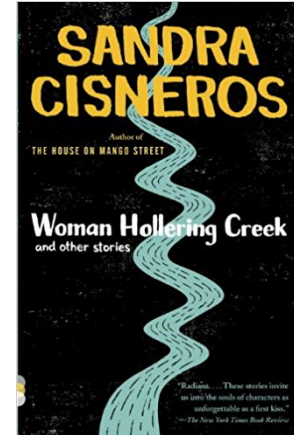
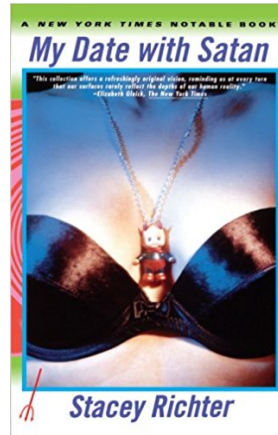
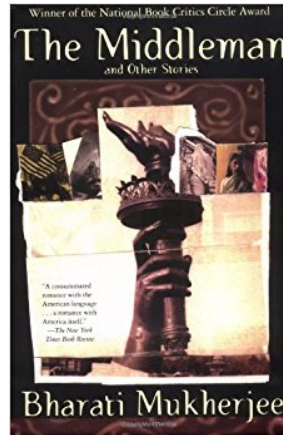
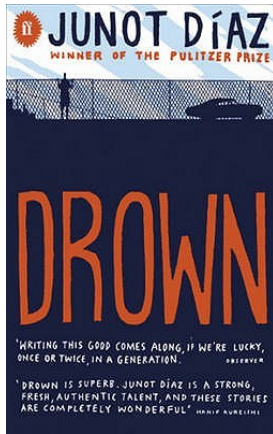


ENGL 4352.01 / Spring 2020

Advanced Creative Writing: Workshop in Fiction



Section, Time, and Location

ENGL 4352.01 / F 10:45-1:15pm / ELABS 258

Instructor: Dr. Robert P. Moreira

Office: ELABS 205

Phone: (956) 665-8771

Email: robert.moreira@utrgv.edu

Web: www.robertpaulmoreira.com

Office Hours: TR 2-3pm; F 1:30-3:30pm

Course Blog

<http://engl435201.blogspot.com/>

Google Drive

<http://drive.google.com>

Course Description

A workshop course in short fiction writing.

Outcomes

Students will learn how to write, revise, and critique character-driven, literary short fiction while reading widely in this genre. Additionally, students will learn to research appropriate literary venues for submission of their work.

Required Text (On reserve in the UTRGV Library)

LaPlante, Alice. *Method and Madness: The Making of a Story*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2009. Print.

Other Required Materials

- 1 Composition Book (for writing activities)
- 1 File Folder (for Discussion Leader Forms & other handouts)

Creative Writing Program Student Learning Outcomes

- SLO 1—Students will be able to interpret and analyze a text using different approaches from literary, rhetorical and/or linguistic theories.
- SLO 2— Students in certification tracks will demonstrate knowledge and skills in the areas of writing, literature, reading, oral communication, media literacy, and English language arts pedagogy.
- SLO 4—Students will be able to use discipline-appropriate technology applications (such as library databases, computer applications, Internet research, non-print media, multi-media applications, desktop publishing, etc.) in preparation and presentation of course projects

ENGL 4352 Instructor's Course Objectives

ENGL 4352 is designed to develop students' skills in writing and reading in the genres of short fiction (SLOs 1, 2, 4); acquaint students with the specialized terminology and methods used in fiction writing and literary criticism (SLOs 1, 2, 4); promote students ability to read analytically and creatively; develop critical writing skills; and practice written and oral communication skills (SLOs 1, 2, 4).

Google Drive

All work for this course will be composed/revised in Google Drive. To set up a Google Drive account and folder, follow the instructions on our course blog.

Important Dates

January 13	First day of classes
January 16	Last day to add a course or register for Spring 2020
January 20	Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday – NO classes
March 9-14	Spring Break – NO classes
April 9	Last day to drop a course; will count toward the 6-drop rule
April 10-11	Easter Holiday – NO classes
April 30	Study Day – NO classes
May 1-7	Final Exams
May 7	Spring classes end; Official last day of the term
May 8-9	Commencement Exercises

GRADES

I will periodically evaluate the work you do for class (attendance/participation, reading responses, workshops, etc.). This will allow me a chance to let you know how you're doing in different areas and how you can improve throughout the semester. At the end of the semester, there will be a total number of possible points available for specific categories (see below). **Your final grade will be determined by the sum of the percentages of the total points you accumulate in each category.** Below is a breakdown of each graded category:

Attendance & Participation	10%
Discussion Leader	10%
Workshops	30%
Mandatory Conference	10%
Blog Reading Responses	10%
Final Portfolio	30%

Attendance and Participation (10%)

In this class we will analyze published texts, as well as critique each other's work. This requires your attendance both to write and discuss your feedback. Therefore, attendance and promptness are required. You are allowed **one** unexcused absence from class. Two tardies equal one absence. Each additional absence above the limit of one will deduct 1/2 letter grade off of your final letter grade for the course. In the case of extended emergency absences contact the Dean of Students. If you are unprepared for the day, then you're not "attending and participating," and therefore will not be given credit for having done so. This means you should bring the required text/s to class every class session and be prepared to engage in our discussions. It's been my experience that students who attend class regularly, ask questions, and eagerly participate in class discussions/workshops get the most from this class. I say this a couple of times throughout the syllabus, so here goes: **If you arrive late and/or unprepared to class, I reserve the right to ask you to leave and count you absent for that class period.**

****IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT DROPPING THIS COURSE****

I **WILL NOT** submit a Drop Form for you. If it is your wish to drop this course, **YOU MUST FILL OUT THE FORM YOURSELF AND BRING IT TO ME FOR MY SIGNATURE.** I repeat, if you stop attending class altogether and do not submit a Drop Form, I will issue an "F" for you at the end of the semester. Ultimately, the best thing to do is to talk to me first.

Punctuality and Preparedness

Please be considerate of our classroom space and make every effort to get to class on time. I will not have time to help you get caught up if you come in late, and, as you will be involved in group work, you will be impeding your classmates' progress, as well as your own, if you come in late habitually. **If you arrive late and/or unprepared to class, I reserve the right to ask you to leave and count you absent for that class period.**

Discussion Leader (10%)

My pedagogical style is not lecture-based, but rather predicated on the notion that students can and should teach each other and learn together. Thus, at the start of the course, each student or pair of students will sign up as Discussion Leaders for one of the semester's assigned readings. Discussion Leaders facilitate class discussions through author bios, close readings and observations, visuals, and in-depth questions pertaining to the assigned readings. The following is what is expected of you in order for a successful Discussion Leader presentation:

1. **Read AND analyze your readings as early as possible, download the Discussion Leader Form, and complete it.** DLF forms can be found on our course blog. Be sure to choose the correct genre (creative nonfiction, short fiction, drama, or poetry).
2. **AT LEAST THREE (3) DAYS PRIOR TO YOUR DISCUSSION DATE, email your DLF to Dr. Moreira for feedback.** Using your UTRGV email address, email your DLF as a Microsoft Word attachment to robert.moreira@utrgv.edu and I will provide suggestions to ensure we get the most out of your discussion in class. **IMPORTANT:** Failure to send me your early draft will deduct 5% from the total for this assignment.
3. **Upload your DLF to Blackboard by the deadline specified on our Weekly Agenda.**

In my experience, **the most successful Discussion Leaders are those that plan their discussions well in advance**. If you have questions about the readings or want to brainstorm ideas concerning questions, activities, etc., you should set up an appointment to come and talk to me well in advance of your discussion date.

Workshops (30%)

There will be ten (10) mandatory workshop sessions during the semester; check the syllabus for exact dates. For the most part, we will workshop two students per workshop session. During these mandatory workshop sessions you will share your creative work and/or provide/receive feedback for/from your peers. The required workshop form is available on our course blog. **Students who arrive to class late and/or unprepared forfeit their participation in the workshop session, will be asked to leave, and subsequently marked absent.**

BEFORE YOUR WORKSHOP DATE: ONE (1) WEEK PRIOR TO YOUR WORKSHOP DATE, upload your short story draft (**at least 8 pages but no more than 15**) to our shared Google Drive folder.

AFTER YOUR WORKSHOP DATE: YOU WILL HAVE ONE (1) WEEK TO WORK ON YOUR REVISIONS IN YOUR GOOGLE DRIVE. I will then provide feedback on this new draft, we will meet to discuss your story (see **Mandatory Conference** below), and you will have the rest of the semester to revise and develop your story based on my suggestions and/or complications. If you would like to discuss a subsequent draft with me before the final portfolio due date, you should contact me via email and set up an appointment during office hours. I will need time to look over your new draft (**at least** one day), so please take this into consideration.

WHEN YOUR CLASSMATES ARE BEING WORKSHOPPED: In addition to the course readings and blog responses, you will be required to read and comment on the stories that are to be workshopped. Use the FICTION WORKSHOP FORM to write out your commentary. **Along with copies of both stories, PRINT, STAPLE, and BRING two (2) copies of each workshop form (4 in total).** Two forms will go to the students being workshopped, the other two to me. More on this process in class.

Finally, creative writing courses are highly interactive courses in which students submit their own creative writing for review and, in turn, discuss and comment upon their peers' submissions.

This means that course participants determine much of the course content as they decide which of their works to submit for discussion and review. It also means that a single individual's participation in the course has the potential to significantly impact the workshop experience for the rest of the students in the class. **All students have a right to a safe and nurturing workshop environment and all workshop participants owe a duty of care to their classmates to be respectful to others and to see that their participation doesn't compromise other students' ability to partake in the class.** Because students' comments and behavior in class necessarily impact their classmates, it is imperative that they maintain a professional attitude and assure their written and verbal comments are never dismissive, threatening or intimidating. Should the instructor determine that a student's participation undermines the workshop's effectiveness or creates an environment which is detrimental to or interferes with the learning and development of other students, he may bar the student from attending or otherwise participating in the class. This decision is entirely within the instructor's discretion and the instructor's decision is final. This policy is equally applicable in the virtual classroom—i.e., your reading responses on our course blog.

Mandatory Conference (10%)

After I provide feedback on your short story draft, **but BEFORE you attend to my comments**, you will be required to meet with me during office hours to discuss any questions you may have about my feedback, along with any ideas you may have for developing your story further. During our meeting, **YOU** will be in charge--that is, you will ask the questions, and I will provide the answers or clarifications, so make sure to come prepared.

Blog Reading Responses (10%)

During the semester, you will respond to each of the course readings on our course blog. These responses are intended to foster in-class dialogue and exchange, and to promote active analysis of the texts we read. Along with the information provided by the Discussion Leaders, these responses will serve as starting points for our class discussions. **The best reading responses take on a specific topic from lecture, class discussions, Discussion Leader presentations, and/or your own readings of the texts, which are then worked out in some critical and analytic detail discussing the craft behind the prose under discussion. Avoid summarizing the text.** Instead, discuss the elements you find most interesting or thought-provoking, and which you feel are crucial to the overall impact of the story. Point-of-view, objective correlatives, characterization, dialogue, descriptive and figurative language, plot, allegory, imagery, tone, style—these are just some of the terms I encourage you to discuss in your reading responses. Of course, you may also address questions you have about the literature itself (e.g. What is this chapter or story about?), but my advice to you is to look for those strategies that will allow you to grow as a fiction writer. Write down your observations on our course blog, and be prepared to discuss your comments in class whenever I or the Discussion Leaders call on you. Our continued dialogue of the elements involved in the craft of fiction writing will help you as you compose/revise your own short stories. Finally, while the responses should be thoughtful and thorough, they are meant to be informal in nature. Above, all, have fun breaking down the texts we read, and use our class discussions and reading responses to understand what it takes to become the writer you want to be.

Reading Response Instructions:

- Reading Responses must be **AT LEAST** 200 words.
 - My advice is to type up your response in a text editor (e.g. Microsoft Office) or Google Drive, determine the required word count, then cut/paste onto the proper post on our course blog. I will model this process for you in class.
- **Reading Responses are due by the deadlines detailed on Weekly Agendas.**
- For additional guidelines, see Blackboard.

Final Portfolio (30%):

This semester, you will be working towards the creation of a creative writing portfolio. You will do it through a set of writing assignments, (re)vising (which means adapting and changing your ideas) along the way. Your portfolio will consist of four separate assignments:

- 1 revised Short Story
- 1 List of 10 Prospective Journals
- 1 List of 10 Ideas for Future Stories
- 1 Reflective Essay

Your Short Story

Our goal this semester will be to work together to refine your short story (3000-5000 words; roughly 12-20 double-spaced pages; see sample on course blog) and prepare it for submission to at least one print or online journal or anthology of your choice. Because of this, it is important that you develop a sense that your writing is a work in progress. Thus, I will not assign grades to your short story. Instead, my job throughout the semester will consist of commentary and complications that are meant to help you strengthen your short story. Your job throughout the semester will be to re-think and re-write parts or all of your short story based on the feedback you receive from your peers and I. As you revise your short story, you should keep track of the feedback you receive, the revisions you choose to make, and each successive draft. To help you with this, you will be using Google Drive to compose and revise all of your work for this class. **And finally, a few important notes about this class:**

- **All of the assigned readings for this class will consist of character-driven, emotionally-charged short stories.** While you are free to include speculative, fantasy, horror, young adult, and/or other popular genre elements in your story for this class, my job this semester will be to get you to think beyond one-dimensional characters, common cliches, simple plots, and/or your reliance on the fantastical or supernatural in order for you to develop a greater appreciation for the more complex elements of the craft of short fiction.
- Novel excerpts are fine so long as they read like self-contained stories and can stand on their own.

Your List of Ten Prospective Journals

At the start of the semester, I will introduce you to NewPages.com, an online database which lists both online/print journals and anthologies seeking fiction submissions. Your job will be to visit/research this database in order to locate ten journals that publish the

type of fiction you are composing and/or interested in. More on this TBA in class and on our course blog.

Your Ten Ideas for Future Stories

Ten Ideas (w/titles) for future stories. More on this TBA in class and on our course blog.

Your Reflective Essay

Finally, as a way to help me gauge your overall development as a writer at the end of the semester, your final portfolio folder will include a short reflective essay (3-5 double-spaced pages) that discusses your overall experience in the class. More on this TBA in class and on our course blog.

Because your overall course grade depends on your portfolio, it is difficult to estimate your overall course grade throughout the semester. However, if you'd like to have an idea of where you stand after you've completed a substantial amount of writing and revision, please make an appointment to meet with me outside of class, and I will review your work with you and give you a better sense of where you are grade-wise. There is no need for you to be surprised by your final course grade even though I do not put grades on assignments throughout the semester. It is your responsibility to set up a meeting if you're curious or concerned, and it's important that you not wait until the last week or so to start asking about grades. At that point, it's too late for you to do what needs to be done to significantly raise your overall course grade.

Where and How do I Turn My Work In?

You will compose and revise ALL of your written assignments in Google Drive during the course of the semester. Creating documents in Google Drive is easy. Google Drive is a free cloud storage service that not only allows you to store your files, but lets you create a variety of file types as well, including word processed documents. Google Drive also automatically saves your work. I will provide specific instructions on how to create your Google Drive account at the start of the semester. Basically, you will create/revise your work in a folder that only you and I will have access to. This access point will allow me to provide you with feedback on your assignments throughout the semester. Afterwards, you will be required to (re)visе your work based on my/your peers' suggestions, our readings, and our class discussions. Ultimately, this same folder will serve as the final collection of your work throughout the course--in other words, your final portfolio.

What Do I Name My Files?

Because all of your work will be submitted electronically, it's important that you are careful to name your files consistently and clearly. **Your file names should include the name of the assignment, followed by a hyphen, and ending with your full name. Here is an example:**

ShortStory-SandraCisneros

For your reference, the list below includes the file names for all of the major assignments you will compose/revise this semester:

- **ShortStory-YourFullName**
- **JournalList-YourFullName**
- **Ideas-YourFullName**
- **Reflection-YourFullName**

Late Work

Late work is too difficult to keep track of, so I generally don't accept it. I will be giving a lot of feedback over the course of this semester, and with 20 students, I won't be able to keep track of your work if you turn it in late. However, I do realize that extraordinary circumstances may arise that are beyond your control; talk with me **BEFORE** they interfere with your progress in the course.

Paper Format and Guidelines

ALL major writing assignments for this course must be composed using Google Drive's word processing software, also known as Google Docs. **Writing assignments in Google Drive in any other format than Google Docs (i.e. Microsoft Word, Pages, etc.) will not be read or receive my commentary.** What is more, **I will not provide feedback for any assignments titled incorrectly or misplaced (i.e. saved in any folder OTHER than the folder you are sharing with me).** Unless otherwise noted, **all writing assignments should be double spaced, using Times New Roman 12 point font, include page numbers, and follow all other MLA guidelines.** See the sample short story on our course blog if you have questions about any of this.

Extra Credit

You are allowed no more than two (2) extra credit assignments during the semester. One (1) extra credit assignment is equivalent to one (1) blog reading response or one (1) tardy/unexcused absence. **Workshop dates and all other assignments cannot be made up.** Here are your options:

1. Attend a Fiction Reading on or off Campus
2. Listen to a *New Yorker* Fiction Podcast (<https://www.newyorker.com/podcast/fiction>)
3. Attend a Theatrical Performance on or off Campus

For off-campus readings and theatrical performances, you are free to select those on your own, but please check in with me in order to make sure the reading/performance qualifies for extra credit. For on-campus performances, visit <https://www.utrgv.edu/theatre/productions/shows/index.htm>. Additionally, I will periodically send out emails announcing other on/off-campus readings and performances.

To complete your extra credit assignment, here are the guidelines:

- **Compose a 3-page SUMMARY and RESPONSE to the reading, podcast, or theatrical performance.**
 - Papers should include a creative title; be double-spaced; use Times New Roman, 12 pt. font; include page numbers; and be carefully revised and edited.
 - **The first half of your paper should:**

- provide the names of **ALL** readers/authors/playwrights and titles of stories/plays
- summarize the reading, podcast, or the play's important plot points and characters
- **The second half of your paper should:**
 - discuss HOW and WHY the reading, podcast, or theatrical performance impacted you
- **For readings and theatrical performances:**
 - **Don't forget to include the event flier or program.** Programs should be stapled to your three-page paper. **Papers without event program will not be accepted.**
 - **Papers are due within one week of the event AND at the start class; no email submissions or late work will be accepted.**
- **For *New Yorker* Podcasts:**
 - **You can turn in extra credit throughout the semester. No email submissions. The last day to submit extra credit is Friday, 12/6 in my mailbox in ELABS 125.**

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity Statement

As members of a community dedicated to Honesty, Integrity and Respect, students are reminded that those who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and expulsion from the University. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, and collusion; submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student; or the attempt to commit such acts. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced (Board of Regents Rules and Regulations and UTRGV Academic Integrity Guidelines). All scholastic dishonesty incidents will be reported to the Dean of Students. **Finally, the written work you submit for feedback and grading is to be unpublished.**

Accommodating Students with Disabilities

Students with a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects academic performance) who would like to receive academic accommodations should contact **Student Accessibility Services (SAS)** as soon as possible to schedule an appointment to initiate services. Accommodations can be arranged through SAS at any time, but are not retroactive. Students who suffer a broken bone, severe injury or undergo surgery during the semester are eligible for temporary services.

Pregnancy, Pregnancy-related, and Parenting Accommodations

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination, which includes discrimination based on pregnancy, marital status, or parental status. Students seeking accommodations related to pregnancy, pregnancy-related condition, or parenting (reasonably immediate postpartum period) are encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services for additional information and to request accommodations.

Student Accessibility Services:

Brownsville Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in Cortez Hall Room 129 and can be contacted by phone at (956) 882-7374 (Voice) or via email at ability@utrgv.edu.

Edinburg Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in 108 University Center and can be contacted by phone at (956) 665-7005 (Voice), (956) 665-3840 (Fax), or via email at ability@utrgv.edu.

Mandatory Course Evaluation Period

Students are required to complete an ONLINE evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account (<http://my.utrgv.edu>); you will be contacted through email with further instructions. Students who complete their evaluations will have priority access to their grades. Online evaluations will be available on or about: **April 10-29, 2020**

Sexual Harassment, Discrimination, and Violence

In accordance with UT System regulations, your instructor is a “Responsible Employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and so must report any instance, occurring during a student’s time in college, of sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, or sexual harassment about which she/he becomes aware during this course through writing, discussion, or personal disclosure. More information can be found at www.utrgv.edu/equity, including confidential resources available on campus. The faculty and staff of UTRGV actively strive to provide a learning, working, and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect that is free from sexual misconduct and discrimination.

Cell Phones and Class Deportment

No texting, phone calls, or social media use during class. If you will be expecting an important phone call, let me know **before** the start of class, then take your phone call outside without disrupting the class. Additionally, for those of you purchasing a digital copy of our required textbook/s, be aware that **I will not allow you to access class readings or your written assignments via your cell phone while in class.** Make plans to purchase/borrow a tablet or laptop if you plan to use a digital copy of our textbook in class.

Course E-mail Policy

I will use UTRGV email to make **ALL** class announcements and to respond to inquiries. **You should check your UTRGV email frequently in order to stay abreast of any announcements, alterations to class assignments, and/or due dates.**

Class Schedule

[Tentative and Subject to Change]

WEEK 1: “Weird is Good” and Course Introduction

1/17 Course Blog, Syllabus, & Introductions
Model Blog Reading Responses

Google Drive Setup Preview

WEEK 2: Learning to Fail Better: On Revision and the Workshop Process

1/24 Have read: “Becoming” a Writer by Junot Diaz (available under READINGS)
“Shitty First Drafts” by Anne Lamott (available under READINGS)
Tuch, “The Submitter’s Dilemma” (available under READINGS)
Barret, “What Editors Want” (available under READINGS)
Laplante, Ch. 13
Carver, “The Bath” & “A Small, Good Thing” (458-480)
Intro to Journal List, Story Ideas, *New Yorker* Fiction Podcasts, and *New Pages*

WEEK 3: Writing as Discovery, Details, Details, and Objective Correlatives

1/31 Have read: Ch. 3
“What is the Objective Correlative?” (available under READINGS)
“Understanding the Objective Correlative” (available under READINGS)
O’Brien, “The Things They Carried” (79-92)

Workshop #0

WEEK 4: What’s Under Your Character’s Bed?: Crafting Believable Characters

2/7 Have read: Chapter 10
Mukherjee, “The Management of Grief” (353-365)

Workshop #1

WEEK 5: Raising the Curtain: Beginning Your Story

2/14 Have read: Ch. 11
Cisneros, “Woman Hollering Creek” (53-60)

Workshop #2

WEEK 6: He Said, She Said: Crafting Effective Dialogue

2/21 Have read: Chapter 8
Hemingway, “Hills Like White Elephants” (269-272)

Workshop #3

WEEK 7: The Short Story: Defining and Shaping Your Narrative Structure

2/28 Have read: Chapter 4
Díaz, “Fiesta, 1980” (137-146)

Workshop #4

WEEK 8: AWP Conference@San Antonio

3/6 AWP CONFERENCE [NO CLASS]

Your Journal/Story Idea Update

****SPRING BREAK [3/9 thru 3/22]****

WEEK 9: Why You Need to Show AND Tell: Dramatizing and Narrating

3/27 Have read: Chapter 5

Packer, "Brownies" (163-178)

Workshop #5

WEEK 10: Who's Telling the Story: Thinking About Point of View

4/3 Have read: Chapter 6

Chekhov, "The Lady With the Little Dog" (208-220)

Workshop #6

WEEK 11: EASTER HOLIDAY

4/10 EASTER HOLIDAY [NO CLASS]

WEEK 12: How Reliable is This Narrator? How POV Affects Our Understanding

4/17 Have read: Chapter 7

Marquez, "A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings" (252-256)

On Final Portfolio & Reflective Essay

On Publishing & Creative Writing MFA Programs

Workshop #7

WEEK 13: What Happens Next? Figuring the Plot

4/24 Have read: Chapter 9

Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues" (290-312)

Workshop #8

WEEK 14: What is this Story REALLY About? True Emotions, Sensory Events

5/1 Have read: Chapter 12: What is This Story *Really* About?

Richter, "My Date With Satan" (417-426)

Workshop #9

WEEK 15

TBA LAST DAY TO SUBMIT EXTRA CREDIT IN MY MAILBOX IN ELABS 125

WEEK 16: FINAL PORTFOLIO

TBA FINAL PORTFOLIO REVISIONS DUE BY MIDNIGHT