

Gail Galloway Adams, ENGL 212, Creative Writing: Fiction, Fall 2002

**Fall 2002 English 212 (H)** MW 2:30- 3:45 Stansbury 247

**Gail Galloway Adams** Office: 434 Stansbury;293-2107 xt 434 or 292-2540(h) e-mail: gadams@wvu.edu or tadams1 @MIX.wvu.edu. Office hours: M/W Noon-1:00,

Th 2-4 or by appointment; F 2:30 -4:30; Tues 2 -4/Mon am by appointment.

Textbooks: *What If? Writing Exercises for Fiction Writers*, Bernays & Painter; *Points of View: An Anthology of Short Stories*, ed/ Moffett & McElheny; *Sudden Fiction: American Short-Short Stories* ed. Shapard & Thomas; *Best American Short Stories of the Century*, ed. John Updike. You will also need an observation notebook--your personal choice.

## AUGUST

Monday 19 Introduction. Discussion of syllabus and expectations. In-Class Exercise.

Wed 21 Read Introductions in *What If?ISF* and Coover piece A Sudden Story/Foreword & Intro in BASSC. First entry in observation journal: Color.

Mon 26 Informal essay on your creativity 2-4 pp. Read first section *What If?* Beginnings. Do #1 First Sentences exercise: write five. Read in SF Paley/Cheever--write responses. Journal entry: Odors

Wed 28 Do Pairs of Beginning Sentences. Read Old Zelig in BASS. Read Chapter III on Journals/Memory in *WI?* Journal: Noises

**SEPTEMBER LABOR DAY 2nd NO CLASS.** Relax/Read/Observe/Write/Write in journal about taste

**Please Note:** BLUE MOOSE Wed 4 7:30 Voice Poetry Performance with Sandy Baldwin of The Center for Literary Computing, Ben Doyle, poet and winner of Walt Whitman Award, Katy Ryan, short story writer and theater scholar, and Adam Komisaruk, Blake scholar and performer. John Cage's music among others. This should be fun. Free.

Wed 4 Interior Monologue: Parker's Telephone Call and/or I Stand Here Ironing. (your choice) Write a 1-2pp interior monologue. Continue *SF* reading for responses. Handout sheets of first sentences compiled. Read *What If?* Beginning with a given sentence.

Mon 9 First sentence stories--see instruction sheet--and small critique groups. Discussion of the process. Lee Martin story to be handed out.

**Please Note:** Fiction Writer Lee Martin will read on Tuesday 9/10 at 7:30 (either Rhododendron Room or Gold Ballroom). You must attend at least one reading during the term and write on this experience. This is the first in the official reading series.

Wed 9 Story group discussion continues. *SF* reading continues. Journal observations continue: Feel/Touch

Mon 16 (Yom Kippur) POV Dramatic Monologue--read all three:

O'Hara/Mansfield/Oates--try and write at least a page of a dramatic monologue. *SF* reading continues. Will discuss Oates.

Wed 18 Chapter III in *WI?*: Characterization. Write He/She Gender Switch. Don't identify yourself on piece--we'll try and guess. Read *The Bridle* by Carver in POV.

Mon 23 Read *That Evening Sun* by Faulkner in BASS. Using exercise instructions in *What If?* characterization section write a 2+ and build a character. SF reading continues.

Wed 25 Letter narration: Exercise 42 in *What If?* or write another letter of your choice. POV: All read: *A Wilderness Station*/one other of your choice. Be prepared to discuss.

Mon 30 Second piece brought in for class critique. Try and get to 5+ pp. Small groups.

## OCTOBER

Wed 2 Small groups continue. This is mid-term week so load will be light. SF reading continues.

Journal observation continues. Sign-up schedule for conferences next week.

**Please Note: SECOND OFFICIAL READING: DEAN YOUNG**--*Sturm Poet in Residence*. Poems will be made available. Monday 7, 7:30 in Gold Ballroom. Remember you must attend and write up at least one such presentation during the term.

Mon 7 No official class. Conferences this week to discuss progress in class. Please have at that time reading responses to date/observation journal/draft notes for any other work. P

Wed 9 Conferences Continue. Keep up your reading in SF. Read Alexander Godin's *My Dead Brother*/William Saroyan *Resurrection*/Cynthia Ozick *The Shawl* all in BASSC during this week. Be prepared to discuss on return. ~

Mon 14 Discussion of the three stories. In-Class Exercise. P.!

Wed 16 Discussion of *WI?* Perspective/Point of View/Voice. Choose one exercise (your choice) and/or choose a story from POV/SF and model on its pov.

Mon 21 Read *Sinking House* by TC Boyle in POV. In class exercises. Keep up with SF P reading/journals.

Wed 23 Read *The Way We Live Now* by Sontag in BASS. Begin to read Dialogue section in *WI?*

Monday 28 Read Welty's *Hitch Hikers* in BASSC. Do Dialogue exercise in class.

Wed 30 Read Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*. Work up a page or two of characters and what they carry or look in your own backpack/tote and write up what you carry.

## NOVEMBER

**Please Note:** Meredith Sue Willis, author of *At Home In the Mountains* & many works of fiction, a native of Shinnston, will read on campus Saturday November 2 at 4:00. Her stories will be available. Further information later.

Mon 4 Read Alice Munro's *Menenseteung* in BASSC; bring in piece called *Here is a Story I've Been Wanting to Tell*. SF reading continues. Journal observation continues. With every story read try and see if in the real world you're seeing any of like things.

Wed 6 Read Lorrie Moore's *You're Ugly Too*. In BASSC. Discussion on plot/event/setting in story.

Mon 11 Bring in two ideas for stories: one with a fairy tale basis, the other grounded in reality. Must have titles. Sufficient copies for all. Read L. Moore's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* in BASSC.

Wed 13 Small groups to discuss proposed ideas. If you have a draft of the piece bring that in to share with the group. You can use this as a base for a final story/third piece.

Mon 18 The third story/piece in draft for me. You will not have time to revise/rewrite this piece so don't worry about that. Read also *City of Churches* by Barthleme in BASSC.

Wed 20 On this class before we all have a break, bring into class your favorite journal entry/your favorite reading response/a story you have discovered on your own and questions about the process of imaginative writing. Portfolio checklist and handout.

**Please Note: NOVEMBER 21 Steven Dunn**, Pulitzer Prize winning poet will lecture on 9/11 and its effects on poets/writers. 7:30 in the Gold Ballroom.

**THANKSGIVING RECESS**--eat well and observe keenly--this will be a really fruitful time for your journal keeping. **Work on your portfolios**. Catch up on your reading responses. Read for the final class: Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* and/or Brown's *How To Win* in BASSC.

## DECEMBER

Mon 2 Welcome Back! Discussion of above stories. Portfolio Review. Final in-class exercise.

Wed 4 **Final Class! Portfolios May Be Turned In On This Day!** This includes everything you've done during the semester. There will be refreshments and congratulations for all your good work. Graduating seniors get cards and cake and freshman get applause. All others perhaps pizza and accolades. If your portfolio is not complete, **deadline is: Friday December 6 at 4:45. time. None accepted after this.**

Welcome to Creative Writing. This class will be both challenging and fun and it will also lead to discovery. There's a lot of reading so gear up for this. You're only as good a writer as you are a reader has been said by many and this is true. The more stories you can fit into your mind the better your stories will be-- they have such good company. A writer has to always be observing and I hope that this class teaches you to look carefully at many things. Be a snoop and an eavesdropper but also listen to that voice inside your head and let that help you write. Keep some kind of small notebook nearby, if you are a natural journal/diary keeper, great--keep it up. These writerly observations are different however; they are meant to lead from mere observation to deep contemplation--this will come. The Sudden Fictions are short and the responses need not be long.

Think at least 1 + pp for the more complex. Some will be natural interpreters of literature and so go ahead and wax eloquent. You will need to read 20 of these from *SF*. I want evidence in your journal or in a

separate folder that you've done the reading for class--part of that response will be in class, but if you're not an eager talker, I need to see that you're read. You'll be doing a number of in-class exercises so keep your work organized. You'll be doing exercises from What If? Sometimes you'll be doing modeling on suggested stories. You will write five short short stories (1-5 pp+) from which group you will choose one to be a developed piece for group critique. That will be considered Story # 1. You will write a second piece that should push past 5pp--try and aim

for 8 - 10. Choose either of these to revise to what you'd consider final completion. There is, of course, not mid-term and no final--quick write me a 3rd person story in 3000 words! There are other informal reading venues: Blue Moose/Perks/123 Open Mic and Poetry Slams. I'll bring you information. There is a creative writing minor/concentration of 15 hours. If you're interested, see me. Calliope the student literary journal is always looking for writers/readers to be on staff. Sigma Tau Delta, the English honorary sponsors a reading and other literary events i.e. reading of Poe on Halloween.

**Attendance** policy: Try not to miss class. Two absences and your grade will be affected. If these come before mid-term, I'll suggest you withdraw because it's unlikely that you'll be able to do well in the final grade.

**Final Portfolio:** I urge you to organize and get this in on the last day so you're not worrying about it while preparing for final exams. How grades are given: Difficult in a subject as subjective as creative writing. A percentage on class attendance/participation/meeting the reading response number of 20/exercises--both in-class and assigned/attending at least one reading and submitting a response--would be great if you developed a taste for these and went to more/ additional work on other stories/your stories--the first apprentice five and the developed one; the second

one-spark /talent /desire /ability /dedication. These can't be percentiled.

There will be those students with much talent--we will all admire it. Perhaps they will also be dedicated readers and organized students--perhaps not. There will be those starting from nothing but an inchoate feeling that they want to write--perhaps they'll do so clumsily, but they keep at it and at it and it gets better and better, and we admire that. This is a course in which you should not ~ worry about grades. All who work hard and immerse themselves in this wonderful world of reading and writing will be rewarded. ~\_ ~