

The University of Texas at Tyler
The Department of Literature and Languages
ENGL 4399.060
Independent Study
Glenn Blake
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Class Meetings: Online Course
Office Hours: Mo-We 4:00-5:00

COURSE DESCRIPTION

INDEPENDENT STUDY: The Short-Short Story is a course designed for students who have not yet selected a genre, who have not yet selected a concentration in

The Department of Literature and Languages. The student-writers will read three anthologies—short-short stories grouped, sorted, according to stylistic, thematic, similarities—revise weekly assignments, and meticulously hone their narrative techniques in preparation for more advanced seminars in Creative Writing.

ASSIGNED READINGS

Flash Fiction	Norton
Micro Fiction	Norton
Sudden Fiction	Gibbs Smith

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Short Shorts	Bantam
Sudden Fiction (Continued)	Norton
Sudden Fiction International	Norton

WEEKLY RESPONSIBILITIES

Every week, we will read eight short-short stories. Every week, we will revise the previous assignment and complete the new assignment.

MICRO FICTION

AUGUST 28, 2026

DRAMATIC SITUATION

"20/20"

"The Poet's Husband"

"The Cough"

"Your Fears Are Justified"

"Daydream"

"At the Point"

"The Halo"

"Wrong Channel"

ASSIGNMENT ONE:

Write an example of Micro Fiction in which you establish an initial dramatic situation. ½ pg.

SEPTEMBER 4, 2026

DESIRE

"Harmony"

"Mockingbird"

"Anti-Cain"

"Changing the Channel"

"Painted Devils"

"Wanting to Fly"

"Eclipsed"

"Honeycomb"

ASSIGNMENT TWO:

Write a Micro Fiction in which a character is propelled by Aristotle's DESIRE. ½ pg. Revise ONE.

SEPTEMBER 11, 2026

TENSION/CONFLICT

"The New Year"

"Baby, Baby, Baby"

"Survivors"

"An Old Story"

"Conception"

"Kennedy in the Barrio"

"All This"

"Carpathia"

ASSIGNMENT THREE:

Write a Micro Fiction in which a character's DESIRE is thwarted. 1 pg. Revise TWO.

SEPTEMBER 18, 2026

ANECDOTES/MOMENTS/SURPRISE

"Stone Belly Girl"

"Hurray for Hollywood"

"Worry"

"Morning News"

"Flu"

"This Is How I Remember It"

"Tea Leaves"

"But What Was Her Name?"

ASSIGNMENT FOUR: Write a Micro Fiction in which you perfectly capture a moment. 1 pg. Revise THREE.

INDEPENDENT STUDY
PAGE THREE

SEPTEMBER 25, 2026 EPIPHANIC MOMENTS

"Pumpkins" (FF)	"Moment in the Sun Field" (FF)
"Roseville" (FF)	"The Last Parakeet" (FF)
"232-9979" (FF)	"The Hurricane Ride" (FF)
"Snow" (FF)	"The Paring Knife" (FF)

ASSIGNMENT FIVE:

Write a Flash Fiction in which a character experiences an epiphanic moment. 1 pg. Revise FOUR.

OCTOBER 2, 2026 PERIPETEIA

"Mother" (SF)	"A Very Short Story" (SF)
"Billy's Girl" (SF)	"Pendergast's Daughter" (FF)
"Mr. Mumsford" (FF)	"The Appalachian Trail" (FF)
"Pygmalion" (SF)	"A Walled Garden" (SF)

ASSIGNMENT SIX:

Write a Flash Fiction in which there is a reversal of a character's fortunes, an earned reversal in the reader's expectations. 2 pgs. Revise FIVE.

OCTOBER 9, 2026 MINIMALISM

"Yours" (SF)	"The Father" (FF)
"Night" (FF)	"Popular Mechanics" (SF)
"Say Yes" (SF)	"Blackberries" (FF)
"Water" (FF)	"The Hatchet Man" (SF)

ASSIGNMENT SEVEN:

Write an example of Flash Fiction in the minimal style, a story in which the not-said is more important than the said. 2 pgs. Revise SIX.

OCTOBER 16, 2026 POSTMODERNISM/LISTS

"Girl" (FF)	"Fear: Four Examples" (FF)
"Class Notes" (SF)	"The King of Jazz" (SF)
"Subtotals" (FF)	"The Merry Chase" (SF)
"Tickits" (SF)	"Questionnaire for R.G." (SF)

ASSIGNMENT EIGHT:

Write a Sudden Fiction which is comprised of lists or fragments. 2 pgs. Revise SEVEN.

SHORT SHORTS

OCTOBER 23, 2026	DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE
"The Three Hermits"	"The Beggarwoman of Locarno"
"Alyosha the Pot"	"The Third Bank of the River"
"An Old Man"	"An Episode of War"
"After the Theatre"	"A Yom Kippur Scandal"
"The Wolf"	"Little Legend of the Dance"

ASSIGNMENT NINE:

Write an example of Sudden Fiction in a Dramatic Monologue. 3 pgs. Revise NINE.

OCTOBER 30, 2026	SETTING
"If Not Higher"	"The Soft Touch of Grass"
"Eveline"	"The Hunter Gracchus"
"Paper Pills"	"Joy and the Law"
"First Sorrow"	"The Untold Lie"
"A Sick Collier"	"A Clean, Well-Lighted Place"

ASSIGNMENT TEN:

Write an example of Sudden Fiction in which there is a strong sense of place, in which the setting—the stage upon which the action is performed—contributes significantly to the earned tension and conflict of the story. 3 pgs. Revise NINE.

NOVEMBER 6, 2026	SHORT SHORTS
"Magic"	"Homage to Isaac Babel"
"The Bathhouse"	"Swaddling Clothes"
"The Use of Force"	"The Blue Bouquet"
"In the Night"	"The Death of Dolgushov"
"The Dead Man"	"My Father Sits in the Dark"
"Wants"	"The Laugher"
"The Eclipse"	"News from the World"

ASSIGNMENT ELEVEN:

Write your own Short Short. 5 pgs. Revise TEN.

INDEPENDENT STUDY
PAGE FIVE

RETURN

NOVEMBER 13, 2026	SUDDEN FICTION
"Blind Girls"	"Sunday at the Zoo"
"Dinner Time"	"Reading the Paper"
"Reunion"	"No One's a Mystery"
"The Hit Man"	"A Lost Grave"

ASSIGNMENT TWELVE:

Present a revised work of Sudden Fiction. 3 pgs.
Revise ELEVEN.

NOVEMBER 20, 2026	FLASH FICTION
"Spider Creek"	"Brilliant Silence"
"Love Poems"	"Here's Another Ending"
"The Colonel"	"A Public Denial"
"Space"	"How to Touch a Bleeding Dog"

ASSIGNMENT THIRTEEN:

Present a revised work of Flash Fiction. 2 pgs.

DECEMBER 4, 2026	MICRO FICTION
"The Bridge"	"You Can't See the Dogs"
"Grief"	"Mount Olive"
"Chickens"	"But What Was Her Name?"
"Land's End"	"A Gentleman's C"

ASSIGNMENT FOURTEEN:

Present a revised work of Micro Fiction. 1 pg.

THE DEPARTMENT OF LITERATURE AND LANGUAGES

The Department's Attendance Policy is to fail a student who misses more than two weeks of a course due to unexcused absences. One week's unexcused absence will result in a deduction from the final grade. Two unexcused tardy arrivals to class will result in the recording of an absence.

TUESDAY AND THURSDAY (two weeks) = 4 classes

MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, AND FRIDAY = 6 classes

AI is not permitted in this course at all.

I expect all work students submit for this course to be their own. I have carefully designed all assignments and class activities to support your learning. Doing your own work, without human or artificial intelligence assistance, is best for your efforts in mastering course learning objectives. For this course, I expressly forbid using ChatGPT or any other artificial intelligence (AI) tools for any stages of the work process, including brainstorming. Deviations from these guidelines will be considered a violation of UT Tyler's Honor Code and academic honesty values.

FORMATTING

Scenes, stories, chapters will be typed, double-spaced in a readable font-12 or larger.

GRADING PROCEDURE

Attendance	25%
Written Assignments	25%
Classroom Participation	50%!

IRON SHARPENS IRON

This is not only a writing class--this is a class in EDITING. Long before you can presume to put words on a page, you must first learn how to read them. You learn to write by first learning how to read.

In this Classical Creative Writing Workshop, we will learn to edit our fellow writers' works. In this workshop, we will obtain, acquire, the Mean Eyes required for the arduous life of writing fictions.

PREPARATION & PARTICIPATION

CW I will be a Classical Creative Writing Workshop—scenes, stories, chapters will be written, copies will be made and distributed. Each and every last one of us will read these presentations and share our insights.

In this Classical Workshop, we will not only learn to write, we will learn to read, to edit, to critique other writers' works.

Everyone is expected to attend all classes, arrive on time, turn off cellphones and laptops.

Attention to the cellphone instead of class and peers will be counted as an absence.

Attendance is crucial in a Classical Workshop—if the student-writer is absent, the student-writer will miss the distribution of the presentations, the copies and will receive a **ZERO** for the following class. The presentations, the copies, of the scenes, stories, chapters ARE the texts we will be studying in Creative Writing I.

