

Department of English and Writing Studies

**Food Writing 2222G**

**Section: 001**

**Instructor: Melanie Chambers**

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Special Topic: Creative Writing: Food Writing Western University

**Course description:** Food writing touches many genres of writing: it is part memoir, history, reporting, recipes and memoir. This course will teach students how to write these various genres while emphasising the trends (slow food, organics, local), politics (food reporting) and the culture of food. Students will also develop specific research methods to understand the history and future of our food.

**Peer editing:** You will notice that every assignment requires a first draft, which will be used for online editing purposes. The first due date is when the peer edit draft is due. Every peer edit workshop requires **THREE** copies of your work. The purpose of this is to mimic the editor and writer relationship that exists in a 'real world' scenario. Editing and rewriting are critical to improving and sculpting a story for publication. As an editor, you will learn to critique and help shape fellow students' work and as a writer, you must get used to adopting and/or rejecting editing comments and concerns. This work will be done in-class; therefore, if you're absent, this will reflect on your participation mark.

**Note:** a class meeting missed in order to write a test, exam, or other form of 'make-up class' in another course *will* count as non-attendance, and *will* attract penalties as defined above if applicable. Instructors at the University of Western Ontario *shall not require* a student to write a make-up test or similar at times which conflict with that student's other scheduled class times. If you are asked or 'required' to do this, you should immediately contact an academic counsellor in your Dean's office. If you elect to miss a class in order to write such a test, that is *your* choice; your absence will not be excused.

See also: 'Medical Accommodation Policy' below. **Scholastic Offences, including Plagiarism**

The University Senate requires the following statements, and Web site references, to appear on course outlines:

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholoff.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholoff.pdf)

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using

quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy as above).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

## **Prerequisites**

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

*The prerequisite for registration in this course is a) a final grade of 65 or more in one of Writing 2101,*

*2121, 2111, or 2131, or b) a final grade of 70 or more in Writing 1000F/G or Writing 1030F, or c) Special Permission of the department.*

## **Attendance Policies**

Attendance at class is required to improve as a writer. Here is the Writing Studies attendance policy in this class:

- You may miss up to three hours (the equivalent of one week of class) of class meetings during the term without explanation. That means that the first three class hours you miss will be recorded as absences but *excused provided you don't miss any more.* <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

However, if you miss a total of four to nine class hours (the equivalent of up to three full weeks of class), your final grade will be reduced by 10% (e.g. an earned final grade of 80% will be reported as a final grade of 72).

If you miss a total of more than nine hours of class meetings (the equivalent of more than three weeks of class meetings) your final grade will be reduced by 15% (e.g. an earned final grade of 80% will be reported as a final grade of 68). <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> This policy will be waived only for medical or compassionate reasons. If you have good reasons for waiving an absence of one class meeting (e.g. if you've missed three hours, and need or want to miss another class meeting) discuss these reasons with your instructor within one week of that absence. If your absence is extended and prolonged (over one week of continuous non-attendance), then you should discuss it with your academic advisor in your home faculty, who may require documentation. That advisor may then contact all of your instructors.

See also: ‘**Medical Accommodation Policy**’ below. **Attendance also extends to tardiness.** If you are more than 20 minutes late, you will be penalized an hour of attendance. Please make every effort to be on time as late entry can disrupt the flow of discussion in our class. Early departures from class, which have not been previously arranged with the instructor, will also be counted as an absence. If you leave during the break, you will be docked an hour of attendance. **Note:** a class meeting missed in order to write a test, exam, or other form of ‘make-up class’ in another course **will** count as non-attendance, and **will** attract penalties as defined above if applicable. Instructors at the University of Western Ontario **shall not require** a student to write a make-up test or similar at times which conflict with that student’s other scheduled class times. If you are asked or ‘required’ to do this, you should immediately contact an academic counsellor in your Dean’s office. If you elect to miss a class in order to write such a test, that is **your** choice; your absence will not be excused. **Medical Accommodation Policy** For UWO Policy on Accommodation For Medical Illness, see:  
[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf)  
(downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading)

Students seeking academic accommodation **on medical or other grounds** for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments **worth 10% or more of their final grade** must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation on medical grounds cannot be granted by the instructor or the Program in Writing, Rhetoric, and Professional Communication, and the Program requires students in these circumstances to follow the same procedure when seeking academic accommodation on non-medical (i.e. non- medical compassionate or other) grounds.

Students seeking academic accommodation **on medical grounds** for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments **worth less than 10% of their final grade** must also apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Where in these circumstances the accommodation is being sought on **non-medical grounds**, students should consult in the first instance with their instructor, who may elect to make a decision on the request directly, or refer the student to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive medical documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds, or for other reasons (e.g. to explain an absence from class which may result in a grade penalty under an ‘Attendance’ policy in the course). **All** medical documentation **must** be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student’s home Faculty.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

**Special Requests: Special Examinations, Incomplete Standing, Aegrotat Standing**

Please refer to the “Information for All Students in a Writing Course” for more detailed information. Briefly, remember that your instructor does not have the discretion to initiate, consider, or grant (or not) such requests; you must go directly to the Dean’s office of your home faculty.

### **Class one: Meaning of food**

#### **FORUM:**

Watch Bourdain:

<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x6rchcd>

- 1) What qualities of Bourdain's make him a good food reporter?
- 2) Describe the last meal you ate. This will get us warmed up for next week’s class on how to describe food.

Use your senses to describe, or similarities (what does it remind you of? Something other than food?), sounds when eating it, texture, taste, and did you like it?

### **Class Two: describing food and sourcing information**

#### **READING:**

1. <http://read.dreamscapes.ca/i/905839-winter-2017-2018/13?>
2. <https://www.writing.ie/resources/food-writing-so-good-you-can-taste-it-dianne-jacob/>

#### **FORUM:**

1. Considering all the new ways to describe food.

Do the following: rewrite your food description from week one using the new skills you learned from this week’s lecture.

2. From the Taiwan reading, find a description that evokes a feeling. What do you like about it?

### **Class three: history of food writers/trends in food writing**

#### **READING:**

1. <http://themillions.com/2010/10/our-meals-ourselves-a-short-history-of-food-writing.html>
2. MFK Fisher  
<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=11480593>
3. Bourdain text: Appetizers; Second and Third courses.

**FORUM:**

1. In Fisher's memoir, what do you learn about her feelings towards food? Any excerpts you want to share? Does she use tons of adjectives and sensory description?

**Class four: Food Reporting****READING:**

- 1) <https://www.today.com/food/these-will-be-biggest-healthy-food-trends-2021-according-dietitian-t203476>
- 2) <https://www.menshealth.com/nutrition/a19541309/kombucha-health-benefits/>
- 3) <https://time.com/longform/food-best-medicine/>
- 4) Bourdain: Third Course and Dessert

**FORUM:**

- 1) What study, or food, do you wish to write about? If you end up changing it, that's fine, but this will help us get prepared for the assignment. Use the resources on the lecture page to find them!
- 2) Of the food stories we read from *Today* and *Men's Health*, what is the tone and style like of the language, word choice?

**Class Five: Guest Speaker****READING:**

Online links

Finish Bourdain: discussion on Zoom after guest speaker.

**FORUM:**

**Guest speaker – TBA**

**Reading Week****Class Six: Profiles of chef /interviews****READING:**

1. <https://canadas100best.com/peruvian-food/--structure> for your profile assignment
2. <https://edibletoronto.ediblecommunities.com/food-thought/vegan-coach>
3. <https://edibletoronto.ediblecommunities.com/food-thought/chef-ivana-raca>

**FORUM:**

1. WATCH VIDEO: Daniel Boulud  
<https://thechefsconnection.com/blog/chef-interviews/>

Feel free to use this video to help shape your interview. What story might you use for a possible profile lead?

Copy down two quotes that might add some personality to your pretend story.

2. From the profile stories: tell me your thoughts on the subjects Gaston, Ivana, and Margie.

### **Week seven: Restaurant Reviews**

#### **READINGS:**

1. <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/14/dining/reviews/restaurant-review-guys-american-kitchen-bar-in-times-square.html>
2. <https://www.nydailynews.com/life-style/eats/85-year-old-earnest-review-olive-garden-internet-sensation-article-1.1036629>
3. Online article

#### **FORUM:**

1. Find a statement or two in the Calgary review that is balanced: it is critical but fair?
2. From reading the Guy Fieri review, do you think the reviewer is too mean? Likewise, from the Olive Garden review, is the reviewer too kind? Discuss.

**See assignments for instructions on review: due at the end of the week on the Sunday.**

### **Class Eight: Recipe writing/headnotes**

#### **READING:**

- 1) <https://diannej.com/2010/what-makes-a-recipe-headnote-so-good-you-want-to-rush-into-the-kitchen/>
- 2) PDF's of Julia Child and Nigella Lawson and more

#### **FORUM:**

1. Write a list of how to make your favourite sandwich. Create a method list according to this week's lecture.
2. Write a headnote for the sandwich.

### **Class Nine: Memoir**

#### **READING:**

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/nov/03/ruby-tandoh-the-meaning-of-a-food-memoir>
2. <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/98/01/18/home/fisher-savoring.html>
3. [ONLINE from Anthology](#)

#### **FORUM:**

1. What dish or meal do you plan to make for your memoir and why?
2. What emotions do you feel from reading Fisher's Winter memoir? What do we know about the era, the times, in which it was written?

### **Class 10: Ethics**

#### **READING:**

<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2010/07/food-writing-the-ethics-of-eating-for-free/59016/>

#### **FORUM:**

1. You are a guidebook author for Toronto and you cannot possibly review all the restaurants. You ask your friends for their advice and use some of their words in the reviews. Do you think this is ethical and why or why not?
2. You are friends with the restaurant owner and you're writing a review. The restaurant is terrible. Do you A) ask your editor for another reviewer to do the review as it's a conflict of interest and you don't think you can be impartial? B) tell your friend you're writing an honest review and that they should be prepared for it. C) write a positive review because friendship is more important than anything?

### **Class 11: Working as a food writer**

#### **READING:**

1. <https://www.northernontario.travel/cycling/mountain-bikes-and-microbrews-are-the-perfect-combination?s=>
2. [https://www.thestar.com/life/travel/2010/09/03/hard\\_hills\\_gobs\\_of\\_fat\\_and\\_instant\\_friends\\_in\\_italy.html](https://www.thestar.com/life/travel/2010/09/03/hard_hills_gobs_of_fat_and_instant_friends_in_italy.html)
3. <https://www.themuse.com/advice/how-i-broke-into-food-writing-advice-from-tasting-tables-senior-editor>

#### **FORUM:**

1. What other skills do you have to lend to your food writing? Photography, recipe making etc? What genre of food writing appeals to you? If you wrote a blog, what is your speciality?