

8:36:SCA  
Introduction to the Short Story  
Fall 2008  
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Diffley  
355 EPB, 335-0437  
Hours: MTuTh 2:30-3:30  
& by appointment

### Course Description

In this course we examine how stories are told: the setting, characters, dramatic conflict, structure, imagery, narration, and language that together help define the way short fiction works. To see how the genre has evolved, we will look at both recent and early stories, at those from the United States and those told in other places and once upon a time. To see who has dibs on a story's meaning, we will consider what authors have to say about what they have written and how they write. To see where critical commentary can be illuminating, we will consider six case studies of stories to which critics have responded with intelligence and wit. And to see how much pages and readers matter, we will consider a particular short story and the longer film made from it as prose gives way to pictures.

### Text

Ann Charters, *The Story and Its Writer: An Introduction to Short Fiction*, 7th edition  
Copies are available at the IMU Bookstore, Old Capitol Town Center.

### Coursework

Two five-page papers, both attentive to close reading, will be due on **October 6** (25%) and **December 8** (25%). Reading journals will be submitted on **October 20** (25%) and **November 17** (25%), following an ungraded opportunity in September and weekly posting of a selected first response. Thanks to steady writing throughout the term, there will be no exams.

Attendance at all classes is expected and is expected to make both papers and reading journals easier to complete. An absence needs to be explained satisfactorily and the work completed; an unexplained absence or incomplete reading journal amounts to a week's work lost and will unfortunately result in a whole grade reduction when work is next submitted. Any student with a disability is welcome to discuss alternative coursework arrangements.

Reading Schedule

- Mon Aug 25 Oscar Hijuelos, "Lunch at the Biltmore"  
Kate Chopin, "Desirée's Baby"  
Doris Lessing, "A Sunrise on the Veld"
- Mon Sep 8 Louise Erdrich, "The Red Convertible"  
Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The Minister's Black Veil"  
Gabriel García Márquez, "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings"
- Mon Sep 15** T. Coraghessan Boyle, "Greasy Lake"  
Washington Irving, "Rip Van Winkle"  
Clarice Lispector, "The Smallest Woman in the World"
- Mon Sep 22** Raymond Carver, "What We Talk About When We Talk About Love"  
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper"  
Bharati Mukherjee, "The Management of Grief"
- Mon Sep 29 Alice Walker, "Everyday Use"  
F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Babylon Revisited"  
Anton Chekhov, "The Lady with the Little Dog"
- Mon Oct 6** Eudora Welty, "Why I Live at the P.O."  
Edith Wharton, "Roman Fever"  
Virginia Woolf, "Kew Gardens"
- Mon Oct 13 Gish Jen, "Who's Irish?"  
Samuel Clemens, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County"  
Chinua Achebe, "Civil Peace"
- Mon Oct 20** Tim O'Brien, "The Things They Carried"  
Sarah Orne Jewett, "A White Heron"  
Frank O'Connor, "Guests of the Nation"
- Mon Oct 27 Leslie Marmon Silko, "Yellow Woman"  
Sherwood Anderson, "Hands"  
Isabel Allende, "An Act of Vengeance"
- Mon Nov 3 Grace Paley, "A Conversation with My Father"  
James Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues"  
Margaret Atwood, "Happy Endings"
- Mon Nov 10 Amy Tan, "Two Kinds"  
William Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily"  
Jamaica Kincaid, "Girl"

**Mon Nov 17** Joyce Carol Oates, "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?"  
Zora Neale Hurston, "Sweat"  
Anton Chekhov, "The Darling"

Mon Dec 1 Flannery O'Connor, "Good Country People"  
Edgar Allan Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher"  
Graphic Storytelling

**Mon Dec 8** *Smoke Signals*  
Sherman Alexie, "This Is What It Means To Say Phoenix, Arizona"  
Conclusions