ch. 2 in *Writing Fiction*
Discuss Daphne Palasi Andreades’ “Brown Girls”
Review strategies for journaling as a conscientious observer

3: Showing Readers Characters

Discuss “Building Character: Characterization, Part I,” Ch. 3 in *Writing Fiction*

Discuss Karina Sainz Borgo’s “Scissors”

In-class: Character Writing Exercise

Journal Writing Prompt #1

4: Telling Readers About Characters

Discuss “The Flesh Made Word: Characterization, Part II,” Ch. 4 in *Writing Fiction*

Discuss Asali Solomon’s “Delandria”

Due: Journal Writing Prompt #1

5: Showing and Telling Characterization

Discuss Anthony Doerr’s “The Master’s Castle”

Discuss Konstantinos Tzika’s “A Boy and His Kite”

6: Setting the Scene

Discuss “Long Ago and Far Away: Fictional Setting,” Ch. 5 in *Writing Fiction*

Discuss Alice Jholly’s “From Far Away They Saw Us Burn”

In-class: Setting Writing Exercise

Journal Writing Prompt #2

7: Plot and Narrative Structure

Discuss “The Tower and the Net: Plot and Structure,” Ch. 6 in *Writing Fiction*

Discuss Jamel Brinkley’s “Witness”

In-Class: Plot Writing Exercise

Due: Journal Writing Prompt #2

8: Plot and Narrative Structure

Discuss Adachioma Ezeano’s “Becoming the Baby Girl”

Discuss Jude Dibia’s “Among Strangers”

Journal Writing Prompt #3

9: Why Point of View Matters

Discuss “Call Me Ishmael: Point of View,” Ch. 7 in *Writing Fiction*

Discuss David Rabe’s “Things We Worried About When I Was Ten”

In-Class: POV Writing Exercise

Due: Journal Writing Prompt #3

10: What's Your Vantage Point?

Discuss Brett Anthony Johnston's "Don't Write What You Know" from *The Atlantic*
Discuss Souvankham Thammavongsa's "The Edge of the World" from *The Atlantic*
Due: Short Story #1 Draft

11: Literary Devices: Bringing Fiction to Life

Discuss "Is and Is Not: Comparison," Ch. 8 in *Writing Fiction*
Discuss Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's "My Mother, the Crazy African"
In-Class: Metaphor Writing Exercises
Journal Writing Prompt #4

12: The Art of Revision and Literary Technique

Discuss "Play it Again, Sam: Revision and Theme," Ch. 9 in *Writing Fiction*
Discuss Sindya Bhanoo's "Malliga Homes"
In-Class: Revision Writing Exercise
Due: Journal Writing Prompt #4

13: Preparing for Field Class

Discuss Shabnam Nadiya's "Ishwari's Children"
Discuss Lucinda Nelson Dhavan's "The Volunteer"
Field Class Assignment
Due: Short Story #1 Second Draft

14: Other Stories and Literary Technique

Discuss Martin A. Ramos' "The Way of the Machete"
Select and be prepared to discuss a short story of your choice from *One World*.
Due: Field Class Assignment

15: Other Stories and Literary Technique

Discuss Sequoia Nagamatsu's "Melancholy Nights in a Tokyo Cyber Café"
Select and be prepared to discuss a short story of your choice from *The Best Short Stories 2021*.

16: Other Stories and Literary Technique

Discuss Elaine Chew's "Leng Lui is for Pretty Lady"
Discuss Jianan Qian's "To the Dogs"
Journal Writing Prompt #5

17: Preparing for the Writing Workshops

Discuss Beth Nguyen's "Unsilencing the Writing Workshop" from *Literary Hub*
Draw on field class writing to model the workshop format

Due: Journal Writing Prompt #5

Journal Writing Prompt #6

18: Short Story Writing Workshops

Due: Short Story #2 Draft

19: Short Story Writing Workshops

20: Short Story Writing Workshops

Due: Journal Writing Prompt #6

Journal Writing Prompt #7

21: Short Story Writing Workshops

Due: Journal Writing Prompt #7

22: Story Presentations and Peer Critiques

Due: Revised Short Story

Journal Writing Prompt #8

23: Story Presentations and Peer Critiques

Due: Journal Writing Prompt #8

24: Story Presentations and Peer Critiques

25—FINAL CLASS: Course wrap-up and reflections

Disembarkation Day — December 22

FIELD WORK

Semester at Sea® field experiences allow for an unparalleled opportunity to compare, contrast, and synthesize the different cultures and countries encountered over the course of the voyage. In addition to the one field class, students will complete a Comparative Experiential Project that span multiple countries.

Field Class & Assignment

STUDENTS: Field Class proposals listed below are not finalized. Confirmed ports, dates, and times will be posted to the [Fall 22 Courses and Field Class page](#) when available.

Field Class attendance is mandatory for all students enrolled in this course. Do not book individual travel plans or a Semester at Sea sponsored trip on the day of your field class.

Field Classes constitute 20% of the contact hours for each course.

Field Class Title: Narrative Inspiration from Observation

Outcomes:

- Enrich your literary imagination through the art of conscientious observation and journaling
- Understand the ethics and politics of representation and their bearing on how you see, read, and write about other cultures

Activities:

You will visit two or three local sites to learn more about the history and culture of the place. At least one of the sites will provide access to historical information that you are unable to research on your own while aboard the ship. You will have lunch in a local restaurant or marketplace and then explore the natural beauty of the region. Ideally, you will have an opportunity to engage with local residents and learn about their lives.

Assessment:

Inspired by the day's events and observations, you will produce three descriptive sketches, one focused on setting, one on character, and one on plot. Each sketch should be approximately 250-words in length and may be used in the short stories produced for the course.

Comparative Experiential Project

The CEP is the required comparative assignment that spans multiple countries. The Comparative Experiential Project constitutes at least 5% of the grade for each course.

For your CEP, you will keep a journal of your observations in each port-of-call in response to eight journal prompts. The course schedule includes the dates when journal prompts will be provided in class as well as the due dates for journal submissions. Prompts are typically assigned before each port-of-call and are due the next class day. Each journal must be 300 to 500-words typed (or 1 to 2 single-spaced handwritten pages) and will be evaluated based on alignment with the prompt and demonstrated engagement with elements of fiction writing learned in the course.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

Attendance and Participation: 15%

(includes preparation for and active participation in reading discussions, in-class writing exercises, writing workshops, and all other class activities)

CEP Journal: 10%

(reflections on your observations in each port of call and completion of eight journal prompts)

Short Story 1: 25%

(submission of two drafts required)

Short Story 2: 25%
(submission of two drafts required)

Revised Short Story Presentation: 5%

Field Class and Assignments: 20%

GRADING SCALE

The following Grading Scale is utilized for student evaluation. Pass/Fail is not an option for Semester at Sea® coursework. Note that C-, D+ and D- grades are also not assigned on Semester at Sea® in accordance with the grading system at Colorado State University (the academic partner institution).

Pluses and minuses are awarded as follows on a 100% scale:

<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Satisfactory/Poor</u>	<u>Failing</u>
97-100%: A+	87-89%: B+	77-79%: C+	Less than 60%: F
93-96%: A	83-86%: B	70-76%: C	
90-92%: A-	80-82%: B-	60-69%: D	

ATTENDANCE/ENGAGEMENT IN THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Attendance in all Semester at Sea® classes, including the Field Class, is mandatory. Students must inform their instructors prior to any unanticipated absence and take the initiative to make up missed work in a timely fashion. Instructors must make reasonable efforts to enable students to make up work which must be accomplished under the instructor's supervision (e.g., examinations, laboratories). In the event of a conflict in regard to this policy, individuals may appeal using established CSU procedures.

CLASSROOM CLIMATE

Semester at Sea® is committed to the Voyage Community Values. Consequently, the classroom environment is founded on mutual respect, community, and an aim toward equity. The Voyage Community Values support the creation of a collaborative and vibrant community. Our community is the foundation of our learning, critical inquiry, and discovery. Each member of this course has a responsibility to uphold these values when engaging with one another.

With that, please review the following Voyage Community Values:

- **Well-Being:** We commit to the health, safety and well-being of ourselves, all members of our voyage community, *and* members of the communities we will visit.

- **Interconnectedness:** We understand our actions and attitudes have an impact locally and globally. We always seek to positively affect the planet and the people around us near and far.
- **Respect:** We honor the inherent dignity of *all people* with an abiding commitment to freedom of expression, scholarly discourse and the advancement of knowledge. We have the right to be treated, and the responsibility to treat others, with fairness and equity.
- **Inclusion:** We ensure inclusive environments that welcome, value, affirm and embrace *all people* within the shipboard community and in each country we visit.
- **Integrity:** We are honest and ethical in all of our interactions, including our academic work. We hold ourselves accountable for our actions.
- **Excellence:** We model the highest academic standards of preparation, inquiry and knowledge and consistently seek to understand complex issues and express informed opinions with courage and conviction.

LEARNING ACCOMMODATIONS

Semester at Sea® provides academic accommodations for students with diagnosed learning disabilities, in accordance with ADA guidelines. Students who will need accommodations in a class, should contact ISE to discuss their individual needs. Any accommodation must be discussed in a timely manner prior to implementation.

A letter from students' home institutions verifying the accommodations received on their home campuses (dated within the last three years) is required before any accommodation is provided on the ship. Students must submit verification of accommodations to their Student Services advisor as soon as possible, but no later than two months prior to the voyage. More details can be found within the **Course Registration Packet**, posted to the student portal prior to registration.

STUDENT CONDUCT CODE

The foundation of a university is truth and knowledge, each of which relies in a fundamental manner upon academic integrity and is diminished significantly by academic misconduct. Academic integrity is conceptualized as doing and taking credit for one's own work. A pervasive attitude promoting academic integrity enhances the sense of community and adds value to the educational process. All within the University are affected by the cooperative commitment to academic integrity. All Semester at Sea® courses adhere to this Academic Integrity Policy and Student Conduct Code.

Depending on the nature of the assignment or exam, the faculty member may require a written declaration of the following honor pledge: "I have not given, received, or used any unauthorized assistance on this exam/assignment."

RESERVE BOOKS FOR THE LIBRARY

None

FILMS

None

ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS

AUTHOR: Chimamanda Adiche

ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: "The Danger of a Single Story"

JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: TED Talk

VOLUME: <https://www.hohschools.org/cms/lib/NY01913703/Centricity/Domain/817/English%2012%20Summer%20Reading%20-%202018.pdf>

DATE: 2009

PAGES: n/a

AUTHOR: Souvankham Thammavongsa

ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: "Edge of the World"

JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: *The Atlantic*

VOLUME: <https://www.theatlantic.com/books/archive/2020/03/souvankham-thammavongsa-edge-world-short-story/607465/>

DATE: March 13, 2020

PAGES: n/a

AUTHOR: Beth Nguyen

ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: Unsilencing the Writing Workshop

JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: Literary Hub

VOLUME: <https://lithub.com/unsilencing-the-writing-workshop/>

DATE: April 3, 2019

PAGES: n/a