PREREQUISITES: ENG 381A, 381B, and ENG 351

492 – 001  INSTRUCTOR: BLACKWOOD

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Description: Good fiction writers don’t simply write what they know—they write out of the traditions they know and admire. Our goal in this class is threefold: to improve your fiction, to broaden your understanding of the literary context in which you’re writing, and to produce a body of revised work by the end of the course (35-40 pages). How will we get there? You’ll read and comment on published fiction; participate in and sometimes lead discussions on particular works; and workshop peers’ stories and novel chapters using honesty, thoughtfulness, and tact.

This course will be run as a workshop / seminar. The seminar portion will work this way: We will discuss short stories extensively (looking at form and tension in particular), including works by Dubus, Diaz, Wolff, D. Johnson, Munro, Carver, and Hempel. You will be asked to read these stories as a writer reads—to determine how they achieve their effects. For instance, how does Alice Munro use competing narratives in her stories to continually surprise the reader but also create a sense of inevitability? How does Denis Johnson destabilize our understanding of characters and place in a way that produces both empathy and dark comedy?

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Students are required to write and revise at least 35-40 pages of fiction and to comment effectively on their peers' work. Discussion will be central to the class and attendance mandatory.

REQUIRED TEXTS

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