

**THE ART OF FICTION**  
**ENG 273G**  
**Spring 2017**  
**Syllabus**

**Instructor:** Katherine Hale Finnell  
**Email:** katherine.finnell001@umb.edu  
**Office:** 06 Wheatley Room 044  
**Office Hours:** M/W/F 10:50-11:50 by appointment

**Course Description:** What is art? How is fiction art? Why is it important? Throughout this course we will attempt to begin answering these questions through the exploration of many short stories and a couple novels. We will ponder the works through different perspectives and angles in order to open a new avenue for understanding both ourselves and the world around us. We will learn not only to enjoy the works of great authors and discover what elements make them great but also how to articulate our thoughts about them. We will learn and practice the tools to be able to discuss the *what*, *how*, and *why* of a story's power. Each student will write 8 short essays (journals) and 2 longer papers. By the end of the semester I hope you will not only be able to articulate your opinions on the art of fiction but also be able to say with G. K. Chesterton: "Fiction is necessity."

**About the Intermediate Seminar Program:** Intermediate Seminars offer students with 30 or more credits the opportunity to work on essential university capabilities in small-sized courses that are often thematic or problem-oriented and interdisciplinary in nature. Intermediate Seminars put special emphasis on *critical reading, thinking and writing*. They focus on other essential capabilities as appropriate to the course and might therefore include attention to library research and information technology, collaborative learning, oral presentation, and academic self-assessment. Students who practiced reading, writing, and critical thinking in a First Year Seminar at UMASS Boston will practice them at a more advanced level in the Intermediate Seminar. The writing assignments given in this course are designed to help students with the Writing Proficiency Requirement. **Only ONE Intermediate Seminar may be taken for credit.** If you have taken another G200-level course in any department at UMB, you cannot receive credit for this one.

**Prerequisites:** English 101, English 102, First Year Seminar (or waiver), and 30 credits. The First Year Seminar is automatically waived for students who enter UMB with 30 or more transfer credits. Because these are intensive reading and writing courses, some students may find it helpful to enroll in CRW 221 to further develop their skills with college-level writing *before* taking an Intermediate Seminar. Discuss your situation with the instructor if you have any questions about these prerequisites or your readiness for the work in this course.

**The Writing Proficiency Requirement:** Students from the College of Liberal Arts, the College of Science and Mathematics, and the College of Nursing and Health Sciences complete the University's Writing Proficiency Requirement through the Writing Proficiency Evaluation (WPE). The Writing Proficiency Requirement is not the same as the writing placement test you may have taken when you entered UMass Boston. The WPE can be met through either an examination or a take-home essay submitted along with a portfolio of papers written for UMB courses. See the WPR website ([www.umb.edu/academics/wpr](http://www.umb.edu/academics/wpr)) for more details about the exam and portfolio options and dates. Students who have not already satisfied the WPR should arrange to take the exam or submit a portfolio shortly after completing this course.

**Support services for Intermediate Seminar students:** The Academic Support Office offers both individual tutoring and drop-in workshops for students who need help with the critical reading, thinking and writing skills necessary for success in General Education courses such as this one. More information on their programs is available online at [www.academicsupport.umb.edu/rwsscenter.html](http://www.academicsupport.umb.edu/rwsscenter.html), or at their Campus Center office (CC1-1300). **Student Referral Program.** If it appears to the teacher that you might not pass this First-Year Seminar, and if the instructor cannot figure out how to support your success in the

course, the instructor might inform the advisors in the Student Referral Program (CC-1100; 287-5500). The staff in this program will attempt to help you with difficulties interfering with your success. Your instructor will inform you before calling the Program

**Assessment of these courses:** In addition to course evaluation forms that are routinely administered at the end of each course at UMass Boston, Intermediate Seminar students are asked to complete a self-assessment questionnaire addressing their progress as critical thinkers and writers. Each term an assessment committee will look at randomly chosen student writing from a small sample of Intermediate Seminars. Please save all your writing in this course so that, if you are chosen, you will have your work available. The purpose of this evaluation is to improve the program and to improve particular courses as necessary, not to evaluate individual students. *You may remove your name from your papers if you prefer to submit them anonymously.*

**Attendance:** Attending class, **bringing the course materials and arriving on time is crucial to your success** in this course and to the success of the course in general. If you miss class, *you are responsible for making up the work and finding out what you missed* by contacting me or a classmate. **Missing more than six classes will result in a failing grade. Any student who misses more than six classes by the April 20<sup>th</sup> withdrawal deadline will be recommended to drop the course.**

**Participation:** Along with attendance, participation counts towards your grade for this course. This is because **this class is centered around discussion**, in-class writing and group work. If you miss class and/or do not participate in class you are negatively affecting the learning atmosphere of the class. All students must come to class **on time** and prepared to participate actively in small group, individual and class-wide activities and/or discussions. This **INCLUDES** bringing texts and/or materials necessary for that class.

**Civility in and out of the classroom:** Every person should display appreciation and respect for one another, and for the class discussions. An educational institution is a unique cultural space: here, the open sharing of ideas is not only possible, but valued above all else. Intellectual exchange depends on showing respect for your instructor and peers, taking responsibility for your own course contributions, and demonstrating a mature understanding that learning can involve disagreement over ideas and assessment. If you engage in uncivil behavior, such as making inappropriate comments to your professor or fellow students in the classroom, out of the classroom, or via email or social networking sites, you can be referred to the Chair of the English Department for sanctions that can include the lowering of your course grade. You can also be referred to the Dean of Students.

**Journal Assignments:** You will receive a handout for each of the journal assignments. If you miss class and do not receive the assignment, you must contact me via email. The topics of each journal assignment relate to what we are discussing *at the time, and will be used for our class discussion on the day that it is due*. Journals are generally 2-3 page reflections on a given topic, must be typed (BUT- if you are having trouble with your printer or computer- **hand write it!!!** You will NOT be penalized) and are due at the **beginning** of class on the date noted. If you miss class, journals can be turned in via email **before** the start of the missed class and a **hard copy will be submitted** by you at the next class. **Late journals will not be accepted. You may drop your lowest journal grade at the end of the semester.**

**Writing prompts:** From time to time, there will be a brief writing exercise, based on the day's reading/work. These will be administered at the beginning of the class, or will be handed out at the previous class, and will help focus both your reading and the day's discussion, and will be **turned in** as part of your journal grade. If you miss class and do not receive the assignment, you must contact me via email.

**Formal Papers:** In addition to the somewhat informal journal/mini paper assignments, your formal papers are the best way to demonstrate what you have learned about literature and to showcase your ability to express your thoughts clearly and cohesively through written language. All assignments are due at the beginning of class unless otherwise noted. A paper received after class is considered **late**, which will be

reflected in the grade- one full letter grade lower each day. ***Emailed or electronic copies of papers will not be permitted.*** You will be allowed to revise papers *once* if you wish. However, revisions are more than just correcting simple surface errors. All revisions must be returned ***one week*** after you received the assignment back. They should involve a rethinking about the subject matter and form of your paper. You may schedule an appointment with me for assistance. Calculating an ***average of the revised and the original grades*** will determine your final grade for that paper.

**Final Presentation:** A formal assignment explanation will be handed out toward the middle of the semester. These final projects will allow you to creatively express your individual understanding of fiction and fiction studies.

**Plagiarism:** Students are expected to abide by the University's Code of Student Conduct in all their classes at UMASS Boston ([www.umb.edu/life\\_on\\_campus/policies/code/](http://www.umb.edu/life_on_campus/policies/code/)). The University takes plagiarism very seriously. Plagiarism is an act of academic dishonesty, and can include actions such as presenting another writer's work as your own work; copying passages from print or internet sources without proper citation; taking ideas off the internet, modifying them, and presenting them as your own; or submitting the same work for more than one course. ***Plagiarism will result in failure/and or dismissal from this course.*** Plagiarism cases will be referred to the Chair of the English Department. Also note that plagiarism can result in further academic sanctions such as suspension or expulsion.

**Incompletes:** Incompletes are rarely offered, as they are reserved for students who are unable to complete a small portion of the course at the end of the term due to an extreme circumstance such as illness. Incompletes are not allowed to replace a significant amount of coursework or absences. If you are awarded an Incomplete, you must sign a contract with your instructor outlining the work to be done and work due dates. Although an INC automatically turns into an F after a year, your Incomplete work will typically be due before the year's end.

*Incomplete policy:* [http://www.umb.edu/registrar/academic\\_policies/incomplete\\_policy/](http://www.umb.edu/registrar/academic_policies/incomplete_policy/)

**Required Texts:**

*The Namesake*, Jhumpa Lahiri, ISBN 0618485228

*The Warrior Woman*, Maxine Hong Kingston, ISBN 13: 9780679721888

**Course Grade Determination:**

Paper #1 & Rough Draft: 20%

Paper #2 & Rough Draft: 25%

Final Project/Exhibition: 10%

Journal Assignments: 30%

In-class writing prompts: 5%

Workshop/Group Work participation: 10%

**YOUR GRADE WILL ALSO BE AFFECTED BY ATTENDANCE, PERFORMANCE, PREPAREDNESS**

***ALSO!!!! NO cell phones allowed during class!!!! Not even on top of your desk or in your lap. If you are using an electronic device for your text (such as Kindle), please inform me.***

***Please feel free to email me with any questions, concerns, throughout the semester. I look forward to working with you and getting to know you this semester!***

## CLASS SCHEDULE

### WEEK 1:

**MON 1/23:** Introductions, Syllabus  
Read (in class): The Use of Force [**BUY BOOKS NOW!!!!**]

**WED 1/25:** Lorrie Moore, "Boys and Girls" (12),

**FRI 1/27:** Jamaica Kincaid, "Girl" (1), Rick Moody, "Boys" (4) [**Journal # 1 distributed**]

### WEEK 2:

**MON 1/30:** Oates, "Where Are You Going Where Have You Been" (9), Hurston, "Sweat" (9)  
\*\*\*ADD/DROP ENDS

**WED 2/1:** Kingston, *The Warrior Woman* "No Name Woman" (16) [**Journal # 1 due + Journal # 2 distributed**]

**FRI 2/3:** Kingston, *The Warrior Woman* "White Tigers" (20)

### WEEK 3:

**MON 2/6:** Kingston, *The Warrior Woman* finish "White Tigers" and "Shaman" (22) [**journal #2 due + Journal #3 distributed + Paper #1 assignment distributed**]

**WED 2/8:** Kingston, *The Warrior Woman* "Shaman" (20)

**FRI 2/10:** Kingston, *The Warrior Woman* "Shaman" (28) [**Journal #3 due + Journal #4 distributed**]

### WEEK 4:

**MON 2/13:** Kingston, *The Warrior Woman* "At The Western Palace" (23)

**WED 2/15:** Kingston, *The Warrior Woman* "At the Western Palace" (23) [**Journal #4 due + Journal 5 distributed**]

**FRI 2/17:** Kingston, *The Warrior Woman* "A Song For A Barbarian Reed Pipe" (25)

### WEEK 5:

**MON 2/20: Presidents Day Holiday**

**WED 2/22:** Kingston, *The Warrior Woman* "A Song For A Barbarian Reed Pipe" (20) + "18 Songs of a Nomad's Flute" (2) [**Journal #5 Due**]

**FRI 2/24: Paper #1 Draft Due for Paper Workshop**

### WEEK 6:

**MON 2/27:** Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues" (14), Alexie,

**WED 3/1:** "What You Pawn I will Redeem" (19) [**Paper #1 due + Journal #6 distributed**]

**FRI: 3/3:** Nikolai Gogol "The Overcoat" (17)

### WEEK 7:

**MON 3/6:** Lahiri, *The Namesake* Chapter 1 [**journal #6 due + journal #7 distributed**]

**WED 3/8:** Lahiri, *The Namesake* Chapter 2

**FRI 3/10:** Lahiri, *The Namesake* Chapter 3

**SPRING BREAK!!!! MON 3/13-FRI 3/17**

**WEEK 8:**

**MON 3/20:** Lahiri, *The Namesake* Chapter 4 [**journal #7 due + Journal #8 distributed**]

**WED 3/22:** Lahiri, *The Namesake* Chapter 5

**FRI 3/24:** Lahiri, *The Namesake* Chapter 6 [**Journal #8 due + Journal #9 distributed**]

**WEEK 9:**

**MON 3/27:** Lahiri, *The Namesake* Chapter 7 + Critical Sources [**Paper #2 distributed + Final Presentations distributed**]

**WED 3/29:** Lahiri, *The Namesake* Chapter 8 + Critical Sources [**Journal #9 due**]

**FRI 3/31:** Lahiri, *The Namesake* Chapter 9 + Critical Sources

**WEEK 10:**

**MON 4/3:** Lahiri, *The Namesake* Chapter 10 + Critical Sources

**WED 4/5:** Lahiri, *The Namesake* Chapters 11-12 + Critical Sources

**FRI 4/7:** Paper Workshop

**WEEK 11:**

**MON 4/10: Mandatory Student Meetings (8)**

**WED 4/12: Mandatory Student Meetings (9)**

**FRI 4/14: Mandatory Student Meetings (8)**

**WEEK 12:**

**MON 4/17: Patriots Day HOLIDAY**

**WED 4/19: Paper #2 Due + 6 Presentations**

**\*\*\*April 20th -PASS/FAIL DEADLINE\*\*\***

**\*\*\*April 20th -COURSE WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE\*\*\***

**FRI 4/21: 6 Presentations**

**WEEK 13:**

**MON 4/24: 2 Presentations + Alice Walker, "Everyday Use" (8)**

**WED 4/27: 2 Presentations + William Faulkner, "Dry September" (8)**

**FRI 4/29: 2 Presentations + Flannery O'Connor "Revelation" (15)**

**WEEK 14:**

**MON 5/1: 2 Presentations + Flannery O'Connor "Revelation" (20)**

**WED 5/3: 2 Presentations + Cofer "An hour with Abuelo" (4) and Welty "A Visit of Charity" (6)**

**FRI 5/5: 2 Presentations + Mark Twain, "Excerpts from Adam's Diary and from Eve's Diary" (19)**

**WEEK 15:**

**MON 5/8: Kurt Vonnegut, "Harrison Bergeron" (6) + Philip Roth, "The Conversion of the Jews" (9)**

**WED 5/10: Return Work/ Course Evaluations/Wrap up + Final Discussion**