English 90 is a beginning course in the craft and art of fiction writing. We’ll spend the first part of the course examining the basic tools in our toolbox of storytelling: action, description, dialogue, thought, and exposition. We’ll read a variety of works of short fiction, including stories by James Baldwin, Louise Erdrich, Tobias Wolff, Ursula K. Le Guin, and Gish Jen. Students will write reaction papers, complete short writing exercises, choose a story collection to study and analyze, and read and discuss each other’s creative work. We’ll work on a longer piece of fiction (about 12-18 pages) in the second half of the course.

English, Econ, HumBio, Computer Science, PolySci majors and for that matter any and all Stanford majors and minors are very welcome in this course. It’s always stimulating and wonderfully surprising to have a wide variety of backgrounds as part of our discussions.

**Texts:** *Making Shapely Fiction* by Jerome Stern (craft book); a Course Packet, containing around 20 stories, available from CopyAmerica; many handouts that I’ll bring to class; and approximately 15 copies of your longer story that you’ll bring to class in October.

**LORE website:** We’ll be posting writing exercises, reaction papers, and assorted links and messages on the LORE site. I’ll send you an invitation after the first class.

**Requirements:**

- **Class participation, 30%**. This grade will be determined by your coming to class, by being on time, and by your contributions to our discussions. It will also be determined by your participation in group work, including writing letters to your peers. I will determine this grade. How can you help? Come to class, be on time. Help out in our discussions. Turn your letters in on time. I would appreciate it, and your grade will be very much helped.

- **Your Creative Work, 25%** – This will include five or more short writing assignments (1-2 pages each), a one-scene story (3ish pages) and one longer story (12-18 pages) and its revision. And a process letter! About 35-40 pages total.

- **Short Reaction Papers 15%** – You’ll write 350 word reactions to our readings. These will take place in the first-half of the quarter. Basically, you’ll read a story (say, “Sonny’s Blues” by James Baldwin), and then you’ll post to LORE in reaction to a question that I’ll give you (example: *List each time music is mentioned in the story. Overall, how does this impact the scenes and the narrator and Sonny in particular?*).

- **Longer Reaction Paper 15%** – In the second half of the class, you'll read an entire story collection (of your choice) and write a 2000 word reaction paper on LORE.

- **Reading Attendance, 15%** – You’ll attend three campus readings during the quarter. I’ll announce many of them in class, but the best way to stay informed is by following the cw-undergrad email list.
Assignments: I’ve held off on posting a detailed schedule for now. I’d like to get a sense of our class first. However, you’ll always know about assignments in any of three ways: 1. I’ll announce them in class, 2. I’ll write them on the board, and 3. I’ll email them to you.

Late Assignments: Anything turned in late will receive a grade of C.

Finally: I’ll be working hard to make this class an enjoyable and valuable learning experience for you. If it’s in my power, this will be your favorite class this quarter.

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Generally Speaking... Stories We’ll Read, Things We’ll Do:


List of Assignments for Jerome Stern’s Making Shapely Fiction,
1. Immediacy, Plot, Position, Reading, Scene, Showing and Telling
2. Atmosphere, Beginnings, Character, Description, Imagery, ZigZag,
3. Accuracy, Dialogue, Premise, Transitions, Trust Your Material
4. Allusion, Ambiguity, Exposition, Interior Monologue, Suspense, Tension
5. Endings, Metaphor and Simile, Names, Revision, Sex, Short Story
6. Advice, Freytag’s Pyramid, Negative/Positive Knowledge, Stereotype, Style, Workshop

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Students with Documented Disabilities
Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, URL:http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/oae).

Honor Code. The Honor Code is the University’s statement on academic integrity written by students in 1921. It articulates University expectations of students and faculty in establishing and maintaining the highest standards in academic work. The Honor Code is an undertaking of the students, individually and collectively:
1. That they will not give or receive aid in examinations; that they will not give or receive unpermitted aid in class work, in the preparation of reports, or in any other work that is to be used by the instructor as the basis of grading;
2. That they will do their share and take an active part in seeing to it that others as well as themselves uphold the spirit and letter of the Honor Code.
3. That the faculty on its part manifests its confidence in the honor of its students by refraining from proctoring examinations and from taking unusual and unreasonable precautions to prevent the forms of dishonesty mentioned above. The faculty will also avoid, as far as practicable, academic procedures that create temptations to violate the Honor Code.
4. While the faculty alone has the right and obligation to set academic requirements, the students and faculty will work together to establish optimal conditions for honorable academic work.