# ENGL 384b: Advanced Prose Workshop

Fall 2021, MW 9:30-10:50

## Contact

Professor Maya Sonenberg

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

Office Hours: W 2:30-4:30 pm (Zoom) and by appointment (email to set up a time)

## Description

We often think a story or essay is an organic thing, its form rising naturally from its content, but in this class, we will be turning those ideas upside down—rethinking the idea of “natural” form and using form to generate content.  Of course we will look out for, work on, and discuss all other aspects of literary prose too, but we will look at them and create them through the lens of form.  The quarter will start with an exploration of linear narratives, and move on to various more experimental and nonlinear forms.  At the end of the quarter, we'll explore some books that stretch our ideas of the page and the binding even further. Expect to do a LOT of reading and a LOT of writing influenced by our reading.

### **Fuzzy on “form”?**

By "form," I mean anything and everything that might give shape to a story or essay: traditional plot structure, shifts through time, collage forms, repetition and variation of images, geometric shapes, forms borrows from other things (lists, games, account books, questionnaires, etc.).

### **Writing through influence.**

Here’s a little secret: writers do not create out of thin air, or even only out of the heavily populated air of their own lives.  All writers create their work by listening to stories and reading the work of other writers.  Do I mean that writers steal?  Sometimes, yes. But what I really mean is that writers revel in their influences.  It is impossible to avoid being influenced so we might as well approach these influences consciously, learn from them, and make the best use of them we can.  In this class, I will ask you to be influenced by the forms and patterns other writers have used.  You will not be rewriting their work but creating your own based on their structures.

## Learning Objectives

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

* analyze the forms of short stories and personal essays, as well as the relationship between form and content in those stories and essays
* create short stories and/or essays, demonstrating their ability to combine form and content in appropriate ways
* 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 the forms they most want to explore in their own creative prose writing

## Required Materials

* Course Reader—from Professional Copy/Print (4200 University Way NE, 206- 634-2689)
* Supplies for making an unbound book, as needed
* An active UW email address and UW Google Drive account. Nearly all the writing assignments in this class will be submitted to Google Drive folders and you must access them, you must be logged into Google using your UW NetID. If you need a refresher on how to log in to Google with your UW Net ID, [here's a quick video tutorial](https://youtu.be/LWZvbJ7E-2E).
* A good dictionary and thesaurus

## Grades

Long Story/Essay--100 pts

Book--100 pts

Short-short story (Who's Knocking on My Door)--50 pts

Moving through Time exercise--25 pts

Controlling Image exercise--25 pts

Written Comments--50 pts

Participation--50 pts

**Total--400 pts**

## Reading Assignments

* Required readings--almost all of these can be found in the course reader. A few will be accessed through links in Canvas.
* Optional readings--all accessed through links in Canvas
* I have provided publication dates for each reading, author photos where they were easily available, and links to more information about each author (find this by clicking on the author's name).

## Writing Assignments

* Two short exercises
* One short-short story
* One long story or essay
* An unbound book
* Written peer reviews of your classmates’ prose

## 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

* All writing assignments other than your book will be turned in via Google Docs this quarter. If you usually generate writing within Google Docs, you are, of course, free to do so. If you usually use Microsoft Word or another word processing program, continue to do what works for you and simply upload the document.
* Each assignment will have a link to a separate Google Drive folder.
* Include your full name and a title for the story or essay on the first page.
* Include page numbers!!!!
* Double space and use 12 point font, with 1 inch margins.  Exceptions (of course!) can be made when font style and size, and spacing add to the meaning of your piece.

## Watching Assignments

I have recorded several brief lectures for you to watch on your own time so that we can save our meetings for discussion and activities.

## 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 will be meeting in person this quarter and 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.

You may skip one or more class, depending on the grade you contract for (see Contract Grading below). Please plan for these carefully in case you are struck by a minor illness or other emergency late in the quarter.

Should you suffer a major illness, family emergency, or need to isolate due to our COVID situation, please let me know as soon as possible.

**If you are feeling sick, do not come to class**.

### *Participation*

This is largely a discussion class and therefore cannot succeed without participation from each and every one of you. 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. The possibility for turning in some late work is built into each grade you can contract for. As long as you follow the instructions for your grade, you do not need to ask me for an extension.

### 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 (you can find links to even more general UW support services and to services at UW Libraries through links on our Canvas site.)**

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.

## **COVID-19 Information**

I am extremely happy that we get to meet in person this quarter. However, things are not quite back to "normal." Please see below for details. For even more details, see [UW's COVID-19 Prevention and Response webpage](https://www.ehs.washington.edu/covid-19-prevention-and-response/covid-19-health-and-safety-resources).

### Meeting

**This class is conducted in person**. Therefore, unless you meet the criteria for an  
accommodation from Disability Resources for Students (DRS) or other special  
arrangement approved by the instructor that allows you to take the course  
remotely you should only register for this class if you can attend in-person.  
Please contact UW Disability Resources for Students (DRS) directly if you feel  
you may be eligible for an accommodation based on your status as an immunecompromised  
individual or based on other diagnosed physical or mental health  
conditions that might prevent you from being able to take classes in-person.

**Office Hours will be conducted over Zoom**, at least for the time being.

### Our Room

Windows will be open all quarter, so please make sure you have some warm layers. You might even want a pair of gloves or fingerless mittens.

If we have an air purifier, it will be running.

### Masking

Students are required to follow the University’s COVID-19 Face Covering Policy  
at all times when on-site at the University, including any posted requirements in  
specific buildings or spaces. Basically, you need to mask up whenever you're indoors, no matter your vaccination status. You must mask up outdoors as well, if you are in a crowd, and it is highly recommended that you mask up outdoors anywhere you can't maintain distance from your fellow humans.

I will expect you to wear a mask that fits snugly over your nose and mouth at all times in this class. There are no exceptions! Not even for actively eating or drinking, not even for sips of water. If you are really thirsty and need to hydrate, please step outside the class for a few moments--no need to ask permission!

If you forget to put on your mask or are wearing one incorrectly, I will remind you gently. I will bring a handful of disposable masks to class every day in case anyone needs one. Please do not take my reminders personally. I truly want all of us to stay safe.

If a student refuses to comply with the policy, the  
student can be sent home (to an on or off-campus residence). Student Conduct  
offices are available for consultations on potential violations of student conduct if  
needed. University personnel who have concerns that a student or group of  
students are not complying with this policy should speak with their supervisor, a  
representative of the academic unit, or report it to the Environmental Health &  
Safety Department.

See UW's [COVID-19 Face Covering Policy](https://www.ehs.washington.edu/system/files/resources/COVID-19-face-cover-policy.pdf) for more details.

### Vaccination

All UW students are expected to complete their vaccine attestation before  
arriving on campus.

### Feeling Sick?

If you feel ill, have been exposed to COVID-19, or exhibit  
possible COVID symptoms, **you should not come to class**. If you need to  
temporarily quarantine or isolate per CDC guidance and/or campus policy, you  
are responsible for notifying your instructors as soon as possible by email. If you  
have a known exposure to COVID-19 or receive a positive COVID-19 test result,  
you must report to campus Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S).  
All UW community members are required to notify EH&S immediately after:  
● Receiving a positive test for COVID-19  
● Being told by your doctor that they suspect you have COVID-19  
● Learning that you have been in close contact with someone who  
tested positive for COVID-19  
You can notify the COVID-19 Response and Prevention Team by emailing  
covidehc@uw.edu or calling 206-616-3344.

### Oh no! Someone tested positive.

There are various scenarios in which a positive COVID-19 test might influence your experience of this class.

If you, yourself, need to quarantine or isolate, please contact me as soon as possible so that we can accommodate your absences.

If UW deems that exposure necessitates that our individual class needs to switch to remote learning, or if the COVID situation in our community means that the entire university must switch to remote learning, we will continue to meet over Zoom. I will contact as soon as possible via a Canvas Announcement with all the necessary information.