

University of Allahabad

Department of English & Modern European Languages

CREATIVE WRITING (PROSE – Short Fiction/Non-Fiction):

Theory and Practice

Under the auspices of Global Initiative for Academic Network (GIAN)

March 14-31,2024

Overview:

Often described as compulsive, difficult and ultimately unsatisfying, Creative Writing is much more than putting pen to paper or fingers to keyboard and simply proceeding. Swallowing the Gorgon whole might be a better description of this process. Yet there is no shortage of writers or would-be writers in every country on the planet. Human beings are hardwired to be tellers and listeners of stories. Writers often say that they write because they must, yet deconstructing the act of writing is an almost impossible task. However, this course aims to do just that.

The proposed course offers a theoretical and practical approach to the process of creative writing. Students will be immersed in the study and discussion of a variety of theoretical strategies as well as the practice of writing, for the duration of the course. The prescribed text is *Tell it Slant*, a comprehensive approach to writing, combining theoretical modules with a range of selected readings. An instructor-prepared Course Reader, comprising excerpts from several practitioners in the art of writing, will also form the basis of prescribed reading.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Offer participants a critical understanding of the theory and analysis of a variety of writing principles and strategies practiced in the West
2. Engage in deconstructing/critiquing selected works by a diverse array of writers such as Margaret Atwood, Bharati Mukherjee, Stephen King, Rohinton Mistry, Olive Senior, V.S. Naipaul and Joan Didion.
3. Engage in comparative analysis and critique of selected works by writers in the Indian intellectual and aesthetic tradition such as R.K. Narayan, Salman Rushdie, Anita Desai and Nirad Chaudhuri.
4. Provide structured discussion of each other's writing in a carefully designed manner, so as to maximize the benefits to be derived from peer appraisal

5. Provide hands-on experience in applying creative writing theory to participants' work by completing an agreed-upon writing project over the length of the course (proposed project to be submitted together with portfolio)

Course Details

Description

This course is an intensive ten-day seminar on the theory and practice of creative writing as it has evolved into a discipline in the West. We will study a variety of principles, styles and strategies of writing, and deconstruct pertinent examples of short fiction and creative non-fiction. A critical component of this course is students' engagement with the theoretical aspects in terms of their own practice. To this end, peer appraisal of participants' own writing will be an integral component - care will be taken to create an awareness of the sensitivity required for this aspect of the course. The end product will be a coherent piece of writing produced by each student, which will have developed throughout the duration of the seminar. The students will also be encouraged to participate in a reading of their work, held in a setting conducive to public participation and a Question and Answer (Q&A) format.

Textbooks: Brenda Miller. *Tell it Slant*. 2nd ed. NY: McGraw Hill, 2009.

Online Course Reader designed by instructor in PDF format consisting of selections from the following texts:

1. Julia Cameron. *The Artist's Way*. NY: Putnam, 2002.
2. Annie Dillard. *The Writing Life*. NY: Harper, 1998, c1989.
3. Paul Engle. *A Community of Writers: Paul Engle and the Iowa Writers' Workshop*.
Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999
4. John Gardner. *On Moral Fiction*. NY: Basic Books, 1978.
5. Stephen King. *On Writing*. Simon & Schuster, 2000.
6. William Strunk. *Elements of Style*. NY: W.C. Books, 2009, c1918.

Course Outline

Dates: March 14-31, 2024

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Schedule:

- Lecture 1: Prose Writing: The Basics of Good Writing
- Lecture 2: Finding the Subject: Memory & Desire
- Lecture 3: Form and Content: Ontology, subjectivity and balance
- Lecture 4: Ethical and Moral Dilemmas
- Lecture 5: The Writer & Social Responsibility

- Lecture 6: Understanding Gendered Approaches
- Lecture 7: Writing the Fantastical
- Lecture 8: Essentials: Aesthetics, Style and Rhythm
- Lecture 9: Bearing Witness: Strategies of Reportage
- Lecture 10: Process, Revision and Editing

Teaching Schedule:

Daily Lecture: 10.30-11.30 am

Short Break(15 min)

Lecture continues: 11.45- 12.45 pm

LUNCH BREAK: 12:45-2:00 pm

Daily Writing Sessions: 2.00 -4.00 pm

Evaluation

Final Exam: 50% (Theoretical - A combination of Written / Essay Type/ Short answer type)

Assignment/ Presentations: 50% (Practical – Completed Writing Project &Public Reading/Performance Format)

Teaching Faculty

Dr. Ramabai Espinet

Lecturer II

University of Toronto

Toronto

CANADA

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Ramabai Espinet

Dr. Ramabai Espinet is an academic, a writer, and a critic. At present, she teaches in the Caribbean Studies Program (in the field of Post-Colonial Literature and Women's Studies) at New College, University of Toronto. Dr. Espinet retired recently from her long-time post of Professor of English at Seneca College in Toronto. She is also a Fellow of CERLAC (Centre for Research in Latin America and the Caribbean) at York University. Her scholarly essays are published in a variety of academic journals; she also writes in a popular medium on subjects of current interest.

Her published creative works include the novel, *The Swinging Bridge* (2003), a finalist for the Commonwealth Writers' Prize in 2003 and one of the texts chosen for the celebrated Robert Adams lecture (Canada) in the

same year. *The Swinging Bridge* was long-listed for the IMPAC literary prize in 2005 and published in Paris by Editions du Rocher (*Le Pont Suspendu*) in 2007.

In 2008, Ramabai Espinet received the inaugural **Nicolas Guillen** Prize for Philosophical Literature from the Caribbean Philosophical Association. Other awards include the inaugural Indo Caribbean Female Lifetime award from the Caribbean Network in New York in 1995, an award from the Montreal Naparima Association in 2009 and an award for Caribbean Literature in Toronto.

Her publications include the collection of poetry *Nuclear Seasons* (1991), the performance piece *Indian Robber –Talk*, and the children’s books *The Princess of Spadina* (1992) and *Ninja’s Carnival* (1993). Espinet’s short fiction and poetry are published in anthologies such as *Trinidad Noir*, *Blue Latitudes*, *Green Cane and Juicy Flotsam*, *Beyond Sangre Grande*, *Another Way to Dance* and *Wheel and Come Again*, and also in journals such as *Small Axe* and the *Massachusetts Review*. She edited *Creation Fire* (1990), an anthology of Caribbean women’s poetry in several languages, containing the work of 121 poets.

Her field of academic research and writing is Post-Colonial Literature. A documentary on Ramabai Espinet’s work, *Coming Home* (2005) has been made by Leda Serene Productions in Toronto. Forthcoming is a collection of poetry, *Travel Documents* and a volume of short fiction, *Shooting Trouble*. Ramabai Espinet was born in Trinidad and Tobago and now makes her home in Toronto.

Susheel Kumar Sharma

Susheel Kumar Sharma is Professor of English and Head Dept of English & MEL at the University of Allahabad (India). He holds an M. Phil. And a Ph. D. Degree. Dr. Sharma has taught at I. K. S. University, Khairagarh, G.B.Pant University of Agriculture & Technology, Pantnagar, Chitrakoot University of Rural Development, Chitrakoot. Dr. Sharma joined the University of Allahabad in 2001. Prof. Sharma has published five books, more than fifty research papers, ten interviews and thirty book-reviews. He is also on the editorial panel of some journals. Some of his work can be viewed at <http://allduniv.academia.edu/SusheelSharma/Papers>. He has completed three research projects and has successfully guided four master’s and five seven doctoral research candidates. He has participated in about 150 National and International Conferences/ Seminars/ Webinars and presented papers there-in. He himself has also organized many conferences, seminars and workshops. He has also lectured in various Universities on diverse topics on different assignments. Dr Sharma is a creative writer too. Some of his poems have been published in Canada, France, Ireland, Scotland, the UK and the USA. A collection of more than thirty reviews of his first poetry book, *From the Core Within* (1999, ISBN: 81-85231-27-3) has been published under the title *Bricks and Bouquets* (Ed. Sanjeev Kumar, New Delhi: Creative Books, 2008, pp xxxii + 69, ISBN: 81-85231-32-X). Prof Sharma’s second collection of poems *The Door is Half Open* (ISBN: 978-81-8435-341-9, 2012, New Delhi: Adhyayan) has been received very well. Two full length books viz., Danielle Hanson (ed.), *Sightlines: View Points on Susheel Kumar Sharma’s The Door is Half Open*, (New Delhi: Paragon International Publishers, 2024, ISBN: 978-93-9496425-9) and Pradip Patra (Ed.), *Voices at the Door: Critical Responses to Susheel Kumar Sharma’s The Door is Half Open* (Delhi: Upanayan Publications, 2023, ISBN: 978-93-91467-00-5), have been published. The third collection of his poems, *Unwinding Self: A Collections of Poems* (Cuttack: Vishvanatha Kaviraja Institute, 2020, ISBN: 978-81-943450-3-9) has also been received very well. Some of his poems have been translated into Assamese, French, Hindi, Lithuanian, Serbian and Turkish languages. Prof. Sharma’s current interests include English Language Teaching, Comparative Literature, English Studies in India and Contemporary Literary Theory.

Seats: 20 (This would be manageable both in terms of group dynamics and individualized attention.)

Medium of instruction: English

Who can attend:

- A portfolio of writing samples should be submitted prior to the inception of the course for the purpose of selecting the most promising and qualified students.
- Any person having a reasonable command over English
- Any person who has a flair for learning and writing
- UG & PG students of any discipline
- Research students (PhD) of the related disciplines
- Young faculty from universities, colleges and research institutions
- Any other person who evinces interest in the course after the approval of competent authority

Registration Fees:

Participants from abroad: US \$200

Participants from Research Organizations: Rs. 8000 /-

Participants from Academic Institutions: Rs. 8000/- for faculty and Rs. 2000 /- for students

The above fee includes all instructional materials and computer use for tutorials only. The fee does not include TA/DA and accommodation costs. Modest accommodation on a sharing basis at the university guest-house or hostel may be arranged on payment for the Course participants.

Host Faculty

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