



ARHU 309 Syllabus
Jiménez-Porter Writers' House
Fall 2021

COURSE INFORMATION

Instructor: Jacky Mueck

Email: jmueck@umd.edu

Office Location: Queen Anne's Hall

Office Hours: Wednesdays 2-3 pm

Class Time: Wednesdays 4-5:30 pm

Class Location: Jellema Library in Queen Anne's room 1132

Section: 0101

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This one-credit course is meant to continue work in fiction within a workshop setting. We will all work to read and understand fiction and short stories on a deeper level to then create and revise stories of our own with a better understanding of the power of our language. This semester might be a normal semester, but we will all be flexible as the semester develops, prioritizing safety and being kind to ourselves and to others as we move through what is *hopefully*, the ending phase of the pandemic. We will come together as a community and support each other both in and outside of writing. Students will submit two fiction pieces throughout the semester, culminating in a portfolio of one heavily revised fiction piece, two unrevised pieces, as well as a reflection paper.

All JPWH courses aim to further the principles of anti-racism while fostering inclusivity and community. To be anti-racist is to actively work against racism in all of its iterations – political, interpersonal, institutional, etc. As a member of the JPWH community, it is integral that we take part in the work to address and dismantle the racism and white-supremacy inherent to the academic spaces we inhabit. Together we can improve our world.

It is easy to believe that the space of the creative writing classroom is untouched by issues involving race or racism, that writing itself transcends the boundaries and barriers erected by race; however, that belief does not reflect reality. So what can we do? In this course, we will engage with diverse readings beyond the English Canon and consider how race informs the craft of writing and the practice of reading. We will workshop using a model that encourages empathy, exploration, and dialogue instead of enforcing silence. By engaging with the craft of creative writing from this perspective, we can ensure that we do not further reify the presence of white supremacy and racism within creative writing.

COMMUNITY STATEMENT

The Jiménez-Porter Writers' House is a community of writers from all over campus and from all undergraduate years. We work as a community for all writers to improve their work in an inclusive and anti-racist environment, both inside and outside of workshop. As students and staff members, we aim to support each other through community events and other activities that bring us together. We are all writers and we all work together to improve our craft.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, our community will meet differently compared to prior years. Our classes and events will be socially distanced or online to protect our community and each other's well-being. We may not know what our semesters and community will look like for this fall, but we are determined to be the community of writers and friends as we have been since Writers' House was founded, online or otherwise. Our workshops will be as active and productive and we will continue to grow as writers together.

MASKS

President Pines provided [clear expectations to the University](#) about wearing of masks for vaccinated and unvaccinated students. Face coverings over the nose and mouth are required while you are indoors at all times. There are no exceptions. Students not wearing a mask will be given a warning and asked to wear one, or will be asked to leave the classroom immediately. Students who have additional issues with the mask expectation after a first warning will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for failure to comply with a directive of University officials.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Read and analyze various multi-cultural works of fiction.
2. Identify conventions and literary techniques used by professional writers and apply them in the creation of original works of fiction.
3. Develop an inclusive literary workshop community where thoughtful comments and critiques are offered in an honest and respectful manner.
4. Communicate emotion in writing using action verbs, dialogue, sensory language and vivid imagery.
5. Explore a wide range of styles and voices; push the limits of your own writing.
6. Learn how to read texts carefully, and write about them critically, using the proper vocabulary to discuss what you're noticing.
7. Produce a portfolio with one heavily revised piece and an introduction.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND TECHNOLOGIES

All readings will be made available online. The following are required for success in this course: a digital device (computer/tablet/laptop) and internet connection. If our classes are held online, access to a webcam is required but exceptions can be made as discussed with me. If you anticipate access issues for any reason, please contact me.

WORKSHOP SUBMISSIONS

All students will submit two times to be workshopped by the class on the assigned dates. While the nature and style of your submissions will vary given your strengths and preferences, there are certain things to remember which apply to all submissions:

1. Workshop submissions should be between 2 and 8 pages.
2. Workshop submissions must be submitted on the **Monday before workshop by 4pm**. It is your responsibility to submit your pieces in a timely fashion. If you submit your piece the day after it is due, you will get partial credit for your submission. Anything later and you will forfeit your round of workshop. No exceptions will be made.
3. You should not be absent or late on the day of your workshop. Your classmates worked hard to give you feedback, and you should do everything in your power to be there.
4. I do **not** expect the pieces you submit to be publishable, and you shouldn't either. We are all a work in progress. However, I do expect your work to demonstrate care and attention to detail. Anything you put before your peers should be proofread.
5. Follow MLA format: Times New Roman, 12 point font, one-inch margins, Name, my name, class, date on the top left, title centered with the same font/size, PAGES NUMBERED if your submission is more than one page.

RESPONDING TO WORKSHOP SUBMISSIONS

Each classmate's submission demands your full consideration. It is recommended that you carefully read each student's submission **at least twice** – once as a reader and a second time as a peer leaving comments. Notes don't need to be complicated – underlining lines you really enjoyed, putting question marks next to confusing passages, or writing small comments all work. The more feedback you can provide, the better.

For your more complete thoughts, you will provide one workshop response for every piece. These will be at least **250 word responses to your peer's work**. You post them as text replies on Discussion Boards with your annotated copy of their piece as an attachment. In your responses, consider the following questions (*you do not need to answer all of them, spend time in your response where you think it will be most beneficial to the writer*):

What is happening in this piece? *Briefly* distill the piece into its various parts: literally what happens? Who are the characters/who is the speaker? What person/tense is it in?

How long is the period of time in which it takes place? What is the occasion of the piece? Hold a mirror to the piece and reflect it back to the writer. This is invaluable, as it helps immediately clarify logical confusions.

What is really working here? Tell the writer what you like most about their piece! What is fresh, eccentric, strange? Surprising? Delightful? Made you laugh? Made you empathize? Made you want to keep reading? What is the poet doing with their language, characters, setting, plot, syntax, meter, tone, diction, line breaks, etc. that feels like it's working well?

What confused you? What would you like to see more of? Questions about a submission are more productive than judgements. For example, "I found Mary's decision to run away confusing, what are her motivations?" is helpful to the author/poet in a way that "Mary should not have run away" is not. What parts of the piece could be clarified? Was there a specific scene or image you wanted to spend more time in/with? Was there a character decision/tonal shift you didn't understand? Were you able to picture the characters, narrative, and settings clearly?

GRADING RUBRIC

<p>Participation</p> <p>Participation Breakdown:</p> <p>In-class: (20%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Verbal and/or written participation during in-class discussions, exercises, and workshops ● Attendance ● Preparedness and engagement with course material ● This will be posted in two parts, one mid-semester and one at the end of the semester <p>Outside of class (Workshop Feedback): (20%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Workshop response, written comments on workshop submissions, and any other written feedback on workshop materials ● This will be graded each workshop <p>Advising appointment (5%)</p>	<p>45%</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At some point during the semester, we will meet briefly in small groups or one-on-one to discuss ideas for your portfolio and this class. 	
Workshop Submissions	20%
WH&N (Replacement Events) Attendance (2 events)	5%
Final Portfolio	30%

Final Grade Cutoffs (minimum percentages listed next to grade)									
+	97.00%	+	87.00%	+	77.00%	+	67.00%	+	
A	94.00%	B	84.00%	C	74.00%	D	64.00%	F	<60.0%
-	90.00%	-	80.00%	-	70.00%	-	60.00%	-	

Participation (verbal or written)

This accounts for in-class discussions of published works and workshop sessions. Part of this grade includes having read/watched all of the works assigned and then engaging with them in our class discussions.

Attendance

You need to be present in class to be able to participate. If you are logged in to the zoom calls and paying attention to the class discussions each week, you will receive full credit. Absences will not affect your grade if you email me in advance.

Workshop Discussion Boards

This grade comes from your written comments to your peers each week. Your responses should be at least 250 words and contain both positive and constructive comments. These are due **before** our weekly class session begins.

Writers Here & Now

WH&N events are mandatory for all JPWH students. This grade simply reflects your attendance to these events. There will be three events this semester, all of which will take place on Zoom. If you cannot attend any of them, contact me as soon as you know. You will be asked to write a short and casual response to the event to confirm your attendance.

Workshop Submissions

Your submission to workshop is a **draft**, your peers and myself will provide feedback to help improve your work for the final portfolio. You will receive full points as long as you have turned

it in on time (or have contacted me in advance) and met the length requirements (2-8 pages). You can think of this as a completion grade, you don't need to love your draft for workshop, but you need to have something written; you can't edit a blank page.

Final Portfolio

You will thoroughly revise at least one of your two longer workshop submissions (not the flash submission at the end of the semester) and lightly revise the others (for basic grammar/formatting) into your final portfolio for the course. We will review requirements and other details when we get closer to the end of the semester. This assignment should give you time to reflect on our writing and the feedback from your peers and will be graded based on the improvement you have shown from the first draft to the final. You will also include a short reflection essay about the semester, writing process, and the feedback you received in-class. There will be a longer document explaining my expectations and guidelines for this assignment distributed closer to the end of the semester.

CAMPUS POLICIES

It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland's policies that relate to all courses. Please visit www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html for the Office of Undergraduate Studies' full list of campus-wide policies such as

- Academic integrity
- Student and instructor conduct
- Accessibility and accommodations
- Attendance and excused absences
- Grades and appeals
- Copyright and intellectual property

Special Accommodations

The University of Maryland is committed to providing appropriate accommodations for students with accessibility needs. Students with documented accessibility requests should inform the instructors within the first two meetings and specify the type of accommodations required. To obtain an Accommodation Letter prepared by the Accessibility and Disability Service (ADS), a division of the University Counselling Center:

- Call 301314-7682
- E-mail dissup@umd.edu
- or visit the Shoemaker Building for more information.

Diversity

The University of Maryland considers the diversity of its students, faculty, and staff to be critical to its educational mission and expects every member of the community to contribute to an inclusive and respectful culture in the classroom, work environment, and at campus events. It is

my intent that students from diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and learning needs be well served by this course and that the diversity students bring to class be viewed as a resource and strength. Dimensions of diversity include intersections of sex, race, age, national origin, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, intellectual and physical ability, primary language, faith and non-faith perspectives, income, political affiliation, marital or family status, education, and any other legally protected class. I endeavor to present materials and activities that foster a positive learning environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Please let me know of ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or other students or student groups.

During discussions and workshop, it is important that you treat your peers and their work with respect. You will be introduced to a diverse range of published literature, but do not forget that your peers are also diverse writers and will likely present you with work you aren't familiar with. You should keep an open mind when engaging with each other's content. Remember how your perspective is limited. Your job is to explore the literature and ask questions, not to pass judgement.

If you experience any discrimination or encounter issues related to diversity and our goal as an inclusive community, email Director Johnna Schmidt at jmschmid@umd.edu or ARHU Diversity Officer Linda Aldoory at laldoory@umd.edu.

COURSE-SPECIFIC POLICIES

Names/Pronouns and Self-Identifications

The University of Maryland recognizes the importance of a diverse student body, and we are committed to fostering inclusive and equitable classroom environments. The course instructors invite you, if you wish, to tell us how you want to be referred to both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). The pronouns someone indicates are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity. Visit trans.umd.edu to learn more.

Additionally, how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, among all aspects of your identity, is your choice whether to disclose (e.g., should it come up in classroom conversation about our experiences and perspectives) and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed. As instructors, we will do our best to address and refer to all students accordingly, and I ask you to do the same for all of your student peers.

Canvas/Elms now lets you add your preferred pronouns as part of your personal profile. If you wish to note your pronouns there, all students and instructors will be able to see your pronouns wherever your name appears.

Absences

Students are expected to inform the instructor of medically necessary absences and present the appropriate documentation (e.g. doctor's note) specifying the dates of the missed class period(s). These documents must include an acknowledgement that, (a) the information provided is true and correct, and (b) that the student understands that providing false information to University officials is a violation of Part 9(h) of the Code of Student Conduct. The University's policies on medical and other absences can be found at: <https://tltc.umd.edu/attendance-and-make-policies>

*As this semester is not a normal one, there will be an asynchronous option to make up points for the synchronous class discussions. If you contact me **before** class begins that you will be unable to make it to class, for any reason, you will be able to instead send me a 500 word response to the readings assigned for that class to receive class participation points. In the same vein, your workshop feedback is partly the in-person feedback you give to fellow students. If you expand your workshop feedback to other students by the end of that week, you will also receive full points for that assignment. This policy is subject to change as our needs as a class and as individuals change throughout the semester.*

Tardiness

If a student is more than 30 minutes tardy for a class without a documented excuse, it will be counted as an absence. Being 20 minutes late for class more than twice also will be counted as one absence.

For this semester, if you are more than 30 minutes late to class, you will be offered the chance to make up points with a brief response to the assigned readings.

Participation

Participation is a key component of the final grade. Students will be asked to discuss the assigned readings and to comment on the work presented by peers.

- Given the interactive style of this class, attendance will be crucial to note-taking and thus your performance in this class. Attendance is particularly important also because class discussion will be a critical component for your learning.
- Each student is expected to make substantive contributions to the learning experience, and attendance is expected for every session.
- Students with a legitimate reason to miss a live session should communicate in advance with the instructor, except in the case of an emergency.
- Students who miss a live session are responsible for learning what they miss from that session.

Each student is expected to contribute to every class discussion

Reading accountability

It is impossible to have a meaningful discussion if students have not read the assigned course materials. A short reading accountability quiz may be given at the beginning of some class periods to ensure that the required contents have been read.

Late Work Policy

You will always be welcome to take an extension in all work in the course, with the exception of end-of-semester assignments. For workshop submissions, this extension will be one-week in length, but will be in exchange for your workshop time. For workshop feedback, you may email me to ask for an extension, but this means you are unable to participate in the class's workshop session; if you want to receive full points for an extension, it must be longer than normal (minimum 400 words) to make up for this.

Microaggression Policies and Guidelines

We will decide on these guidelines as a group, beginning with these guidelines as a baseline.

- Safeword: "Timeout" means a microaggression or other harmful actions/words have occurred. If this word is used, we drop everything, pause and reflect, and then come together to talk about what happened and how to avoid it in the future. Students are welcome to do anything they feel is necessary to mitigate and minimize harm, including cutting myself off mid-sentence or speaking to me after class.
- If microaggressions or other harmful actions/words are used in workshop groups, students get me immediately (through Zoom or calling/texting my cell if I am not present in person or in a zoom session) so I can mitigate any harm while they discuss and follow protocol
- CW will be used for any racial slurs. We will NOT read the slur if we read a work out loud, but instead pause at the word and then continue reading, almost as an audible blank.
- Students should let me know in any way they feel comfortable if I say or do anything that is harmful, problematic, or a microaggression. They may message me in the chat immediately, send me an email, ask for a meeting, or ask someone else to speak to me on their behalf. I encourage any and all students to tell me because I can and will do better, I want to educate myself and reduce harm and I will always commit myself to listening to students when something like this is brought to my attention and reevaluating my actions/words
- I, as your instructor, promise that if you make a harmful occurrence known to me but do not wish for others to know it was you who came to me, I will do everything to keep your confidentiality in confidence. I will not volunteer your name or information as best as I can while dealing with the situation. I also promise to never judge any student based on

these encounters, telling me my language or actions were harmful will never affect my opinion of students in any way. shape, or form.

Communication with Instructor:

Email:

If you need to reach out and communicate with me, please email me at jmueck@umd.edu. Please make sure that your question is not already answered in the syllabus (i.e. When is this assignment due? How much is it worth? etc.) but please DO reach out about personal, academic, and intellectual concerns/questions.

I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours during the week, but please allow at least two days for me to respond to your email, especially over weekends.

Canvas:

I will send IMPORTANT announcements via ELMS messaging or announcements. You must make sure that your email & announcement notifications (including changes in assignments and/or due dates) are enabled in ELMS so you do not miss any messages. You are responsible for checking your email and Canvas/ELMS inbox with regular frequency.

If you have something to tell me but wish to be anonymous, I have a feedback survey under the 'Quizzes' tab where you may tell me anything you feel is important without revealing your identity. I will do my best to check this at least once a week.

Communication with Peers:

With a diversity of perspectives and experience, we may find ourselves in disagreement and/or debate with one another. As such, it is important that we agree to conduct ourselves in a professional manner and that we work together to foster and preserve a virtual classroom environment in which we can respectfully discuss and deliberate controversial questions.

I encourage you to confidently exercise your right to free speech. Keep in mind, that free speech has its limit and this course is NOT the space for hate speech, harassment, and derogatory language. I will make every reasonable attempt to create an atmosphere in which each student feels comfortable voicing their perspective without fear of being personally attacked, mocked, demeaned, or devalued.

Any behavior (including harassment, sexual harassment, and racially and/or culturally derogatory language) that threatens this atmosphere will not be tolerated. Please alert me immediately if you feel threatened, dismissed, or silenced at any point during our semester

together and/or if your engagement in discussion has been in some way hindered by the learning environment.

Academic Integrity

The UMD Honor Code prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents and forging signatures. Allegations of academic dishonesty will be reported directly to the Student Honor Council.

Accessibility and Disability Support

Students with a documented disability should inform me within the add-drop period if academic accommodations are needed. You are expected to contact me to provide me with a copy of the *Accommodations Letter* and to obtain my signature on the *Acknowledgement of Student Request* form. We will plan together how accommodations will be implemented throughout the semester. To obtain the required Accommodation Letter, please contact Disability Support Service (DSS) at 301-314-7682 or dussup@umd.edu.

To learn more about your rights as a student at UMD, and for all other university policies – including Student/Instructor Conduct, Excused Absences, and Grades/ Appeals – please visit <http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>.

Academic Accommodations for Students Who Experience Sexual Misconduct:

The University of Maryland is committed to providing support and resources, including academic accommodations, for students who experience sexual or relationship violence as defined by the University's Sexual Misconduct Policy. To report an incident and/or obtain an academic accommodation, contact the Office of Civil Rights and Sexual Misconduct at 301-405-1142. **If you wish to speak confidentially, contact Campus Advocates Respond and Educate (CARE) to Stop Violence at 301-741-3555. As 'responsible university employees' I, as your instructor, am required to report any disclosure of sexual misconduct, i.e., I may not hold such disclosures in confidence.** For more information: <http://www.umd.edu/ocrsm>

Statement on Content

All topics are open to you as a writer. However, be mindful that you are using subjects such as sexual violence, abuse, or self-harm with care and in a way that is productive and essential to your narrative. If your workshop piece contains material your classmates may find triggering please let me know when you submit. Work about a classmate is prohibited. If a submitted piece is not ready or appropriate for workshop I may pull it from the rotation and request the author revise it further.

If you have any concerns as either author or reader please reach out so I can accommodate them. I can provide individual content warnings for published work at your request.

Statement on Privacy

Workshop is a closed, private environment. **Creative work can only be freely shared and discussed in workshop if we all agree to be guardians of our group's confidentiality. This means we agree not to further share or discuss the workshop outside of it; our discussions and the creative work shared are private and not to be shared further with anyone including friends, room mates, family members, or on any social media platform.** Students are also not permitted to record class or class discussions without permission from the instructor.

I understand that due to the circumstances of online instruction you may not be in a situation where you feel comfortable reading your work aloud or engaging with sensitive material. You are welcome to participate in “Chat” rather than speak if that is more comfortable for you. If you would like to discuss further options, please contact me.

Land Acknowledgement Statement

Every community owes its existence and strength to the generations before them, around the world, who contributed their hopes, dreams, and energy into making the history that led to this moment. Some were brought here against their will, some were drawn to migrate from their homes in hope of a better life, and some have lived on this land for more generations than can be counted. Truth and acknowledgment are critical in building mutual respect and connections across all barriers of heritage and difference.

At the Jiménez-Porter Writers' House, we believe it is important to create dialogue to honor those that have been historically and systemically disenfranchised. So, we acknowledge the truth that is often buried: We are on the ancestral lands of the Piscataway People, who were among the first in the Western Hemisphere. We are on indigenous land that was stolen from the Piscataway People by European colonists. We pay respects to Piscataway elders and ancestors. Please take a moment to consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that bring us together here today.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Assignment for Next Class
9/1	Syllabus review, introductions	Read and review syllabus, contact me with any questions Paula Molina Acosta <i>When We're Done Here</i>
9/8	Where we're going	Overly Sarcastic Productions Writing What You Know Aimee Bender <i>Appleless</i> Workshop submissions and feedback
9/15	Boundaries of knowledge	Julio Cortazar <i>Axolotl</i> Kaely Horton <i>Apology Note to My Roommate Irene after My Chimaera Destroyed Her Blue Suede Heels</i> Workshop submissions and feedback
9/22	Magical Realism and Uncertainty	NK Jemisin <i>The Story Teller's Replacement</i> Chuck Palahniuk <i>Nuts and Bolts</i> Workshop submissions and feedback
9/29	Concrete language	
10/6	WH&N Replacement Event	Brenda Peyado <i>The Kite Maker</i> Workshop submissions and feedback
10/13	Setting and worldbuilding	Sarah Thankam <i>Mathews Rubberdust</i>
10/20	Dialogue and thought	Marian Crotty <i>Halloween</i> Workshop submissions and feedback
10/27	Characters	
11/3	WH&N Replacement Event	Jane Pek <i>The Nine-Tailed Fox Explains</i> Nancy Au <i>Anatomy of a Cloud</i> Workshop submissions and feedback
11/10	Myth, legends, and folklore	Tiphonie Yanique <i>The Special World</i> Workshop submissions and feedback
11/17	Heroes	Rest! Take a nap!
11/24	No class, Thanksgiving	Peter Benchley <i>Jaws</i> Chapter 1 Additional Reading TBD Workshop submissions and feedback
12/1	Tone	Jorge Luis Borges <i>The House of Asterion</i> <i>Flash</i> workshop submissions and feedback

12/8	Last day of class Flash fiction	Final Portfolio due TBD
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Note:

This syllabus and course schedule is subject to change. Please keep track of all course announcements, Canvas updates, and emails from me for notifications about course adjustments.