I. ASCRC General Education Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group IV Expressive Arts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dept/Program</td>
<td>Applied Arts and Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course #</td>
<td>WTS 185A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Title</td>
<td>Beginning Creative Writing: Fiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prerequisite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. Endorsement/ Approvals

Complete the form and obtain signatures before submitting to Faculty Senate Office

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please type / print name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>Alternating Faculty (Coordinator: Mark Medvetz)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone / Email</td>
<td>7904/mark.medvetz@umontana.edu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Chair</td>
<td>Cathy Corr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>Barry Good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III. Description and purpose of the course: General Education courses must be introductory and foundational. They must emphasize breadth, context, and connectedness; and relate course content to students’ future lives: See Preamble: http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/gened/GEPreamble_final.htm

This is a beginning writing workshop focused on the reading, discussion, and revision of students’ short fiction. As well as constructing their own stories, students will read a variety of published fiction representing various styles and approaches to the genre. As they begin to develop their own work, students will examine and utilize a variety of fiction techniques. Upon completion of the course students should be able to articulate constructive criticism, both verbally and in writing, of their own work as well as the work of peers.

While developing their own goals as writers, students will be introduced to ways of exploring and documenting the human experience through creative writing in multiple genres. Additionally, students should begin to develop an awareness of their participation in the creative arts as a reader and writer in the context of creative writing as a means of communicating in both local and global communities.

IV. Criteria: Briefly explain how this course meets the criteria for the group. See: http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/ASCRCx/Adocuments/GE_Criteria5-1-08.htm

Courses guide students, whether in individual or group settings, to acquire foundational skills to engage in the creative process and/or in interpretive performance. Through direct experience (for example, attendance and involvement with live performance, exhibitions, workshops, and readings), they will engage in critical assessment of their own work and the work of others.

While composing their own works of fiction and while reading and critiquing peer work, students will examine the genre of fiction, both as readers and writers. Specific topics will include techniques of fiction and its various styles and approaches. In the workshop environment, students will develop critical-thinking skills by way of reading and commenting on a peer’s works in progress.
**V. Student Learning Goals:** Briefly explain how this course will meet the applicable learning goals. See: [http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/ASCRCx/Adocuments/GE_Criteria5-1-08.htm](http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/ASCRCx/Adocuments/GE_Criteria5-1-08.htm)

| Students will express themselves in the making of an original work or creative performance; | While composing their own works of fiction and while reading and critiquing peer work, students will examine the genre, both as readers and writers. Students will end the semester with a portfolio of original work. |
| Students will understand the genres and/or forms that have shaped the medium | Students will be introduced to models of form and technique, and, through their own writing and reading, they will begin to evaluate tangible and abstract concepts involving issues of form and technique. |
| Student will critique the quality of their own work and that of others. | Within a workshop forum, students will gain experience to articulate constructive criticism, both verbally and in writing, of their own work as well work of peers. |

**VII. Syllabus:** Paste syllabus below or attach and send digital copy with form. The syllabus should clearly describe how the above criteria are satisfied. For assistance on syllabus preparation see: [http://teaching.berkeley.edu/bgd/syllabus.html](http://teaching.berkeley.edu/bgd/syllabus.html)
**Creative Writing 185 • Technique and Form in Fiction**

Course Instructor: Azita Osanloo  
Office: The Writing Trailer  
E-mail: azitaosanloo@yahoo.com  
Office Hours: T and TH 11:30-1:00  
Phone: TBA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Description:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In this course, students will read extensively from published fiction and respond from a creative writing perspective, which is to mean a craft-oriented perspective. Writing includes daily exercises aimed at exploring the various techniques of fiction used in the assigned reading. We will engage in active discussion and lecture-demonstrations of both assigned readings and student exercises.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Objectives: To introduce the craft of fiction, specifically the craft of short stories, from a historical perspective with an eye toward developing two skills:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. crafting our own short stories  
2. understanding the techniques and influences over almost two centuries that have developed our understanding of the modern short story |

This course will be dedicated toward reading a variety of short stories and triggering your writing with short exercises. Each story we read in this class will be followed by discussion questions that ask not *What does this story mean?* but *How does this story work?* Learning to read as a writer involves focusing on craft, the choices and techniques an author chooses to employ in his or her fiction. Read the way a young architect looks at a building or the way a medical student watches an operation. Both watch devotedly, hoping to learn from a master; both are critical too, alert for any possible mistake. Weekly writing exercises, both in-class and for homework, will be the result of your study. Ask yourself as you read: what is memorable, effective, moving? Re-read, if possible, watching for the techniques that produced those reactions in you. *Why did the author choose to begin at this point? Why did s/he make this choice of imagery, setting, ending? What gives this scene tension? What makes me feel sympathetic?* You can also learn from stories that don’t personally move you—how would you have handled the same material, and what would have changed with your approach? Be greedy from your own viewpoint as an author: *What techniques, from this story can I learn/imitate/steal?*

While the first half of this course will be devoted toward reading stories from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, the second half will focus on more contemporary short fiction, including a detailed reading of *CivilWarLand in Bad Decline* by George Saunders (who will give a reading here in April). During this second half, we will also focus on your short stories in a workshop setting wherein students present their own creative work for critique and discussion by their classmates. Rather than focusing merely on the “good” or “bad” aspects of a draft, we will work toward attempting to understand a writer’s intentions and presenting critiques with an aim toward helping a specific piece of writing live up to those intentions.

While one of our main objectives in this class is to study the development of the short story craft from a historical perspective, it goes without saying that a semester’s worth of reading barely scratches the surface of the effects the short story has had on literature. My hope is that our study will trigger further reading, writing and, above all, curiosity from you.
Course Outcomes

An outcomes statement describes what students should strive to acquire by the end of semester. Upon completion of this course, students working as both writers and critical readers, should be able to:

- develop a variety of strategies to write short pieces of fiction
- develop a variety of strategies to read, analyze, and comprehend a diverse selection of texts within the genre
- examine the use of general and genre-specific literary components and techniques
- approach and appreciate a literary text that reflects a particular intellectual or literary tradition
- approach and appreciate a literary text that presents and/or reflects an author’s literary concerns as well as others such as the political and the social
- construct and support a critical interpretive response to a literary text constructed by peers

Required Texts and Materials:

*Great American Short Stories*, edited by Wallace and Mary Stegner
*The Vintage Book of Contemporary American Short Stories*, edited by Tobias Wolff
Notebook and folder for in-class writings, responses and handouts
Something to electronically save your work (floppy disk, USB drive, etc.)

Course Workload and Final Portfolio:

- Regular attendance and active participation (see below under “Course Policies”)
- Daily reading and writing assignments (all writing assignments must be typed on a computer)
- Daily in-class writing and responses to reading
- One story or a portion of a story for class workshop (the number of pages we will workshop will depend on how much time we have)
- Typed critiques on students’ stories for class workshop

- Final Portfolio, which will include one revised short story and one revised exercise (Note: There will also be a short final exam for this class. Portfolios will be due in my office on the day of the final.)

Course Policies:

- I will allow only 2 excused absences for the semester (keep in mind those 2 absences equal one week’s worth of class).
- Regardless of the reason, your final grade will drop one-half grade with each absence after 2 (Example: you finish the class with an A-, but you’ve missed 3 classes. You’re final grade is a B+, no questions asked.).
- After 6 absences, you will automatically receive a NO CREDIT (regardless of whether or not you continue coming to class).
- If you must miss class, it is your responsibility to get notes and assignments from a classmate before the next class session. (Please do not come to my office and say, “I’m sorry I missed class, please tell me everything you did.” This requires me to repeat lecture notes usually at a time when I’m either preparing for our next class or meeting with a student who already attended class that day).
- Absence is not a viable excuse for missing work. For example, if you miss class on Tuesday, on Thursday you must turn in both Tuesday’s homework and Thursday’s homework in order to receive credit.
- If you miss one or both the classes during the first week of the semester, you must see me during office hours or risk being automatically dropped from the class.
• Please respect the classroom space and classroom participants by making every effort to arrive on
time. Late arrivals disrupt the momentum of class. Therefore, if you are more than 10 minutes late,
you will be marked tardy. **Two tardies equal one absence.**

• All reading and writing work must be completed before class. Under no circumstances (including
absence and computer malfunction) do I accept late work.

• If either the daily reading and/or writing assignment is not completed, you will be marked absent for
the day regardless of whether or not you choose to stay (How can you really be present if you’ve done
none of the work to contribute?)

• **Active participation** is a requirement of this course and if you choose not to participate, it will lower
your grade substantially. As you will see, this is a course that honors words above all and asks you to
put your words (in written and verbal form) before the scrutiny of others and without your
participation this class may as well not even exist. If you are shy, this is an excellent opportunity to
overcome your fears. You do not need to speak eloquently. Be thoughtful, honest and open. Be
prepared to listen and learn from your classmates, especially from those whose attitudes and
perspectives differ from yours.

Participation is verbal interaction in class and is not synonymous with your attendance; everyone is
expected to speak in class during discussion and you are required to respect the contributions of your
peers. If you participate in a manner that is aggressive or unnecessarily critical; if you continually
interrupt others, ridicule others verbally or non-verbally (rolling your eyes, napping, talking out of
turn, whispering, snickering, reading a newspaper or book or magazine), you will be asked to leave
the room and marked absent for the day.

**Grading:**
Your final grade is based on the following elements: attendance, class participation, written responses to
reading, quality of daily writing assignments and workshops, quality of written critiques, quality of the
final portfolio and the final exam. If, at any time during the semester, you would like more information
on grading or on your grade in particular, please do not hesitate to contact me during office hours.

**Office Hours:**
I encourage you to visit with me during the office hours mentioned above throughout the semester.
While I can’t re-invent any wheels during office hours, I can certainly get to know you better and
understand any concerns you might have regarding this class or college in general. In my experience,
there is a mutual benefit when students and professors meet to discuss writing. First, when you explain
your ideas to me, I have a better understanding of what I might read in your writing. Second, in talking
through your ideas, you further clarify them. Third, you can anticipate possible questions your potential
readers might have with your story ideas. Office hours also provide a free forum to discuss more general
questions. For example, do you have grammar trouble? Are you shy or hesitant to speak in class? Do
you procrastinate? Do you have trouble coming up with story ideas? Come in during office hours and
we can discuss these issues together.

**Honor System:**
According to the course catalog, “the Honor System maintains a high standard of integrity in all
academic work, under the basic assumption that all work submitted is the sole and original product of
the individual student. The System respects the student’s ability to maintain this standard and
encourages the further development of this ability.” This class will follow all requirements and
stipulations of the University of Montana Honor System. For more information, refer to the document
*Student Regulations, Policies, and Procedures*.

*Professor reserves the right to add to or amend the syllabus.*
*Please note: As an instructor of a general education course, you will be expected to provide sample assessment items and corresponding responses to the Assessment Advisory Committee.