

TERM: Spring 2026
COURSE NUMBER & CATEGORY: ENGL 4500: Creative Artistry
COURSE TITLE: Unconventional Fiction
SECTION TIMES/DAYS: MW 1:45-3:25 pm
INSTRUCTOR: Claire Stanford

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS:

As writers, we often say that we need to know the rules in order to break them. This course offers an opportunity to break the so-called “rules” of writing fiction, focusing on experiments in form. We will explore unusual point of view (you/we), experiments in structure (fragment, reverse chronology), atypical modes of dialogue, flash fiction, micro-fiction, and more innovative forms that will help you push your writing further and develop a stronger understanding of the relationship between form and content. Over the course of the semester, we will read and discuss published short fiction that experiments with form, try out different modes of formal innovation with in-class and at-home writing exercises, and engage in a full-class workshop for your own piece of short fiction that builds on one of our formal experiments. We will also consider the sociopolitical stakes of formal experimentation.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Students will understand the characteristics, conventions, and techniques in a genre, form, or mode
- Students will be able to write original work in a genre, form, or mode
- Students will be able to critique peer work

CLASS LEVEL RESTRICTION:

Junior/Senior Only

RECOMMENDED/PREREQUISITES:

N/A

COURSE ATTRIBUTES:

OLD CURRICULUM

- ☐ GENRES (LD)
- ☐ HISTORIES (LD)
- ☐ AUTHORS (UD)
- ☐ CRITICAL/THEORETICAL (UD)
- ☐ COMPARATIVE (UD)
- ☒ CREATIVE/ARTISTRY

CORE ATTRIBUTES:

N/A

NEW CURRICULUM

- ☐ DISCIPLINARY RESEARCH (LD)
- ☐ HISTORY OF LIT, MEDIA, AND CULTURE (LD)
- ☐ READING AND WRITING GENRES (LD)
- ☐ THEORY, POWER, AND RHETORIC (LD)
- ☐ PRE-1800 (UD)
- ☒ CREATIVE ARTISTRY (UD)
- ☐ RACE, INTERSECTIONALITY, AND POWER (UD)
- ☐ UPPER-DIVISION ELECTIVE (UD)
- ☐ 5000-LEVEL SEMINAR (UD)