ENGLISH 0005-01
Creative Writing: Fiction
Fall 2016
M/W 3:00—4:15, Eaton 124

Michael Downing
michael.downing@tufts.edu
East Hall 314, 627-2457
office hours: M/W 1:45-2:45 or by appointment

Required text

Assignments
There are two kinds of written work for this class.

1. **Technical Exercises** are brief fictions (150 to 250 words) in which you solve specific problems of narration, style, diction, and plot. Typically, you must email a copy of your Technical Exercise to me on the morning it is due.

2. **Short stories** are longer works of fiction (typically 1,000 to 4,000 words); all of you will complete at least two short stories this semester. It is essential that you read aloud from your fiction and receive comments and suggestions. **At the class meeting BEFORE your workshop date**, you must have 13 printed copies of your story—one for each of your classmates, and one for me to read before your workshop.

Course requirements and grading
Basically, these are the rules: Be present. Be engaged. Be productive.

You must complete at least one draft of each Technical Exercise. Every writer must complete all of the assigned Technical Exercises, and you should expect to revise one or two of these exercises during the semester. In addition, every writer is required to complete two original short stories, both of which will be presented in workshops for commentary and critique, and both of which you will rewrite and revise before the end of the semester. You will be assigned two workshop dates for presenting your short stories to the class.

All of the work you do for this class is public writing. It will be heard or read by your classmates and by me. Typically, we will read all of the Technical Exercises every week, and we will discuss them in class. We will read the full text of all short stories before the workshop for that story. A capacity to read carefully and to provide useful critical responses is essential to your success in this class.

At the end of the semester, each writer will submit a selection of revised stories and Technical Exercises (including drafts, if they are relevant) to represent the semester’s work. This collection will constitute the writer’s portfolio. Throughout the semester, writers may submit work for my comments and responses as often as is useful.
To earn a passing grade, you must complete all assigned Technical Exercises, short stories, and revisions by the due date for each. You must submit a portfolio of revised exercises and stories. In addition, to earn a passing grade, you must be present for class meetings and participate in class discussions. Those are the basic requirements for a passing grade. Your final grade will be determined by the quality of your participation in class discussions and analysis, your completion of all assignments, and, most important, the quality of the creative work in your portfolio. The quality of the original fiction you write and revise is the most significant factor in your grade.

Schedule of meetings
This is a tentative version of our schedule to give you a sense of the minimum requirements for the course. The number of Technical Exercises, and the due dates for each, may change. During our first few meetings, we will clarify the schedule for submitting, reading aloud, and revising your fiction.

ASSIGNMENTS

7 Sept/Wed  Review of conventional grammar and syntax
             Technical Exercise 1 (due Mon/12 Sept)

12 Sept/Mon  Review of conventions of narrative fiction

14 Sept/Wed  Technical Exercise 2 (due Mon/19 Sept)

19 Sept/Mon

21 Sept/Wed  Technical Exercise 3 (due Mon/26 Sept)

26 Sept/Mon

28 Sept/Wed  Technical Exercise 4 (due Mon/3 Oct)
             OR
             250 to 500 words of Story 1

3 Oct/Mon

5 Oct/ Wed

10 Oct/ Mon  HOLIDAY

12 Oct /Wed  Workshops / Story 1
17 Oct/Mon  Workshops / Story 1
19 Oct/Wed  Workshops / Story 1
24 Oct/Mon  Workshops / Story 1
26 Oct/Wed  Workshops / Story 1
31 Oct/Mon  Revision workshops

2 Nov/Wed  Reconsidering grammar, syntax, and the utility of limits
7 Nov/Mon  Workshops / Story 2
9 Nov/Wed  Workshops / Story 2
14 Nov/Mon  Workshops / Story 2
16 Nov/Wed  Workshops / Story 2
21 Nov/Mon  Workshops / Story 2
23 Nov/Wed  HOLIDAY
28 Nov/Mon  Workshops / Story 2
             Technical Exercise 5 (due Mon/12 Dec)
30 Nov/Wed  Revision workshops
5 Dec/Mon   Revision workshops
7 Dec/Wed   Final portfolio workshop
12 Dec/Mon  PORTFOLIO DUE
DIVERSITY
Tufts University values the diversity of our students, staff, and faculty; recognizing the important
collection each student makes to our unique community. Students with disabilities are assured that the
Student Accessibility Services (SAS) office will work with each student individually to create access to
all aspects of student life. Tufts is committed to providing equal access and support to all qualified
students through the provision of reasonable accommodations so that each student may fully participate in
the Tufts experience. If you have a disability that requires reasonable accommodations, please contact the
Student Accessibility Services office at Accessibility@tufts.edu or 617-627-4539 to make an appointment
with an SAS representative to determine appropriate accommodations.
Please be aware that accommodations cannot be enacted retroactively, making timeliness a
critical aspect for their provision.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
As part of this course, I may utilize TurnItIn in the Trunk learning management system to help determine
the originality of your work. TurnItIn is an automated system which instructors can use to quickly and
easily compare each student's assignment with billions of websites, as well as an enormous database of
student papers that grows with each submission. When papers are submitted to TurnItIn, the service will
retain a copy of the submitted work in the TurnItIn database for the sole purpose of detecting plagiarism
in future submitted works. Students retain copyright on their original course work. For more information,
see Turnitin.com or review Tufts' Academic Integrity handbook at
http://uss.tufts.edu/studentaffairs/publicationsandwebsites/AcademicIntegrity.pdf
Tufts holds its students strictly accountable for adherence to academic integrity. The
consequences for violations can be severe. It is critical that you understand the requirements of ethical
behavior and academic work as described in Tufts' Academic Integrity handbook. If you ever have a
question about the expectations concerning a particular assignment or project in this course, be sure to ask
me for clarification. The Faculty of the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering are
required to report suspected cases of academic integrity violations to the Dean of Student Affairs Office.
If I suspect that you have cheated or plagiarized in this class, I must report the situation to the dean.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH / COURSE OUTCOME CHECKLIST FOR SYLLABI
This course will emphasize the following skills essential to the study of language and literature:
X 1. An appreciation of the aesthetic, intellectual, and ideological complexity of literary and cultural
texts;
X 2. A capacity for critical thinking through immersion in close reading, rhetorical analysis, and
historical contextualization;
X 3. An ability to produce original questions for scholarly research or creative production and
the skills necessary to carry that research, critical analysis, or creative project to
completion with rigor and style;
☐ 4. A mastery of the logical, linguistic, and rhetorical skills necessary to construct a compelling
and persuasive argument and the means to convey such arguments successfully in written
and oral form;
☐ 5. An understanding of the historical contexts in which to locate important texts of American,
British, and/or Anglophone world literature;
☐ 6. An awareness of the intellectual programs, aesthetic strategies, and socio-political
contexts within which English language cultural producers have worked;
X 7. An appreciation of the variety of aesthetic standards that have shaped textual production
over time and the ideological contexts that may inflect aesthetic judgments;
☐ 8. A knowledge of the distinctive characteristics of different genres and forms (poetry, novel,
non-fiction prose, film, literary theory, etc.);
X 9. An insight into the contributions of the humanities to ways of thinking about cultural values
and other questions of public concern.
Everyone, real or invented, deserves the open destiny of life.  Grace Paley

The big distinction between good art and so-so art lies somewhere in the art=s heart=s purpose.  David Foster Wallace

Stare, pry, listen, eavesdrop. Die knowing something. You are not here long. Walker Evans

DESCRIPTION: The best reason to take this class is because you want to write good stories, that is, to create something of substance and style. A good way to develop that ability is to write regularly, so you=ll work on 6 short pieces and one long, fully-realized story, which I=ll see in two versions. You=ll usually have about a week to write the shorter pieces. For the long story, the first version will be due early April and the final, polished version a week after our last class. I=ve chosen short stories for practical reasons; you can arrange with me to work also on longer fiction, if you prefer.

Writing good fiction involves figuring out what it is and learning to apply that insight to your own work. For that and other reasons, your participation in class discussion is a significant aspect of the course and of your grade.

To learn from published writers, during the semester, you=re expected to read at least 8 short stories of your choosing. (More would be good – and fun.) Reading as a writer, you=ll think about how they work and what they show you about your own stories and ambitions. Then you=ll write me 2 letters about all that (due 28 February and 18 April). We=ll talk more about what this entails soon.

Finally, because writers are often engaged with the world around them, I encourage you to take advantage of events on and off campus and tell us about happenings that engage you, or alert us to events of interest or your involvement.

DESIGN: Our class is primarily a workshop, which I hope will grow into a community of writers. You=ll read your stories to the class as often as time permits. Then we=ll talk about what you=ve accomplished and suggest ways to improve, deepen or strengthen your work. I=ll comment on most assignments, be available to discuss all, and schedule meetings to talk about your long story. You=re welcome to rework (beyond merely correcting errors) and resubmit any story within a couple of weeks after I return it. Do not wait and give me a bunch of rewrites near the end of the semester when they=re of little educational value to either of us. (I mean this.)
The escape clauses:
§ You may (occasionally) decline to read something to the class.
§ You may (occasionally) ask someone else to read your story aloud in your stead.
§ If you'd like us to follow your story on the page, make hardcopies to distribute.
§ I expect a good faith effort on all assignments, but if you hit a wall, write something else (let me know you've done that). The important thing is to get in the habit of writing.

EXPECTATIONS: There probably are no hard-and-fast rules in writing fiction (including this one), but the following expectations help the class go smoothly:

1. I expect you to attend all classes (more than 3 absences count against your grade), arrive on time and hand in assignments when they're due. If this is likely to be problematic, talk to me ahead of time. I'm friendlier then.

2. All assignments must be printed out legibly in manuscript format, unless I tell you otherwise. Proofread everything carefully. I pay attention to the mechanics of writing and so should you; they're the tools of our craft. When in doubt, refer to a handbook or dictionary. Do not rely solely on Spell Check.

3. Keep hardcopies of your work, preferably in a folder reserved for this course. (Stuff reads differently on a page and on a screen.)

4. You may want to keep a notebook or file for jotting down ideas, phrases, quotations, observations, whatever may be useful in your writing. This is for you; I won't read it.

5. Your comments about others' work should be specific, probing, respectful, and constructive. Think about what would be useful to you and use that as your guide.

6. In addition to scheduled times, I encourage you to talk with me during the semester about specific assignments or more generally about your writing, progress and intentions. I like talking to my students.

GRADING: I think of us as working together for you to become the best writer you can, so I don't grade individual assignments because I find that inhibits the kind of original, authentic writing and muscular, creative thinking I respect. I will respond regularly to your written work, provide an interim assessment about halfway through the semester, grade the final version of your long story, and give you a grade in the course. You're welcome to talk with me about how you're doing throughout the semester and if you're uneasy about the absence of grades, I encourage you to do so.

You also have the option of having me grade one short assignment of your choosing. Just note at the top of a story, when you hand it in, that you'd like me to grade it. This isn't compulsory, so it's up to you when and if it happens.

There are no exams unless I'm appalled by your punctuation, spelling or grammar.
Your final grade will be a balance of all your written and classwork this semester, with the final, fully-realized story weighed more heavily than individual short pieces. In assigning that grade, I’ll consider:

$ primarily, your writing ability what accomplishment in the shorter stories during the semester and in your final, fully-accomplished story, and the quality and of your classwork (including attendance)

$ secondarily, how much you’ve challenged yourself, and how much you’ve improved

Dates of Note

18 February           No Class (Presidents Day sked)
28 February           Letter 1 due
6 April               stories, first version due (tentative)
18 April              Letter 2 due
5 May (Fri.)          Long stories final, polished version due
ENG 0005-02: Creative Writing: Fiction; Wednesday, 1:30-4:00, Spring 2017

Instructor: Marcie Hershman
Office hours: W 12:45-1:30; W 4:00 by appointment.
   East Hall 314, ext. 72457; email: marcie.hershman@tufts.edu.

Texts:

Selected stories: In the first few weeks we will deepen our understanding of craft by
discussing the fiction of established writers. By analyzing literary techniques and authorial
choices not apparent to the casual reader, we learn to read as writers read—a crucial skill as we
approach our own work.

Student stories: All original work must be double-spaced in Times New Roman 12 or
Courier 10, titled, collated, stapled, with a copy made for everyone in our class. Don’t print your
work as single-space, use smaller fonts, or go right to the end or bottom margins in order to save
paper, as we’ll need adequate blank space to write our edits and comments.

Written Requirements:

In-class exercises and independently written stories, all presented for class discussion.
Three interconnected scenes; two full short stories; one final revision of the more
challenging of your two short stories; also, if warranted: one short-short or “turn-around” based on
the other full story. As per the English Department listings, this section of creative
writing/fiction focuses on the power to be found in concision. Note: Genre fiction is not permitted.

Other requirements:

Given the once-a-week, high-intensity format of our class, attendance is crucial. If two or
more classes are missed without acceptable excuse, the final grade will be revised downward. Our
workshop demands participation not only in regard to your own stories, but also in terms of your
editorial contributions to your colleagues’ works. Though you won’t be presenting written work
every session, you are expected to be working ahead on your drafts, a process that benefits from
additional time. All the while, plan on being actively engaged in all aspects of working with fiction-
-reading, critiquing, writing, editing, and revising.

As is common practice in creative writing workshops, stories in progress don’t receive
grades; instead, they’ll carry full editorial comments, aimed at bringing texture and strength to your
work, while pointing out what can get tightened or cut. Your semester grade will be a combination of
your written work (especially, of course, that final revision) and your discussion/editorial
contributions in roughly an 80-20 ratio. Remember: Effort does count, but quality (a work’s vision,
death, and execution) is your grade’s ultimate determinant.

Please feel free to contact me via email and/or meet with me during my office hours. I’d be
happy to discuss individual matters then.

Schedule:

Our first weeks focus on in-class exercises, discussions of selected short stories, and your
own written scenes--each scene focusing on a clear craft goal: use of action and time, creation of
voice, how plot arises from character, the power of literary imagination to cross boundaries and tell
the “untellable.” Then we’re on to the balance of the term with its workshop format and the
individual deadlines for the presentations of your stories and rewrites. These deadlines mark your
commitments. We will confirm this schedule in the third week of class.
This course will emphasize the following skills essential to the study of language and literature:

1. An appreciation of the aesthetic, intellectual, and ideological complexity of literary and cultural texts;

2. A capacity for critical thinking through immersion in close reading, rhetorical analysis, and/or historical contextualization;

3. An ability to produce original questions for creative production and the skills necessary to carry that research, critical analysis, or creative project to completion with rigor and style;

4. An appreciation of the variety of aesthetic standards that have shaped textual production over time and the ideological contexts that may affect aesthetic judgments;

5. An insight into the contributions of the humanities to ways of thinking about cultural values and other questions of public concern.
English 5
Beginning Creative Writing: Fiction

Semester dates:
Class times: T 1:30 – 4:00; T 6:30 – 9

General Information
Instructor  Sibyl Johnston
Contact Information: sibyljohnston@gmail.com
Office: East Hall, Room 314
Office hours: T, 4 – 6, and (upon request) T 12-1. Please feel free to contact me if those times are inconvenient.
Availability outside office hours and class: I’m also available via Skype at almost any time. Please be sure to contact me in advance to make arrangements for Skype meetings. I am always available to answer questions via e-mail or podcast.

Books and Handouts
Required Text: Sibyl Johnston, Where the Stories Come From: Beginning to Write Fiction (Please order It used through Amazon ASAP. I will place one copy on reserve in the library, but you will need your own.)
Optional Texts: O’Conner, Woe Is I; Sherry Ellis, ed., Now Write! Painter and Bernays, What If? MacCaulay and Lanning, Technique in Fiction. I also recommend Best American Short Stories, which publishes a new collection by a different editor each year.
Handouts: All handouts except for the course calendar are available on our course Trunk site, in the Resources subfolder. The course calendar is available on Google documents at a link I will provide. Please pay special attention to the syllabus, the course calendar, and the handout called “Everything You Need to Know on the First Day of Class.”

Course Overview
Overall Goals: Present and discuss several drafts of a major project comprising at least two stories, ultimately totaling 10 – 25 pages. Participate in discussions of your own and others’ work. Complete additional smaller assignments and exercises. Read and discuss published stories and theoretical material. Adapt this course to your individual needs. (See p. 5 of this syllabus.)
Weeks One and Two: Read and discuss published stories and theoretical material. Do writing exercises in and out of class. E-mail me several ideas for your major project.
Week Three: No class; each student will meet with me individually in my office during class time, to discuss plans for your major project.
Week Four and Thereafter: Workshops. Discuss student stories in progress in class. Complete and discuss readings. Do writing exercises and other work in and out of class.

Major Projects and Workshops
This semester you will work on one major project (10-25 pages). You will submit three drafts of this project to be discussed in class on specified dates. Your workshops will take place about three weeks apart. Two weeks after the end of the semester, you may choose to submit a fourth draft to me as well, but this isn’t required.
Your workshop is your opportunity to present your drafts in progress and solicit responses and criticism from the class. Each writer’s due dates are different, and these will be added to the Course Calendar by the third week of class.
Due Dates: Your drafts are due on the Sunday before each of your scheduled workshops, by 10 a.m. Late papers will be graded down by one point.
How to Submit Story Drafts: You will submit your story drafts by posting them on our Trunk forum.

Weekly Work
Most weeks, in and out of class, you will complete a number of smaller writing assignments as well as reading assignments. All of these assignments are detailed on the course calendar. Many may be adapted to suit your needs. (See p. 5 of this syllabus for suggestions.)

**How to Submit Weekly Work:** Simply save or upload your weekly work (that is, all work except your story drafts and notebook contents) to your Tufts Box folder as one document. **Note:** You will receive a link to your Tufts Box folder upon submitting your story ideas to me by e-mail during the first two weeks of class.

**Individual Meetings**
During the semester you'll have two scheduled individual meetings with me. At these meetings, you can consult and work with me privately. Also, I encourage you to see me at any time during my office hours to ask questions, raise issues, come up with ideas, go over drafts, or discuss whatever else you would find helpful. I am also available via Skype and e-mail. **Important:** If you are having trouble arranging a meeting or conversation with me, please let me know by sending me an e-mail. I want to be available to you.

**Quizzes**
Quizzes on assigned textbook chapters will take place in class. You will complete them on your computer and add them to your Tufts Box folder during class. Quizzes are checked off but not graded.

**Where To Keep Completed Work**
For your convenience, I suggest that you keep your dream journal, freewriting, family trees, and Reader's and Writer's Charts in your Tufts Box folder. If you prefer, you may store them in a notebook or on your computer.

**Guidelines**

**Attendance**
You may have one unexcused absence; beyond that, remember that since we meet only once a week, each missed class equals one week of absences and will quickly affect your course grade. However: Please **do not** come to class if you have a fever or are coughing, sneezing, etc. Just e-mail me to let me know that you're sick.

**Snow Days**
Please check your e-mail before class when the weather looks iffy. Should class be canceled I will notify you before class and will send out instructions for online workshops and schedule make-up days as necessary.

**Due Dates**
All work must be turned in by the specified due dates unless you've made other arrangements beforehand.

**Skipped Workshops**
Missing your own workshop will cause your overall grade to drop by one-half point. If you anticipate a problem, let me know at least one day before the workshop.

**Grades**
Your course grade will be based on the following criteria:

**Your fiction writing:** Three or four drafts of your major project, to be completed and handed in at the end of the semester.

**Other written work and readings:** Your Tufts Box folder and/or notebook, which will include freewriting, dream journal, family tree and other exercises, quizzes, and charts. The purpose of these assignments is to provide you with focused practice relevant to your major project. You may adapt any assignments to make them more relevant. All reading assignments are required except those marked optional on the course calendar. All readings are from the textbook or are posted on our Trunk site.

**Class participation:** Contributions in class and attendance.

**Note:** Doing the “other written work” and participating in class is necessary in order to get an A in the course. More importantly, it's necessary to be sure that you fully understand the concepts that we discuss in class, which will have a direct effect on the quality of your writing. But this is a writing course, so your grade is based mostly on the stories you write.

There are several ways of assessing your progress and standing in the course:

**Draft Grades**
I will give each draft an A, B, or C. A B means you're doing very well and are basically meeting my expectations for this particular draft. An A means you're exceeding my expectations. A C means you are not meeting
my expectations.

**Other Written Work** Although I don’t grade the many minor assignments that you will do each week, I do read them and mark them with an “OK,” and sometimes I add comments. If you specifically want comments on an assignment, please add a note saying so.

**Individual Feedback** At every stage, I will give you detailed feedback on how to improve your story. If you are unsure how to interpret or employ my feedback or want more ideas, I welcome you to see me during office hours or contact me by e-mail.

**To those who have taken this course from me before:** You are excused from all assignments except for your story in progress. You may submit up to 15 extra pages of fiction during the semester, beyond the page limitation. Alternatively, if you prefer to focus on one story, you may submit an extra draft. Please submit extra pagesextra drafts **before** the third round of workshops. All extra pages/drafts are optional.

**Caveat:** Because I try to adapt the course each semester to my current students, any of the above is subject to change.

**A final note:** Yes—you may write science fiction, fantasy, “weird stuff,” or whatever you like! Send me your wildest ideas and I will help you tame them, or at least house them safely. Genre writers, please see the Genre and Fantastic Writing section of our Trunk site for additional reading that may be useful to you. I particularly recommend the essay on reserve in the library called “Realism and Other Illusions” by Thomas Kennedy.
More About Workshops

This semester you will be developing 10-25 pages of fiction. Please do not exceed 25 pages — see me if you have concerns about page requirements.

First Workshop: 5 pages

Before each workshop, writers scheduled for that day will submit their work and everyone will read it. Your first workshop will follow a general structure:

1. Plan to use about 30 – 40 minutes: Roughly 5 minutes for the class to reread your story, 25 minutes to discuss your questions, 10 minutes for your exercise, and 5 minutes for readers to post comments on the forum.
2. Prepare your questions for readers by using a writers chart as you work on your story (not afterward). Include the questions (5-10 of them) with your draft. To encourage discussion, avoid yes/no questions and prepare follow-up questions. See Chapter 11 for additional suggestions.
3. Prepare a writing exercise for the class, based on whatever aspects of the story you would like help with. Add it to the last page of your draft. You may use an exercise from the book or from Trunk, or you may create your own. If you can’t think of an exercise, ask me for help — I’ll get back to you before class with some ideas.
4. To submit your work, post your draft, exercise, and questions for readers on our Trunk forum by 10 a.m. on the Sunday before your workshop date.

Second Workshop: 10-15 pages

For your second workshop, you may either revise your first draft or write an entirely new story or stories. When revising, please correct all errors, spell-check, and implement criticism from your first workshop that you find useful. You do not need to use readers or writers charts for your second or third drafts, unless you prefer to.

During your second workshop you may follow the plan above if you wish, or you may choose to structure your workshop differently — for instance, by not using a writing exercise and instead allotting more time for discussion, or by reducing discussion time to allow for more exercises or other activities. Do make sure to plan enough discussion and/or activities to fill the allotted 30 – 40 minutes. Please leave about 10 minutes for rereading and posting comments.

Third Workshop: 10-25 pages

By now you should have your final project mostly drafted. Your third draft must include some revised material — it should not consist entirely of new material.

You are free to follow the plan for first workshops or to create your own structure — just leave time for rereading and posting. Since third drafts are longer than previous drafts, most workshops will last 40 minutes are more, and we may not always have time for in-class exercises or other non-workshop activities.

If at any time you’re unsure how to conduct your workshop or dissatisfied with the results, please let me know. I am available to help you.
Adapting Assignments

Not everyone learns an art in exactly the same way. Ideally, you will let me know what is helpful to you and what isn't, and I'll help you tailor the course to suit your individual needs. I welcome this kind of creative problem-solving and will be as flexible as I can be in order to make this semester as exciting, helpful, and fun as possible for each student. So, below are some guidelines for adapting assignments.

There are a few fixed assignments for this course, and these cannot be adapted:

- You must write and workshop (30 – 40 minutes) three drafts of your major project.
- You must read and discuss others’ drafts each week.
- You must read all assignments from the textbook and the other reading assignments that are not marked optional.

Adaptable assignments include the following:

- Assigned writing exercises, including dreams and freewriting
- Additional reading (marked optional on the course calendar)
- In-class exercises—while I encourage you to try new things, if you're certain that an exercise doesn't apply to your work, feel free to substitute something else. Freewriting, for example, may be applied to any aspect of your story.
- Workshop approaches—my suggestions are meant to be guidelines. If you think something else would be more helpful, feel free to make your own plan. Also feel free to contact me to discuss alternatives—I may be able to help.
- Extra workshops—feel free to bring in a story or scene for on-the-spot workshopping at any time. If we have extra time during class, you are free to use it in this way. Keep in mind that students will need time during class to read your work. Also, keep in mind that we'll have more in-class time for extra workshops before the third round of workshops.
- Anything else—please see me, and I'll help you come up with a plan.

If you decide to substitute an assignment, please let me know in advance and write SUBSTITUTE at the top of the page.
Preparing for English 5: What You’ll Need

To make sure you’re prepared for the course, please review this list of what you’ll need this semester.

**The Course Text** Please order this from Amazon ASAP. A used copy will cost less and will arrive sooner.

**A Laptop** You will need a laptop or similar device during class. Please let me know if you are unable to bring one to class.

**Access to the Course Trunk Site** Please check out our course Trunk site. Your access to the site will be automatic once you are officially enrolled in the course. Our Trunk site contains all course handouts except for the course calendar and is where you will submit your drafts and retrieve drafts from other students.

**A Shared Tufts Box Folder** You don’t need to create this folder. You will receive an invitation to it from me shortly after you submit your story ideas assignment early in the semester. You will need to create a Tufts Box account if you don’t already have one. To do so, go here: https://tufts.app.box.com/login?redirect_url=%2Ffiles

Your shared Tufts Box folder is where you will submit almost all assignments and where I will return submitted assignments and leave you recorded comments on each of your drafts. Because these folders are shared, please remove my recorded comments after listening to them. This ensures that there will be room for future podcasts.

**Access to our Course Calendar and Syllabus** I will send out a link to this Google document.

**A Working Tufts E-Mail Address** Extremely important: If you don’t keep up with my weekly e-mails, you will quickly fall behind in your work. If you don’t use your Tufts e-mail account and check it regularly, please be sure to forward mail from it to your main account this semester.

**Handouts** All course handouts (except for the Course Calendar/Syllabus, which is posted as a Google document) are available to read and/or print on our Trunk site. Please review these and pay particular attention to the posted Course Calendar/Syllabus.

**Podcasts and Workarounds** You will be receiving my comments on your papers in the form of brief written remarks accompanied by explanatory podcasts. Most of my comments will be on the podcast. Please let me know immediately if you don’t see a podcast one day after your workshop. Also let me know if you experience difficulty accessing or listening to your podcasts. But first, please try these workarounds:

- Update your music software (GarageBand and iTunes).
- Try opening your podcast with iTunes by right-clicking the file and then clicking “Open With” and selecting iTunes.
- Access your podcast via your phone.

One of these methods should work, but if not please let me know—I will get you some technical help or will go over your paper with you in person if necessary. This is also an option for anyone who has a hearing impairment or other difficulties with audio comments.
This course will emphasize the following skills essential to the study of language and literature:

- 1. An appreciation of the aesthetic, intellectual, and ideological complexity of literary and cultural texts;

- 2. A capacity for critical thinking through immersion in close reading, rhetorical analysis, and historical contextualization;

- 3. An ability to produce original questions for scholarly research or creative production and the skills necessary to carry that research, critical analysis, or creative project to completion with rigor and style;

- 4. A mastery of the logical, linguistic, and rhetorical skills necessary to construct a compelling and persuasive argument and the means to convey such arguments successfully in written and oral form;

- 5. An understanding of the historical contexts in which to locate important texts of American, British, and/or Anglophone world literature;

- 6. An awareness of the intellectual programs, aesthetic strategies, and socio-political contexts within which English language cultural producers have worked;

- 7. An appreciation of the variety of aesthetic standards that have shaped textual production over time and the ideological contexts that may inflect aesthetic judgments;
8. A knowledge of the distinctive characteristics of different genres and forms (poetry, novel, non-fiction prose, film, literary theory, etc.);

9. An insight into the contributions of the humanities to ways of thinking about cultural values and other questions of public concern.
Intermediate Journalism EN 11

Nan Levinson
Office: East Hall 208A
Phone: ex. 72380

Office hours: Tu & Th 4:15-5:00 and by arrangement
E-mail: nanlevinson@comcast.net

Useful book: The Associated Press Stylebook, 2016 edition (also available for e-readers)

Journalism is the natural habitat of skeptics, so let’s start with some tart and true observations spanning a century, more or less:

News is what somebody somewhere does not want you to print. The rest is advertising.
Lord Northcliffe (British press baron, 1865-1922)

Fundamental accuracy of statement is the one sole morality of writing.
Ezra Pound (American poet, 1885-1972)

Social media isn’t journalism, It’s information. Journalism is what you do with it.
C. J. Chivers (New York Times reporter since 2001)

Journalism that doesn’t challenge itself isn’t worth much.
Nan Levinson (freelance journalist, now)

This semester, you’ll work at finding out what’s happening and what everyone doesn’t already know about it, figuring out what matters, and reporting accurately, clearly, intelligently, and interestingly. In other words, you’ll practice journalism, that often maligned, often noble enterprise. To that end, you’ll focus on honing the core skills of news gathering, writing, editing, and illustrating, which will set you in good stead as the craft of journalism and the business of news media continue to evolve.

Your assignments will cover:
§ finding and using primary sources: human, written, raw, and digested data
§ reporting and writing precisely, concisely, and engagingly
§ investigating and analyzing events, people, organizations, and phenomena
§ trying your hand at blogging, tweeting, and visualizations
§ pitching, researching, writing and polishing a long, narrative feature story

Our medium is the written word, but you’ll be introduced to other parts of the news ecosystem and will include some in your work. Our distribution media will be newspapers (print and online), magazines & Journos, our class blog (http://thejournos.blogspot.com).
You’ll also act as readers and editors, so your contribution in class is a significant element of the course and of your grade.

For the first two-ish months, you’ll follow a beat (a subject area) of your choosing (decide by 26 Jan.) and write five different types of stories on it. You’ll also write weekly blog posts. Your assignments will usually require you to work independently, sometimes with classmates, and always resourcefully. Journalists find their material in the communities they cover, so I’ll encourage you to venture off campus and beyond familiar sources as much as possible.
In the latter part of the semester, you'll follow several steps to produce a long, fully realized magazine feature on a different topic from your beat. The first version will be due around 11 April and the final version a week after classes end. This will draw on what we've worked on all semester, so I anticipate that you'll ultimately be capable of producing a piece worthy of publication.

Throughout the semester, you'll be expected to: follow what's going on in the world and how it's reported; draw on what you know; add to your knowledge and understanding of what you don't know; and think about what it all means. We'll often talk about the roles and responsibilities of journalists among ourselves and with guests to our class.

**DESIGN:** I assign stories, you read them aloud in class as often as time allows, and your classmates -- who I hope will become a community of fellow journalists -- will discuss what you've accomplished and suggest ways to strengthen the piece. We'll schedule who's reading ahead of time; when it's your turn, bring copies of your story for us to follow on the page. I'll collect most assignments, comment on and be available to discuss them. If you're interested in doing more work on a story (beyond just correcting errors), you're welcome to resubmit an assignment within a couple of weeks after I return it. **Do not wait until the end of the semester and do a bunch then when they're of little educational value to either of us.** (I mean this.)

You'll also be assigned regular blog posts, some on your beat, some on timely or general topics. **This integral to your classwork and counts toward your grade.** It would warm my heart if you interacted on the blog, gussied it up and added to it beyond the assignments. It's our forum.

**EXPECTATIONS,** which help things go smoothly:

1. I expect you to attend all classes (after 3 absences, it counts against your grade), arrive on time and hand in assignments when they're due — as any editor would. When meeting a deadline is problematic, talk to me ahead of time. I'm nicer then.

2. **All assignments must be printed out legibly, in correct journalistic format, without typos, so proofread everything carefully (blog posts too).** I pay attention to the mechanics of writing & so should you. **When in doubt, refer to a reputable style manual.**

3. Keep hardcopies of your work where you can find them, so they're available when we meet. (Stuff reads differently from page to screen and journalism appears in both forms.)

4. Try to make your comments about classmates' work specific, direct, probing, respectful, and constructive. Think about what would be useful to you and take that as a guide.

5. I'm happy to meet with you during the semester to talk about specific assignments or more generally about your work, progress, and ambitions. I like talking with my students.
GRADING: I think of us as working together for you to become the best journalist you can, so I
don’t grade individual assignments because I find that inhibits the kind of independent, rigorous
work and muscular thinking good journalism requires. I will respond regularly to your written
work, grade the final version of your feature story, and give you a grade in the course. You’re
welcome to talk with me about how you’re doing throughout the semester and if you’re uneasy
about the absence of grades, I encourage you to do so. There are no exams unless I’m appalled
by your punctuation, spelling or grammar.

You have the option of asking me to grade one shorter assignment of your choosing. Just note at
the top of a story, when you hand it in, that you’d like a grade. This isn’t compulsory, so it’s up to
you when and if it happens.

Your final grade will be a balance of all your written and classwork this semester, with the
final, long feature weighed more heavily than individual short pieces.
In assigning that grade, I’ll consider:

- primarily, your journalistic ability and accomplishment in shorter pieces and blog posts
during the semester, the quality of your final feature story, and the quality and
seriousness of your work in class (including attendance)

- secondarily, how much you’ve challenged yourself and how much you’ve improved

DATES of NOTE
26 January           decide on your beat
23 February         No Class (Presidents Day sked)
18-26 March         Spring break (we will have class the Thursday before)
27 March (Mon.)     editorial proposal for feature emailed to everyone by 9pm
10 April (Mon.)     panel of journalists (tentative date)
11 April            working version of feature due (tentative date)
5 May (Fri.)         inal, brilliant, publishable version of feature due

ANCIPATED COURSE OUTCOMES for JOURNALISM

By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- recognize news and be familiar with its various delivery systems
- find journalism stories and take advantage of reporting opportunities
- find, cultivate, understand, and make effective use of primary sources
- report original news stories accurately, clearly, intelligently, honestly, and fluidly
- know when to ask, Says who? Oh, yeah? and So what?
- assess the significance and consequences of your reporting
- be a smart, discerning, demanding consumer of news

(It would be great if you also found self-knowledge and a sense of purpose in life, but you’re
more or less on your own there.)