

Spring 2020 – Capstone Seminar

Dr. Christopher Torockio

Tuesdays, 4:00-6:45 p.m.

ENG 461-01: “The Craft of the Novel”



...or, perhaps more accurately: the novella.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This two-semester course will provide the beginning novelist with structure, support, and guidance vital to sustained writing, with a focus on establishing goals and effectively using critique sessions with instructor and peers. We'll also spend time each week discussing problems of novel writing. These problems (and possible solutions) might have to do with technique (characterization, point of view, setting, voice, plot, structure, progression, etc.), with time management, with the writer's nature, or with audiences and markets for novels. We will also read and discuss other contemporary writers' novellas and discuss their handling of these issues. The first semester will consist of reading and discussing outside works as well as constructing a synopsis/outline, and beginning a first draft. The second semester will continue the drafting process, and then focus on revision.

REQUIREMENTS:

- Two-page synopsis and/or outline.
- Completion of a draft of a short novel (novella) of 75-150 pages. While in the drafting process, students will be expected to hand in 10 new pages per week.
- Participation in weekly small-group discussions, workshops, and conferences.
- Assigned readings, which will include several contemporary novellas and short novels (during first semester), along with written responses.
- Completion of assigned exercises. These might be exercises for the entire class or for individual writers.
- A brief oral report on how a novelist has solved (or at least addressed) a certain problem that concerns you (during first semester).
- A 5-page analysis of your own writing (during second semester).
- Frequent revising (during second semester).

* Prior completion of ENG 301, Writing Fiction, is *strongly* advised.