

University of Montana  
**ScholarWorks at University of Montana**

---

Syllabi

Course Syllabi

---

Fall 9-1-2018

## CRWR 310.02: Intermediate Fiction Workshop

Brian H. Groh

*University of Montana, Missoula*

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi>

---

### Recommended Citation

Groh, Brian H., "CRWR 310.02: Intermediate Fiction Workshop" (2018). *Syllabi*. 8123.  
<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi/8123>

This Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the Course Syllabi at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syllabi by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@mso.umt.edu](mailto:scholarworks@mso.umt.edu).

**CRWR 310 Section 2**  
**Creative Writing: Fiction**  
**Fall 2018**

**Instructor:** Brian Groh

Office: Corbin 337

Email: brian.groh@umontana.edu

Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30-11am, and by appointment.

**Classroom:** LA 243

**Class Meeting Time:** T/Th 12:30-1:50 p.m.

**Required Materials:** A journal, folder, and portfolio

- **Journal:** I expect you to keep a journal of dialogue bits, story ideas, insights, complaints, whatever you desire. Although I will not ask you to turn in these journals, I will occasionally ask for a typed excerpt (one page or less) of your thoughts.
- **Folder:** In your folder, you will keep the published stories and essays we discuss, and your peers' critique of your work.
- **Portfolio:** At the end of the semester, you will submit your three revised stories to me in a portfolio.
- **Required Software:** Adobe Reader.

**Course Objectives:**

CRWR 310 is an intermediate fiction writing class. We will focus on the craft of fiction writing and the components required for a successful short story. We will read, discuss, and respond to a variety of published stories and craft-based essays, but the primary emphasis throughout the semester will be analysis and discussion of student work. You will be expected to complete three substantial works of fiction during the semester in addition to workshop exercises and responses. You will be responsible for carefully reading the work of your peers and responding in classroom discussion. You will also provide to your peers edited copies of their stories with your type-written comments.

**Course Requirements:**

- **Three stories:** You will produce three works of fiction over the course of this semester. Two of these works will be presented for peer workshopping and one will be presented to me for conferencing/discussion. Although you will be

expected to revise each story based on peer critiques, instructor comments, and workshop experience, you will choose one story for Reading/Presentation that will demonstrate significant and substantial revision.

Each story needs to be typed, double-spaced, titled, with the page number and your last name on each page.

One week (and in some cases, nine days) prior to the date each of your stories is scheduled to be workshopped, you will be responsible for distributing printed copies of your story to each of your classmates. **If you fail to bring typed copies of your story at that time, your story will not be workshopped.**

- You will be responsible for providing a type-written response to each of your peers' stories along with the notes you've handwritten upon the story. **You will provide a copy of your type-written critique to me.**
- You will be responsible for printing out stories and essays emailed from me for discussion.

#### Grading/Evaluation:

You will be graded on your active participation in class, your type-written peer critiques, your improvement from draft to revision, and your attendance. **IF YOU MISS MORE THAN TWO (2) CLASSES, YOUR GRADE WILL BE REDUCED BY ONE LETTER GRADE FOR EACH ADDITIONAL CLASS MISSED.**

If you must miss class, *you are responsible* for emailing me and your peers your critiques on the due date, and for obtaining the printed copies of your peers' stories. Make sure you talk with me in *advance* if you are worried about meeting a deadline or missing a class.

*Note: Please come to class on time. Students who arrive after attendance is taken cause unnecessary interruption, miss valuable information, and will be considered absent for the day. Also, please turn off your phone. Students unable to give the instructor and their peers their full attention, and distracting others with phone use, will be asked to leave the class. Lastly, please keep your laptops and all other electronic devices in your backpack.*

- **35%** of your grade is based on *verbal* participation. Show up prepared, have questions or comments about the readings and work of your peers, and contribute to the community of the classroom.
- **30%** of your grade is based on successful completion of all writing assignments, *especially* your peer responses.

- **35%** of your grade is based on your fiction portfolio. All major works must be substantially revised by the end of the semester. Demonstrate improvement and the ability to effectively respond to criticism.

Your grade will *not* be based on your inherent skill as a writer, but rather on the improvement of your work and commitment to your material. You will receive a high grade if you come to class, turn your assignments in on time, add valuable insights to group discussions, and actively work at improving your writing. **Late work will not be accepted—you will receive a 0 for each assignment that is not turned in on time.**

**Grade Descriptors:** To give you a sense of what constitutes an A, B, C, D, and F in this class, please refer to the following grade descriptors for participation and portfolios.

### Participation Grade Descriptors for CRWR 310

- **A** Superior participation shows initiative and excellence in written and verbal work. The student helps to create more effective discussions and workshops through his/her verbal, electronic, and written contributions. Reading and writing assignments are always completed on time and with attention to detail. In workshop or conferences, suggestions to group members are tactful, thorough, specific, and often provide other student writers with a new perspective or insight.
- **B** Strong participation demonstrates active engagement in written and verbal work. The student plays an active role in the classroom but does not always add new insight to the discussion at hand. Reading and writing assignments are always completed on time and with attention to detail. In workshop or conferences, suggestions to group members are tactful, specific, and helpful.
- **C** Satisfactory participation demonstrates consistent, satisfactory written and verbal work. Overall, the student is prepared for class, completes assigned readings and writings, and contributes to small group workshops and large class discussions. Reading and writing assignments are completed on time. In workshop or conferences, suggestions to group members are tactful and prompt, but could benefit from more attentive reading and/or specific detail when giving comments.
- **D** Weak participation demonstrates inconsistent written and verbal work. The student may be late to class, unprepared for class, and may contribute infrequently or unproductively to classroom discussions or small group workshops. Reading and writing assignments are not turned in or are insufficient. In workshops or conferences, suggestions to group members may be missing, disrespectful, or far too brief and general to be of help.

- **F** Unacceptable participation shows ineffectual written and verbal work. The student may be excessively late to class, regularly unprepared, and not able to contribute to classroom discussions or small group workshops. This student may be disruptive in class. Reading and writing assignments are regularly not turned in or are insufficient. In workshops or conferences, the student has a pattern of missing, being completely unprepared, or being disruptive.

All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course. All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at [Student Conduct Code](#)

### Students with Disabilities

Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course. Please speak with me privately after class or in my office. Please be prepared to provide a letter from your DSS Coordinator.

### Calendar (Tentative and Subject to Change)

- Week 1 (August 28, 30): Introduction, Story Virtues
- Week 2 (September 4, 6): Story Virtues
- Week 3 (September 11, 13): Workshopping
- Week 4 (September 18, 20): Workshopping
- Week 5 (September 25, 27): Workshopping
- Week 6 (October 2, 4): Workshopping
- Week 7 (October 9, 11): Conferences/ **One-on-One Story Due**
- Week 8 (October 16, 18): Story Virtues
- Week 9 (October 23, 25): Workshopping
- Week 10 (October 30, November 1): Workshopping
- Week 11 (November 8): Workshopping
- Week 12 (November 13, 15): Workshopping
- Week 13 (November 20): Story Virtues, Q and A
- Week 14 (November 27, 29): Conferences
- Week 15 (December 4, 6): Small Group Revision Workshopping
- Week 16: Final Meeting—Reading and Presentation of Work

#### Remember:

It is important that our classroom develop into a community of writers. You must be able to provide and accept criticism and feedback in a positive manner. I will be available during my office hours to meet with you and will also schedule individual and group conferences by appointment.

Missoula is a vibrant literary community. Although not required, I suggest you take advantage of readings, conferences, and gatherings occurring this semester. Readings are frequently held on campus and at local bookstores.

### A Few Words to Ponder on Writing and the Short Story:

"I think that we live in a time where it's easier to be suspicious of dedicated men and women, people dedicated to their craft, because the world around them inspires them to be lazy. It inspires them to be negative. It inspires them to be snarky." Ryan Adams

"I'm not the sort of writer who can think up great story lines outside of writing. The writing itself is the thing that generates stories for me." Alice McDermott

"Try to leave out the part that readers tend to skip." Elmore Leonard

And as imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.  
– William Shakespeare (from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*)

"My own experience is that once a story has been written, one has to cross out the beginning and the end. It is there that we authors do most of our lying." Anton Chekhov

"Making people believe the unbelievable is no trick; it's work. ... Belief and reader absorption come in the details: An overturned tricycle in the gutter of an abandoned neighborhood can stand for everything." Stephen King

"Don't try to figure out what other people want to hear from you; figure out what you have to say. It's the one and only thing you have to offer." Barbara Kingsolver

"If you don't have time to read, you don't have the time (or the tools) to write. Simple as that." Stephen King

"You should write because you love the shape of stories and sentences and the creation of different words on a page. Writing comes from reading, and reading is the finest teacher of how to write." Annie Proulx

**\*\*This syllabus is subject to change\*\***