
Summer 2025
STUDY ABROAD CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP:
Intermediate/Advanced Fiction Writing in Oviedo, Spain
CRWR 340/445
Day/Time: see below
Location: ESDAC School, Oviedo, Spain

Instructor: Karen Thompson Walker
Language of Instruction: English
Site City and Country: Oviedo, Spain
UO Credits: 4
Contact Hours: 30
Student Engagement Hours: 120

“Instructions for living a life:
Pay attention.
Be Astonished.
Tell about it.”
-from “Sometimes” by Mary Oliver

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This class will transport the traditional creative writing fiction workshop to the city of Oviedo, Spain. Through the careful, close, and imaginative reading of one another’s writing, you will become better acquainted with the internal workings of storytelling and the vast array of tools available to you as a writer of fiction. We will look closely at language, sentences, narrative voice, point of view, character, detail and structure. We will pay particular attention to the role of setting, and each student will write one short piece of fiction set in Oviedo. We will also explore how new surroundings can lead to fresh insights into one’s creative work.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY:

A creative writing workshop, in which students will read and critique one another’s fiction, with special attention to the role of place in fiction.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Proficiency in close reading.
- Further development of vocabularies for assessing literature, with an emphasis on craft.
- Application of the formal elements of craft in fiction.
- Familiarity with fundamental concepts, forms, modes, and traditions in literary fiction.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Creative Work:

-One piece of original fiction (8-15 pages), submitted before the class begins. We will workshop this piece in class, according to the schedule below.

-One piece of flash fiction (2-4 pages), to be written during your time in Spain, and set in Oviedo. **(Due via email to me by 10am on 7/18).** You will receive additional instructions for this piece on the first day of class. We will workshop this piece in class during the last week of the program.

-One observational sentence will be due at the start of each workshop class—except for on the first day. Each of these single sentences should capture something you’ve noticed about Oviedo or one of our excursions. Your daily sentence might describe a certain building, or a small street. It might capture the sounds you hear in a park or a church or a market, the way a tourist speaks as they sit in a café. We will share these sentences aloud at the start of every workshop class.

Rules for Creative Work:

1. All submissions should be new work, rather than revisions of pieces submitted to other classes.

2. **Do not submit work that features characters based on anyone in this class, even disguised versions of them. PLEASE FOLLOW THIS RULE!**

Critiques:

Critiques of Long Pieces: Before each class meeting, you will read and critique two or three pieces of fiction written by your fellow students. (Please refer to the workshop schedule for which pieces we will workshop on which day.) Your written critique should consist of 1) a letter to the author, at least 1/2 a page in length (single-spaced), and 2) a line-edited version of the story, with your suggestions captured in the form of MS Word “comments”—or something similar. Please be as specific as possible in your letter, which should address the strengths as well as weaknesses of each submission. It should also give the author a clear sense of your experience reading the piece. Please keep in mind that reading and responding to the work of other students is just as important to your development as a writer as your own writing is. **Please email your critique to the author of the story, cc’ing the professor (ktwalker@uoregon.edu) by midnight on the day that we workshop that piece. Please do NOT email your critique to the author BEFORE the workshop.**

*Please be kind and respectful in your discussions of one another’s work. Your criticism should be constructive and specific. **A strong sense of community and collaboration is part of what makes the workshop environment special.**

Mini Workshops/Critiques of Flash Fiction: We will read and discuss these short pieces together in class. There will be no written critiques for these pieces.

METHOD OF EVALUATION:

Attendance and class participation: 50%

Long submission: (8-15 pages): 15%

Flash fiction Piece (2-3 pages): 10%

Written critiques: 25%

Grading Scale

97-100%: A+	87-89%: B+	77-79%: C+	67-69%: D+	0-59%: F
94-96%: A	84-86%: B	74-76%: C	64-66%: D	
90-93%: A-	80-83%: B-	70-73%: C-	60-63%: D-	

Format for Typed Work

Microsoft Word Document

Times New Roman, 12 pt.

Submissions should be double-spaced.

Critiques should be single-spaced.

Late Work

Please do your best to submit all work on time. A late submission may result in the loss of your workshop slot. Late critiques will result in a one-letter drop in your grade for that assignment.

Attendance

It is crucial that you attend every class. Because of the compressed nature of this program, you should consider it even more important to your grade—as well as to the success of the workshop—that you attend all classes.

COURSE OUTLINE:

This class will be run as a traditional creative writing workshop. This means that the vast majority of our class time will be spent discussing one another’s work. Over the course of four weeks, you will each workshop one longer piece of fiction (8-15 pages), submitted before the trip, and one flash fiction piece (2-4 pages), written during your time in Spain.

WEEK ONE:

Wednesday, 7/2

Intro & Noticing Exercise

Workshops:

Maya Bauer
Anna Christensen

Friday, 7/4

Write one observational sentence about Oviedo to read aloud in class.

Workshops:

Emma Eldridge
Maia Gordon
Finn Jeffrey

WEEK TWO:

Tuesday, 7/8

Write one observational sentence about Oviedo to read aloud in class.

Workshops:

Hollis Morris
Grady Moss
Jayden Taylor

Friday, 7/11

Write one observational sentence about Oviedo to read aloud in class.

Workshops:

Keegan Tippetts
Annia Yastremski

WEEK THREE:

Tuesday, 7/15

Write one observational sentence about Oviedo to read aloud in class.

Workshops:

Keira Wilson
Bella Starbuck
Champe Scoble

Friday, 7/18

***Workshop piece #2 due via email by 10am on this day.**

Write one sentence about Oviedo to read aloud in class.

Mini Workshops

WEEK FOUR:

Tuesday, 7/22

Write one observational sentence about Oviedo to read aloud in class.

Workshops:

Hanna Kalan
Ally Kennedy
Abby Morgan

Thursday, 7/24

Write one observational sentence about Oviedo to read aloud in class.

Mini Workshops

Friday, 7/25: Student Reading (Details TBD)

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Accessible Education

(<https://aec.uoregon.edu/best-practices-faculty>)

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. *Let me know within the first two weeks of the term if you need assistance to fully participate in the course. Participation includes access to lectures, web-based information, in-class activities, and exams. The Accessible Education Center in 360 Oregon Hall (<http://aec.uoregon.edu/>) works with students to provide an instructor notification letter outlining accommodations and adjustments to class design that will enable better access. Contact the Accessible Education Center for assistance with access or disability-related questions or concerns.*

Academic Misconduct

The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at <https://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism>.

Academic Disruption due to Campus Emergency

In the event of a campus emergency that disrupts academic activities, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to change. Information about changes in this course will be communicated as soon as possible by email, and on Canvas. If we are not able to meet face-to-face, students should immediately log onto Canvas and read any announcements and/or access alternative assignments. Students are also encouraged to continue the readings and other assignments as outlined in this syllabus or subsequent syllabi.

Reporting Obligations

I am a student-directed employee. For information about my reporting obligations as an employee, visit [Employee Reporting Obligations](#) on the Office of Investigations and Civil Rights Compliance (OICRC) website. Students experiencing any form of prohibited discrimination or harassment, including sex or gender-based violence, may seek information and resources at safe.uoregon.edu, respect.uoregon.edu, or investigations.uoregon.edu or contact the non-confidential Title IX office/Office of Civil Rights Compliance (541-346-3123), or Dean of Students offices (541-346-3216), or call the 24-7 hotline 541-346-SAFE for help. I am also a mandatory reporter of child abuse. For more info, visit: [Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect](#).

See <https://investigations.uoregon.edu/suggested-syllabus-language> for additional recommended syllabus language.

Mental Health and Wellness

Life at college can be very complicated. Students often feel overwhelmed or stressed, experience anxiety or depression, struggle with relationships, or just need help navigating challenges in their life. If you're facing such challenges, you don't need to handle them on your own--there's help and support on campus.

As your instructor if I believe you may need additional support, I will express my concerns, the reasons for them, and refer you to resources that might be helpful. It is not my intention to know the details of what might be bothering you, but simply to let you know I care and that help is available. Getting help is a courageous thing to do—for yourself and those you care about.

University Health Services help students cope with difficult emotions and life stressors. If you need general resources on coping with stress or want to talk with another student who has been in the same place as you, visit the Duck Nest (located in the EMU on the ground floor) and get help from one of the specially trained Peer Wellness Advocates. Find out more at <https://health.uoregon.edu/ducknest>.

University Counseling Services (UCS) has a team of dedicated staff members to support you with your concerns, many of whom can provide identity-based support. All clinical services are free and confidential. Find out more at counseling.uoregon.edu or by calling 541-346-3227 (anytime UCS is closed, the After-Hours Support and Crisis Line is available by calling this same number).

Basic Needs

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students Office (346-3216, 164 Oregon Hall) for support.

This UO webpage includes resources for food, housing, healthcare, childcare, transportation, technology, finances, and legal support: <https://blogs.uoregon.edu/basicneeds/food/>

Accommodation for Religious Observances

The university makes reasonable accommodations, upon request, for students who are unable to attend a class for religious obligations or observance reasons, in accordance with the university discrimination policy which says “Any student who, because of religious beliefs, is unable to attend classes on a particular day shall be excused from attendance requirements and from any examination or other assignment on that day. The student shall make up the examination or other assignment missed because of the absence.” To request accommodations for this course for religious observance, visit the Office of the Registrar's website (<https://registrar.uoregon.edu/calendars/religious-observances>) and complete and submit to the instructor the “Student Religious Accommodation Request” form prior to the end of the second week of the term.