
Summer 2026
STUDY ABROAD FICTION SEMINAR:
Literature for Creative Writers: Readings from Spain
CRWR 399/414

Instructor: Casey Walker
Language of Instruction: English
Site City and Country: Oviedo, Spain
UO Credits: 4
Contact Hours: 30
Total Hours of Student Engagement (THSE):
120

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The aim of this course is to place you in Spain as deeply as possible--as a writer, reader, traveler, and thinker. This will be a searching month of generative writing, close reading, excursions to museums and historical sites, and, ideally, artistic soul-searching.

We will evenly divide our time together between classroom seminars and site visits. Classes will be held in the Fine Arts Museum, the Archaeological Museum, the cathedral square, and at the historic 'prerrománico' churches of Oviedo.

Our class is composed of three parts:

- 1) *Readings from Spain*: literature in translation by Spanish authors, both contemporary and historical;
- 2) *Readings about Spain*: literature written by travelers to Spain, with a focus on major figures in American and British literature (Ernest Hemingway, Langston Hughes, George Orwell, and others)
- 3) *Generative writing*: in-class exercises, linked to our readings and site visits, with a particular focus on questions of form and experimental storytelling strategies

Students will leave this course with a rich introduction to writing from and about Spain, an expanded sense of formal storytelling possibilities, and a portfolio of writing full of explorations, improvisations, and their own individual curiosities.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

A literature seminar for creative writers, comprised of short lectures, discussions, and generative writing exercises in which students will regularly share their critical and creative work.

REQUIRED TEXTS

PLEASE PURCHASE A COPY OF THE BOOK BY OUR VISITING WRITER

What We Tried to Bury Grows Here, Julian Zabalbeascoa

All other course readings will be provided via a course reader.

Whether you choose to print out the readings, or have everything on a device, students *must have the reading with them each class*. We will be looking closely at this work for our discussions.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Proficiency in close reading.
- 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.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

This is an experiential class, built around in-class discussions, writing exercises, and site visits.

Attendance for all classes and excursions is mandatory. There is no way to ‘make up’ a class at a later date.

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

- 1) **Class Participation-70%**
participation includes active, prepared contribution to class discussions; demonstrated familiarity with the assigned readings; and completion of class writing exercises
- 2) **Final Portfolio-30%**
at the end of the course, each student will turn in a portfolio of work completed in this class

Original Work

All work done for this class must be created by you and for this class alone.

Grading Scale

97-100%:	A+	87-89%:	B+	77-79%:	C+	67-69%:	D+	50-59%:	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-		

AI and Large-Language-Model (LLM) Policy

Students are expressly prohibited from using AI/LLMs--ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini etc.--in any capacity for any assignment for this class.

And I do mean this as a *total ban* on its use. I don't *only* mean that you can't use an AI bot to write your stories--I think you all know that's bad and pointless. Why take a writing class if you just want the Plagiarism Machine to write for you?

I mean that you are also prohibited from using the Plagiarism Machine to do *any aspect of thinking or brainstorming work for you*. Do not short-circuit your own creativity by submitting it to a for-profit technology product whose largest consequence (beyond environmental destruction) is the destruction of human intelligence.

You are made dumber by using the Plagiarism Machine. By using it, you are arresting your own vast capacities for creative connection-building and world-building. You are stripping away everything that is you--all of your experience, all of your stories, all of your wounds and triumphs and wisdom--and replacing yourself with an automaton voice-from-nowhere. Whenever you use AI, you are complicit in the tech world's bid to steal and privatize the sum total of human intellectual work and then sell it back to you.

So: Do not use AI/LLMs/The Plagiarism Machine to write your stories. Do not use it to write your workshop letters. Do not use it to 'brainstorm' your stories. Do not use it for research (we can have a longer discussion about why it's a deeply unreliable research tool--I promise you I've been horrified by the errors it spits out even for ordinary research tasks). Do not use it. Full stop.

I want to hear your voice---your specific, messy, unpolished, grasping, learning, hoping, voice. I want your big chaotic mess of a growing intellect. I want to hear you on the page, not a plagiarism robot. Don't give yourself over to for-profit tech overlord hype that LLMs are just helping you become a better you. They aren't. The whole point of the AI business model is to make you believe you can't do things you can absolutely already do. And once they've stripped you of this belief in your own value, they want to sell these "skills" back to you. It's a scam. It's a lie.

Your chaos will always be more beautiful and interesting than the slop of machines that do not have a beating heart, that do not fall in love, suffer, raise children, know beauty, and must die. Please be yourself in this class. And write.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Accessible Education Statement (see <https://aec.uoregon.edu/best-practices-faculty> for more information): The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 360 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Academic Misconduct Statement (see <https://dos.uoregon.edu/academic-misconduct> for more information): 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 researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism.

Reporting Obligations: I am a [designated reporter/student-directed employee (select one)]. For information about my reporting obligations as an employee, please see [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. Please find more information at [Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect](#)." reporter of child abuse. Please find more information at [Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect](#). See <https://investigations.uoregon.edu/student-directed-employee-responsibilities-and-required-action> for more information

Course Schedule

Tuesday July 7th Location: Classroom Time: 10:30 am. to 1:20 pm	Readings: Asturias ‘Asturias,’ from <i>Grape, Olive, Pig</i> , Matt Goulding ‘Duet for Two Coughs,’ Leopoldo Clarín Welcome Lunch & Walking Tour to follow
Wednesday July 8th Location: Fine Arts Museum Time 10 am to 12:50 pm	Readings: 'a profound experience of art' <i>Leaving the Atocha Station</i> , Ben Lerner (excerpt) Poems by Federico García Lorca
Thursday July 9th Location: Classroom Time: 10 am to 12:50 pm	Readings: The Spanish Civil War <i>Homage to Catalonia</i> , George Orwell (excerpt) Poems by Langston Hughes 'Forever Red,' Tina Valles
Friday July 10th Location: Naranco/San Miguel de Lillo Time: 10 am to 12:50 pm	Readings: Looking Backwards 'When We Were Almost Young,' Mavis Gallant 'Counterpoint,' Josep Pla
Monday July 13th Location: Classroom Time: 10 am to 1 pm	Readings: Foreground and Background 'Sensini,' Roberto Bolaño 'There's Still Oxygen,' Carlota Gurt
Tuesday July 14th: Location: Classroom Time: 10 am to 1 pm	Readings: Narrative Compression 'Traffic Jam,' Soledad Puértolas ‘Hills Like White Elephants,’ Ernest Hemingway Afternoon Author Talk via Zoom Julian Zabalbescoa, <i>What We Tried to Bury Grows Here</i>
Wednesday July 15th: Excursion to Tito Bustillo	
Thursday July 16th Location: Archeological Museum Time: 10 am to 1 pm	'The Accursed Items,' J. Robert Lennon 'The Poor Wee Child,' Ramón Del Valle Inclán
Friday July 17th: Location: Plaza Alfonso II (Cathedral square) Time: 10 am to 12:50 pm	Readings: Narrative Dilation <i>An Attempt at Exhausting a Place in Paris</i> , Georges Perec 'On the Honeymoon,' Javier Marías

Final Portfolio Instructions

Our class is an experiential one. Your grade is based on you being present, with your full attention, at our classes and site visits; completion of the in-class writing exercises; and being an active participant in the discussions of our course reading.

Your final portfolio is a record of the work that you have done over the course of the class. And to that work, you will add one final written reflection, summing up your time in Oviedo.

Your final portfolio should include the following writing exercises:

- Fine Arts museum writing exercise (Lerner/Lorca)
- 'Accursed Items' in the Archaeological Museum
- An Attempt at Exhausting a Place in Oviedo
- George Saunders 200 word story with 50 words
- A Monster in a Peaceful Place

To these exercises you will add a 2-page minimum (double-spaced) reflection on this course and your time in Oviedo.

Because this is a creative writing class, I want you to *choose a specific form/voice* for writing this reflection. I don't want a list, or something that reads like a course review or a college admissions essay. Go deeper.

For example:

- Write your reflection as a letter to yourself, 25 years from now, explaining your time in Oviedo
- Write your reflection as though you have been accused of a horrible crime and you need to prove to the detectives who are interrogating you that you really were in Oviedo--this reflection serves as your alibi.
- Write your reflection as a report to an alien civilization, explaining what college coursework is, what creative writing is--even what Spain is--and why you studied here in Oviedo, why that's important to you, why it should be important to anyone, why this is a worthwhile use of time.
- Write your reflection as a letter to an AI tech executive who thinks no one really needs to write for themselves anymore, because AI will do it for them. What did you experience in Oviedo that a chat-bot can't replicate?

You don't have to use any of these suggestions. Feel free to come up with your own form, and feel free to talk it over with me if you'd like to brainstorm your idea. The key is to find a way to collect your thoughts in specific voice/form to convey what aesthetic experiences, readings, conversations, etc. were the most meaningful to you.

Please address the following in detail:

- the reading you responded to most, and why;
- the museum visit or excursion that you found most engaging, and why;
- what this time studying abroad has done for your thinking, your sense of aesthetics, your creative work

Also, if there are readings, museums, writing exercises that you felt yourself rebelling against, think about why. What makes you resist it? What do you wish to do differently in your own artistic practice? Artists build on other artists—not just through admiration, but also through resistance, discovering what they don't like and don't agree with.

These final reflections are always a joy to read. And they'll be a joy for you to hold onto.