Fiction Writing Workshop

3/17/2020

Dear Writers,

I am so saddened this is where we are right now. I want to be back on campus gathering together for our weekly workshop sessions. I know this isn’t possible, and I also know how difficult is to try to be strong in uncertain times. I feel you. And I hope wherever you are, you are safe.

The rest of this semester isn’t going to be what we signed up for, but I do think with a bit of flexibility and generosity, we can make still have a meaningful experience.

Here’s what I’m imagining at this point:

We will still follow our course [schedule](https://miller-wrt312.uneportfolio.org/schedule/). I’ve updated it. We will continue to workshop stories. Coming up for Monday, March 23, we have Sara, Mackay, and Stephen. What I’d like for us to do is as follows:

1. Read each story draft and make marginal comments as we’ve done so far in class. I will send Sara and Mackay now in case you don’t have them. For Mackay, since it’s a PDF, just jot down your thoughts in an email or Word/Google doc attachment, whatever is easiest for you. I believe Steven is in motion and I’ll send him along soon.
2. Email these drafts with your marginal comments to your peers by next class. Look in this email for the email addresses of your peers so you can send stuff to them.
3. As we have done, post an **END COMMENT** for each writer as the weekly journal (for the 3 drafts this week—Sara, Mackay, and Stephen— this will be journal 17)
4. To keep a human touch, which I think is essential right now, let’s try to following: In place of our class discussions, let’s all record a 2-4 minute (note the flexibility) **Voice Message** for each writer. Feel free to draw from your End Comment to shape this message, but also, as we have talked about in other stories, what really sticks with you about the piece after your read it (I’m still thinking about the dog hair on the blankets in the story “Cougar” we looked at, for example).

I think we all have smart phones. It’s pretty easy to record and send. The key is to send it to me and your peers. If you like, feel free to practice now with a friend or family member (or even me). If you need help with this, let me know—you’re not bugging me at all. In this way, we’ll generate about the same amount of spoken discussion for our peers’ work. That’s a small, good thing I’d say.

The above will cover WEEK 10. We will replicate that format as we move through short story draft 2. **I’m hoping that Delaney, Adam, Kait, and Sinead can send me drafts by Monday, March 23 as Word docs.** If there is an issue with this, let me know. We will certainly work something out.

**From there, can everyone else send their short story 2 drafts to me by Monday, March 30 as Word docs?** This is the proposed schedule I have in mind, starting at WEEK 10:

**WEEK 10: March 23, by class time**, for **Sara, Mackay, Stephen**: Post End Comment, email **Voice Messages** to me and your peers, email drafts with marginal comments.

**WEEK 11: March 30, by class time**, for **Delaney, Adam, Kait, Sinead**: Post End Comment, email **Voice Messages** to me and your peers, email drafts with marginal comments.

**WEEK 12: April 6, by class time**, **for** **Grace, Jordyn, Megan, Vic**: Post End Comment, email **Voice Messages** to me and your peers, email drafts with marginal comments.

**WEEK 13: April 13, by class time**, **for** **Sara, Mackay, Stephen**: Post End Comment, email **Voice Messages** to me and your peers, email drafts with marginal comments.

I’m not expecting you to listen to all of these Voice Messages, especially if you’re not the writer being workshopped, but it seems to me like a good thing to sample, to know there are voices available from our community. So, listen to some of them and think about how your thoughts align with your peers—it’s a form of conversation.

You can expect that I will be as ***generous*** and ***flexible*** as humanly possible as we traverse the next 6 weeks. And, to be upfront, it’s likely something might change, so please be aware of that, OK? And if you have suggestions or question, please let me know.

**Please note**: **Office hours**—I post office hour times soon, but I’ll generally be around between 10-4 to meet with you—this could take the form of Zoom, Facetime, live chat, or a phone call. Whatever works best for you. If you want to chat about your work, let me know. We will find time.

During the last 2 weeks of the semester, we’ll still be having our **conferences** on your work. I’m imagining we’ll do Zoom meetings and they’d be **20-30 mins long**. More on this soon.

I’d also like to check in with you guys starting next week—this could be in the form of Zoom, Facetime, live chat, or a phone call. I think it’s imperative that we make sure to have some human interactions.

**Once you have read this (long, I know) email, can you email back with the following**:

* Let me know 3 days next week (March 23-March 27) when you think you’ll have a free hour. Don’t worry, we won’t need to chat for an hour, just looking to piece a schedule together. We’ll probably just chat for 10 mins or so.
* Let me know how we should communicate—my preference is Zoom right now, but I’m open.
* Let me know if you have any questions about the instructions I’ve laid out here.

Make sense?

As you well know, us writers are tough cookies. We’ll make this semester work from afar. Anything you need from me, just let me know.

Jesse

PS, if it’s any comfort at all, here are my 2 fur children snoozing away. I know they’ve been a comfort to me lately. Maybe now for you too.