# ENGL 484: Advanced Prose Workshop

Fall 2020, TTH 11:30-12:50

Remote (access through Zoom link on Canvas)

## Contact

Professor Maya Sonenberg

[mayas@uw.edu](mailto:mayas@uw.edu)

Office Hours: T 1:30-3:30 pm (access through Zoom link on Canvas) and by appointment (email to set up a time)

## Description

Curiosity is the antidote to judgement.

"I have not failed 1,000 times. I have successfully discovered 1,000 ways to NOT make a light bulb. When I have eliminated the ways that will not work, I will find the way that will work."

--Thomas Edison (allegedly)

Working writers often face two excruciating questions: How do I start? How do I finish?

Facing, with terror, the blank page, we wonder where to find the form, idea, and language to begin. Facing our complete drafts, we wonder how to bring them in line with those dreams of form, idea, and language which inspired us.

This advanced prose writing workshop will focus on the creative process, from inspiration to revision. By the end of the quarter, you should have a short story or personal essay as close to completion as you can possibly bring it in just 10 weeks. Along the way, you'll find challenging but playful exercises, and many guided opportunities to explore the revision process.

As this is an advanced writing workshop, be prepared to do a lot of reading and writing. I’ll expect you to approach all of it—your own writing, your classmates’ writing, the published stories and essays we read—in the spirit of curiosity. Instead of asking “Is this good or bad?” ask “How and where is this interesting? What happens if I make this change? What does the author want to accomplish?”

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of this quarter, students will be able to:

* demonstrate their playful engagement in language-driven writing exercises
* demonstrate their ability to plan aspects of their story or essay
* draft, revise, and complete a short story or essay
* explore content and form of their choosing, following up on the implications of those choices
* contribute constructively to class and small group discussions
* demonstrate the ability to critique and analyze creative writing produced by their classmates in a constructive, forward-looking way
* examine and assess their writing and revision process

## Required Materials

* Steering the Craft: A 21st Century Guide to Sailing the Sea of Story, by Ursula LeGuin
* An active UW email address!
* A good dictionary and thesaurus

## Reading Assignments

* We'll be reading extensively from Steering the Craft. Other readings will be linked on Canvas.
* Whenever possible, I have provided a photo of each author, and you can always find more information about them by clicking on their names.

## Writing Assignments

* One 7-10 (1750-3000 wd) short story or personal essay draft
* Three revisions of that story or essay, including a “final” version
* Six short writing exercises
* Written responses to your classmates’ prose.

## Grades

First complete draft of story or essay

Deep revision

Revision

Final version of story or essay

Exercises

Participation

**Total**

40 pts

40 pts

40 pts

100 pts

120 pts (20 pts each)

60 pts

**400 pts**

## Content for written assignments

You may write about anything in this class, with just a few caveats spelled out below. You may write fiction or creative nonfiction. You may write genre fiction (sci-fi, fantasy, etc.), although some genres (detective, thriller) are very hard to pull off in just a few pages, and some genres (Romance) are very hard to present in new, fresh ways, without relying on clichés. If you’re writing nonfiction, you may write memoir, personal essay, lyric essay.

Here are the caveats:

1. You may not write about me or anyone else in this class without getting their permission first. In order to get their permission, you must share every detail you plan to include with them, and if they say no, you will have to drop that approach and start another.
2. You may not use violence simply in order to generate or resolve conflict. It is the easy way out!
3. You may not write academic papers, lab reports, manifestos, or straight forward journalism.

## Format for written assignments

Written work must be submitted as Word files (doc or docx) in Times New Roman or Arial, 12 point font, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins. Exceptions (of course!) can be made when font style and size, and spacing add to the meaning of your piece. Your last name, assignment name and # (including a, b, c etc. if there’s a choice), and page numbers should appear in the header on every page. You will submit work through Canvas and I will be returning work that way as well.

Files must be named as follows: your last name, exercise or story number, choice (ie. Sonenberg, exercise 1a.doc)

## Class Policies

### *Land Acknowledgement*

We acknowledge the people – past, present, and future – of the Dkhw’Duw’Absh, the Duwamish Tribe, the Muckleshoot Tribe, and other tribes on whose traditional lands we study and work.

### Attendance

We need you here! This course depends on you—a community of dedicated writers and readers. Every day we will be doing something essential to your development as a writer. We may use a mixture of synchronous and asynchronous learning, but I expect you to participate fully in all of our activities. Should you need to miss a class due to illness or family emergencies, please let me know as soon as possible. Likewise, if you have trouble connecting due to internet or computer issues, please let me know as soon as possible.

### *Participation*

This is largely a discussion class and therefore cannot succeed without participation from each and every one of you. As the class will be held remotely, we will be using a variety of ways to create discussion and collaboration. I will expect you to thoughtfully complete the reading and writing assignments, contribute insightful comments to class discussion, and participate in all class activities with consideration, openness, and a sense of humor.

### Late Work

Assignments in this class are designed to build upon each other, and you will benefit from doing them on time and in the order presented. It is especially important to turn in rough drafts and written feedback on your classmates’ drafts on time so that you can all move on to revising. Nevertheless, I know that we are living in stressful times and that we all have a many things to deal with right now. If you find you are having trouble keeping up, please get in touch, and I will work with you to establish deadlines that you can meet.

### ZoomNetiquette

* Keep your video on during class if at all possible. The Zoom Room already feels like a poor approximation of a real classroom, and it’s even harder to connect if we can’t see each other. Of course, you are welcome to use a virtual background! If sharing your video will be a problem due to bandwidth issues, shared spaces, or other problems, please let me know.
* Rename yourself, sharing your preferred name and pronouns.
* Light yourself well so that your face isn’t in shadow—or face a window.
* Mute yourself when you’re not talking.
* Leave space for others to speak. As a class we will decide the best way to signal that we have something to say.
* Use the chat to ask questions during a lecture
* See below for more information

### Canvas Netiquette (adapted from UW Bothell Teaching Online 101)

* Be supportive and provide others with constructive feedback. Share why you agree or disagree. Build on the strengths of others or offer constructive ideas to help solve weaknesses or trouble spots.
* Share your knowledge. Learning happens when people share experiences, knowledge, and ideas.
* Keep discussion focused on the assigned topics/discussion prompt.
* Express alternative points of view respectfully. Debate is ok; personal attacks are not.
* Be mindful of word choice and tone. Written language can blur intent – even if you were trying to be funny, your post may not read as funny. Before posting, ensure your comments are clear and cannot be taken in the wrong context. Use emoticons (sparingly) to help express intent.
* We’re not all online 24/7.One of the advantages of asynchronous learning is the ability to log on at any time. But remember that others are not online 24 hours a day. Replies to your posts/questions may not be instantaneous.
* Messages of a personal nature should be emailed privately.
* Harassment in any form is unacceptable and violates the university's [student code of conduct (Links to an external site.)](https://www.washington.edu/admin/rules/policies/WAC/478-121TOC.html). This includes taking screenshots of other students or the instructor in a virtual environment without their consent.
* Remember, we’re all human. Although you’re learning at a distance, your peers and instructor are still human and have feelings. If you wouldn’t make the comment in a face-to-face environment, don’t post it.
* Honor diversity and aspire to be inclusive. At UW, diversity and inclusion are core values and priorities. We accept and celebrate the differences that are represented through the many diverse and minoritized communities in our community. Be aware of and sensitive to the diversity of your classmates and instructors. Ensure your comments are inclusive to all participants.
* Ask for help**.** Not sure if your post is appropriate? Ask another participant or your instructor to review it before you post.

### Access and Accommodations

Your experience in this class is important to me. It is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have already established accommodations with Disability Resources for Students (DRS), please activate your accommodations via myDRS so we can discuss how they will be implemented in this course.

If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), contact DRS directly to set up an Access Plan. DRS facilitates the interactive process that establishes reasonable accommodations. Contact DRS at [disability.uw.edu](http://depts.washington.edu/uwdrs/).

### Religious Holidays & Accommodations

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW’s policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at [Religious Accommodations Policy (https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/)](https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/). Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the [Religious Accommodations Request form (https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/)](https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/).

### Plagiarism

While I whole-heartedly agree that great writers “steal” from the work of others, they do NOT do this word for word, line for line. If I find that you have been using another writer’s (including another student writer’s) words without attribution, we will need to have a serious chat and you run the risk of failing this class.

That said, you are certainly free to plagiarize yourselves—and I hope you do so! In other words, feel free to expand on or combine our short exercises to write your longer pieces, or feel free to use text you’ve already written as the text of your book.

## ****Student Support****

List of all [Student Services](https://www.washington.edu/students/servicesforstudents/)

[UW IT Connect](https://itconnect.uw.edu/?utm_medium=partner&utm_source=uwit-external&utm_campaign=menu-itc), your hub for all questions about technology, Canvas, email, software, etc.

[Odegaard Undergraduate Library Writing and Research Center](http://depts.washington.edu/owrc/)

[University of Washington Libraries](https://www.lib.washington.edu/?_ga=2.4863867.973686619.1599431987-1481131824.1596340928)

English Subject Area Librarian, [Elliott Stevens](https://guides.lib.uw.edu/prf.php?account_id=115813)

[CLUE and Academic Support Programs](http://webster.uaa.washington.edu/asp/website/)

[Office of Minority Affairs & Diversity](https://www.washington.edu/omad/)

[The Q Center](https://depts.washington.edu/qcenter/wordpress/)

[Financial Aid](https://www.washington.edu/financialaid/)

[Merit Scholarships, Fellowships & Awards](https://expd.uw.edu/scholarships/)

[Novel Coronavirus & COVID-19 Information](https://www.washington.edu/coronavirus/)

[Disability Resources](http://depts.washington.edu/uwdrs/)

[Health Services](https://wellbeing.uw.edu/)

[Counseling Center](https://www.washington.edu/counseling/)

[LiveWell Center](https://depts.washington.edu/livewell/), including Suicide Intervention Program, Survivor Support & Advocacy, and information about Alcohol & Other Drugs

## ****Department of English**** Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The UW English Department aims to help students become more incisive thinkers, effective communicators, and imaginative writers by acknowledging that language and its use are powerful and hold the potential to empower individuals and communities; to provide the means to engage in meaningful conversation and collaboration across differences and with those with whom we disagree; and to offer methods for exploring, understanding, problem solving, and responding to the many pressing collective issues we face in our world--skills that align with and support the University of Washington’s mission to educate “a diverse student body to become responsible global citizens and future leaders through a challenging learning environment informed by cutting-edge scholarship.”

As a department, we begin with the conviction that language and texts play crucial roles in the constitution of cultures and communities, past, present, and future.  Our disciplinary commitments to the study of language, literature, and culture require of us a willingness to engage openly and critically with questions of power and difference. As such, in our teaching, service, and scholarship we frequently initiate and encourage conversations about topics such as race, immigration, gender, sexuality, class, indigeneity, and colonialisms. These topics are fundamental to the inquiry we pursue.  We are proud of this fact, and we are committed to creating an environment in which our faculty and students can do so confidently and securely, knowing that they have the backing of the department.

Towards that aim, we value the inherent dignity and uniqueness of individuals and communities. We acknowledge that our university is located on the shared lands and waters of the Coast Salish peoples. We aspire to be a place where human rights are respected and where any of us can seek support. This includes people of all ethnicities, faiths, gender identities, national and indigenous origins, political views, and citizenship status; nontheists; LGBQTIA+; those with disabilities; veterans; and anyone who has been targeted, abused, or disenfranchised.