

**ENGL 3820 Intermediate Narrative Writing.** M/W 1:25-2:15, GSH 144

Prof. **J. Robert Lennon** / Goldwin Smith 339 / netID **jr124**

Fall 2014 Office Hours: MW mornings by appointment.

Thanks for taking English 3820. This class is an intermediate level fiction workshop. The structure is very simple, and should be familiar to you by now: each week, we'll discuss two or three of your stories, along with one story from the anthology. I may also assign other pieces of outside reading, and experimental writing prompts. Here are the requirements:

- Each student must hand in **30 pages of polished, revised fiction** by the semester's end. There's some wiggle room here; you could hand in ten short-shorts, or one novella, or some combination of lengths. Some of you may be more sparing with your words than others, so confer with me about what is expected of you. The results of the experimental writing prompts may be counted towards this number, and you should feel free to expand them into full-fledged stories, if you wish.
- Each student must sign up to **lead discussion** of a story from the anthology, at least once. This means that you should be prepared to present a mini-lecture, maybe 5 minutes, pointing out noteworthy things in the story that you think we should talk about.
- Each student has to **show up every week, speak in class, and provide written comments** to his/her peers. *You must copy me on the comments.* You should also mark up your peers' manuscripts and hand them back, either on paper or using annotation software.
- Each student must have **at least one conference** with me, to discuss his/her work.
- There is no exam, and I am not going to be doing final portfolios. Final drafts must be handed in by the last day of class, but can be handed in any time before that, as well, and should. If you hand in all your drafts during the last week of classes, they will not get the level of attention you want--so please plan ahead.

I am not a harsh grader, but you'll get a bad grade if you don't take the class seriously. For an A, you should do **detailed revisions** of your work, give and receive advice with **maturity and respect**, and come **well prepared** for class discussions.

**Texts.** The only book you need to buy is *Best American Short Stories 2013*, edited by Elizabeth Strout and Heidi Pitlor. You may buy any format you like, but if you buy a physical copy, I recommend that you get it from Buffalo Street Books in the DeWitt Mall downtown. Call them at (607) 273-8246 to order. The other required text is a free web-based book, *Butterick's Practical Typography* (<http://practicaltypography.com>). Read it at least up through the Text Formatting section, but the whole thing is quite entertaining and useful.

**Class Website.** The syllabus, workshop and discussion signup sheet, assignments and outside readings are always available at <http://jrobertlennon.com/38x0/>.

**Sharing Manuscripts.** If you're up on the chopping block for a Monday, please **email the story to everyone else by Saturday night**. If you're up on a Wednesday, **email the story by Monday night**. A few basic manuscript rules:

- Your name, your netID, my name, and the course number should be on the first page. Also, title your work, even if it's just a working title.
- You **must** include page numbers.
- Your submission should be in the form of a PDF, so that we will all have the same formatting. Your font of choice will be embedded in the PDF. PDFs may be exported from Microsoft Word, Pages, or OpenOffice. Either double-space your manuscript, or use wide margins, so there is room for your peers to write comments on the page, when we print it. I prefer Butterick's Summary of Key Rules for manuscript formatting: <http://practicaltypography.com/summary-of-key-rules.html>
- Your manuscript is a manifestation of your self-presentation as a writer. Make it look awesome.

I allow laptops and tablets in the classroom, because I know some of you prefer to write and edit in the digital realm, and because it's useful to get to consult the internet for quotations, fact-checking, and other references during class. But please, don't abuse this privilege. Quit email and messaging entirely. Turn off notifications and the audio output of your device. Phones should be in airplane mode. I'd like to think that I'm interesting enough to hold your attention, but it's rude and unproductive to allow yourself to be distracted during class.

Thanks and good luck!