

PRELIMINARY COURSE SYLLABUS
Quarter: Spring 2020



Course Title: Fiction Writing: Five Beginnings, One Ending

Course Code: FICT 32 W

Instructor: Nami Mun

A note on the pronunciation of my name:

"Nami" is much like the ending of "tsunami."

"Mun" as in "moon."

Pronouns: she/her

Please contact me through the Canvas Inbox

Course Dates

March 30th – June 5th (10 weeks)

Weekly Outline

Week 1:	Lesson: Chronic and Acute Conflicts Read: "Bullet in the Brain" by Tobias Wolff (podcast or text) Thursday: <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Zoom Session, 6pm (PST)○ Post discussion comments on "Bullet"○ Post projects #1 and #2
Week 2:	Lesson: Suspense and Tension Read: "Patriotism" by Yukio Mishima (link) Thursday: <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Zoom Session, 6pm (PST)○ Post peer-review of projects #1 and #2.○ Post discussion comments on "Patriot"

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Post project #3
Week 3:	<p>Lesson: How Do You Find Your Voice</p> <p>Read: "Love and Honour..." by Nam Le (link)</p> <p>Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Zoom Session, 6pm (PST) ○ Post peer-review comments on Project #3 ○ Post discussion comments ○ Post project #4 ○ Group A--upload MSS (for workshop on Week 4)
Week 4:	<p>Lesson: The Facts in Fiction</p> <p>Read: "Runs Girl" by Chinelo Okparanta (link)</p> <p>Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Zoom Workshop Group A ○ Post peer-review comments on Project #4 ○ Post discussion comments on "Runs Girl" ○ Post Project #5 ○ Group B--upload MSS (for workshop in Week 5)
Week 5:	<p>Lesson: Rate of Revelations</p> <p>Read: "The Smallest Woman in the World" and "The First Day" by Lispector and Jones, respectively (links)</p> <p>Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Zoom Workshop Group B ○ Post peer-review comments on Project #5 ○ Post discussion comments on "Smallest" and "First Day" (Optional) ○ Group C--upload MSS (for workshop in Week 6)
Week 6:	<p>Lesson: Dialogue and the Dialectic</p>

	<p>Read: <i>The Hole</i>, by Hye Young Pyun (link)</p> <p>Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Zoom Workshop: Group C ○ Post discussion comments on <i>The Hole</i> (optional) ○ Group D--upload MSS (for workshop in Week 7)
<p>Week 7:</p>	<p>Lesson: Plot and Structure</p> <p>Read: <i>Beloved</i> by Toni Morrison (link)</p> <p>Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Zoom Workshop: Group D ○ Post discussion comments on <i>Beloved</i> (optional) ○ Group E --upload MSS (for workshop in Week 8)
<p>Week 8:</p>	<p>Lesson: Character and Their (Quest)ions</p> <p>Read: <i>Signs Preceding the End of the World</i>, by Yuri Herrera (link)</p> <p>Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Zoom Workshop: Group E ○ Post discussion comments on <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> (optional) ○ Group F--upload MSS (for workshop in Week 9)
<p>Week 9:</p>	<p>Lesson: Re-read, Re-see, Re-write</p> <p>No Readings.</p> <p>Thursday: Zoom Workshop for Group F</p>
<p>Week 10:</p>	<p>Lesson: Writing as Being.</p> <p>Final Zoom Session Discussion: AMA Session, wherein you can ask me anything about writing, the writing life, publishing, querying agents, etc.</p> <p>-end-</p>

Course Structure

Module Content: Each module typically includes the following:

- Craft Lecture
- Writing Assignments ("Projects")
- Discussion topics
- Peer-reviews

Announcements: Announcements will be posted from time to time so consider setting your "announcement" notification preference to "notify me right away" to immediately receive the information via email. See the Notification Preference section on the Settings and Preferences page for instructions.

Discussions: Each week there will be a discussion that provides students the opportunity to not only address the topics within the weekly lesson, but to perhaps even offer additional questions to deepen our shared inquiry. I provide two or three different options for discussions. Some will be based on that week's readings. Others will be more focused on getting you to write. Please post one response of your own, and then reply to two of your classmates' responses. Doing so helps to build camaraderie. And we didn't need a study to tell us this but there's good evidence to prove that students actually learn from one another, as much as from the instructor.

Regarding the length of your comments, I'll just quote my old professor and Shakespeare scholar Stephen Booth from UC Berkeley: if you can say in five words what others say in ten, please do so. Meaning, length doesn't equal greatness. Content is what counts.

Once the workshops begin in Week 4, discussions about those assigned readings will be optional, as our new focus will be on 1) completing your workshop manuscripts and 2) in-depth peer-reviews of those manuscripts.

"General Class Comments and Questions" section: This discussion section, open throughout the course, is a great place to post thoughts or questions related to the course topics that don't seem to fit in any of the other discussions. Or, questions about the structure of the course, assignment expectations, class grading requirements, and so on.

Assignments: For the first five weeks, short writing assignments will be offered each week. The hope is that these will help you to write your five beginnings (of either short stories or novels or both). While you're writing these "beginnings" you, hopefully, will sense which one you're drawn to the most. That story will be the one you will work toward completing for workshop, even as you continue to write the other projects/beginnings.

Workshop and Sign-ups: You'll have the chance to sign up for a workshop slot on Week Two. Your story must be uploaded/posted on Thursday night, a full week prior to your workshop week.

Workshop Manuscripts/Grades: For credit in this course, you'll need to submit the workshop manuscript, a finished short story or chapter(s) of roughly 3,000-5,000 words, and respond to the majority of your peers' stories. For a letter grade, you'll want to make sure to submit the workshop manuscript, respond to all your peers' stories, complete at least three writing assignments and contribute regularly to discussions. Late submissions are accepted but won't receive feedback without prior arrangement. More details on instructor feedback below.

Live Class Meetings/Zoom Sessions: A live class meeting will be held each week on Thursday nights at 6:00pm (PST), unless otherwise stated. Attendance is optional but very encouraged. The sessions will be recorded for people who are unable to attend. Please refer to the "Class Meeting/Zoom Session" page each week for specific information (e.g., day and time, agenda, and connection information) regarding the meeting for that particular week. The meetings are conducted using Zoom, a video-conference application.

Instructor Feedback: There will be five short writing assignments due, plus a completed draft of a short story or novel chapter(s) which will get workshopped. I will read all assignments and comment briefly on the first three short writing assignments (project #1, #2, and #3) you submit. If you'd like to "save" your instructor feedback for a later assignment, please mark those submitted earlier with the words "No Instructor Feedback" at the top. As for the workshop manuscripts: you will receive a very thorough, individual feedback from me on your workshop story. I have a very intensive reading process, which I will share with you as we approach workshops.

Peer-Review: When commenting on peers' projects, do your best to remember that we're working with works-in-progress. Read meticulously, professionally, and optimistically. Your comments should focus on what you saw/read on the page, rather than what you think the story should be like. (More details will be provided on how to read workshop manuscripts later.)

Weekly Routine: Each week, you should work your way through that week's module: review the lecture, complete the readings and writing projects, participate in the discussions, attend (or watch the recording of) the live class Zoom meetings, etc. The expectation is that you will keep up with each week's materials, including meeting any deadlines for discussion participation and assignments, so you are prepared to take on the following week's lesson. This is especially important if you are enrolled for credit or a letter grade.

Here are some key days of the week:

Monday: Each week officially begins on Monday.

Thursday: Zoom sessions will be held at 6pm (PST). Also, all work—including assignments, workshop MSS, responses, etc.—should be uploaded or posted on Thursdays.

Friday: The module for the upcoming week will be available by the afternoon.

Weekends: Weekends are a great time to “deep dive” into your writing, meaning, I hope you can write for longer stretches (3+ hours) so that you can be fully ensconced into your fictional world. It's also a great time to get a head start on the upcoming week's work.

Texts (Required)

All of the following are available (for free) on the internet. (You're welcome!) Proper links will be included within that week's module.

Novels:

- *The Hole*, by Hye-Young Pyun
- *Beloved*, by Toni Morrison
- *Signs Preceding the End of the World*, by Yuri Herrera

Stories:

- “Bullet in the Brain,” by Tobias Wolff (from *The Night in Question*)
 - “Love and Honour and Pity and Pride” by Nam Le (from *The Boat*)
 - “Runs Girl” by Chinelo Okparanta (from *Happiness, Like Water*)
 - “Patriotism” by Yukio Mishima, translated by Geoffrey W. Sargent
 - “The Smallest Woman in the World” by Clarise Lispector, translated by Elizabeth Bishop (yes, THAT Elizabeth Bishop)
 - “The First Day” by Edward P. Jones, (from *Lost in the City*)
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Grade Options and Requirements

Students have these grading options for this course:

- **No Grade Requested (NGR)**
 - No work is required; no credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided. (Not suitable for those requiring proof of attendance/completion.)
- **Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)**
 - Description of the requirements to earn credit.
- **Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)**
 - Description of the requirements (which must include a written paper or project) to earn a letter grade.

Letter grades will be assigned according to these general standards: A=Excellent (90-100%), B=Good (80-89%), C=Satisfactory (70-79%), D=Minimal Pass (60-69%).

*Discussion credit will be given to responses that are reflective and thoroughly address the prompt. Posting in the "General Class Comments and Questions" thread does not count towards credit.

Please note that you can log into your Continuing Studies student account and change your grading status at any point before the final day of class. Keep in mind, if you require proof that you completed a course for any reason, you must choose the Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit grading option; courses taken for No Grade Requested will not appear on official transcripts nor on grade reports. Your student account is where you will also find your final grade (please allow up to three weeks after a course has ended to view your grade); official grades are not posted in Canvas.

Please refer to the [Continuing Studies Registration Policies page](#) [Links to an external site.](#) for more information about grades, along with policies regarding course credit, tuition, refunds, and so on.

Confidentiality

Writing workshops are built on trust. This is especially true in an online course where we're not all sitting together in the same room. To this end, it's important that we all agree that the work we present here and the personal information we share stays within this group. Sharing writing or personal information by group participants is not permitted without express permission from the writer.