



COURSE UNIT (MODULE) DESCRIPTION

Course unit (module) title	Code
Creative writing: poetry, short story and flash fiction	

Lecturer(s)	Department(s) where the course unit (module) is delivered
Coordinator: Dr Davide Castiglione Other(s):	English Philology Faculty of Philology

Study cycle	Type of the course unit (module)
BA programme, semester 6	selective

Mode of delivery	Period when the course unit (module) is delivered	Language(s) of instruction
Lectures and seminars	Autumn Semester	English

Requirements for students	
Prerequisites: Courses in stylistics, modern and contemporary literature	Additional requirements (if any): English (C1)

Course (module) volume in credits	Total student's workload	Contact hours	Self-study hours
5	150	32	118

Purpose of the course unit (module): programme competences to be developed
<p>The purpose of the course is not teaching creativity itself or necessarily developing hidden talents (although desirable, this would be too presumptuous an aim), but more concretely that of practicing various forms of non-academic writing. The focus will be on three genres: poetry, short story and flash fiction. By the end of the course, students will submit a 2000-word portfolio of their own texts written in these genres and a 700-word self-reflective report in which they go through their creativity process in retrospect and in a personal manner. They will also have to show they have provided meaningful, written feedback to some of their peers.</p> <p>The course is divided into two parts: in the former students will choose <u>what</u> to write about (<i>inventio</i>, in classical rhetoric); in the latter, they will learn <u>how</u> to put these themes into words, paying special attention to sequencing and craft (<i>dispositio+elocutio</i>). Throughout the course, the tutor will also share his experience, from finding inspiration to drafting and polishing a poem, receiving feedback from others and submitting his work to publishers and magazines. There will also be three workshops with invited guests (a poet, a story-teller, a publisher/editor).</p> <p><u>Generic competences:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Responsibility</u>: completing the assigned writing and reading tasks ahead of the seminars, attending the seminars, asking questions, posing problems, monitoring one's learning process;• <u>Cooperation</u>: receiving and providing constructive feedback to peers, appreciating the insights that derive from the process; showing interest in others' works, encouraging them to improve further;• <u>Problem solving</u>: finding the best way to translate an idea or experience into language requires considering various possibilities and alternatives and choose the most appropriate one; in other words, creative writing is a problem solving activity demanding deep personal engagement• <u>Planning</u>: completing a longer piece of writing typically requires careful planning, time and resource management; students will work their way from short texts (e.g., descriptions, dialogues) to increasingly longer, heterogeneous ones according to a realistic plan;• <u>Openness to change</u>: in all likelihood, not all the students will have engaged in creative writing prior taking this course; doing so will be both a novelty and a fresh challenge for them. Even those who are already used to writing creatively may initially find it intimidating to share their work with the rest of the class. As a consequence,

openness to change is both an attitudinal prerequisite and a personal trait that the course will help developing.

Subject-specific competences:

- Students will learn to write regularly so as to overcome the writer's block and gain self-confidence;
- will enhance planning skills and perseverance through the writing of longer pieces (e.g., short stories, long poems, drama pieces);
- will practice introspection, focus and observation through the writing of short forms (e.g., aphorisms, flash-fiction, epigrams, haiku, song lyrics);
- will learn to provide and receive constructive criticism with a view of improving their own's and others' writing;
- will practice a variety of literary techniques (e.g., description, dialogue, characterisation, pace and rhythm, metaphors and imagery, imitation of poetic forms and genres, cut-up and collage);
- will produce original creative work, either in prose or verse or a mixture of the two;
- will enrich their vocabulary, especially for descriptive purposes or for purposes of characterisation;
- will critically reflect on their own craft and creative process;
- will learn about opportunities to publish and meet experienced writers;
- will be able to transfer the creative writing skills onto non-literary contexts (e.g., advertisement, speeches)

Teaching and learning methods	Assessment methods
Short introductory lectures to practices, techniques, genres; reading assignments; hands-on seminars with individual as well as group tasks (e.g., manipulating viewpoint through role-plays, re-writing story endings, continuing or completing dialogues, writing about everyday objects, conforming to/subverting literary manifestoes, writing parodies and imitations); workshops with invited guests.	Assessment of written work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of feedback to peers (20%, optional) • 2000-word portfolio (60%, compulsory) • 700-word self-reflective report (20%, compulsory)

Content: breakdown of the topics	Contact hours							Self-study work: time and assignments	
	Lectures	Tutorials	Seminars	Exercises	Laboratory work	Internship/work placement	Contact hours	Self-study hours	Assignments
1. Overview of the course. Introduction to creative writing. Probing the students' motivation, discussing their earlier attempts at creative writing, if relevant. Overcoming the writer's block.	2						2	7	Students start to keep a notebook/diary
2. WHAT: the existing tradition. Overview of genres and themes in literature.	1		1				2	7	Students select one theme that resonates with them and one that feels alien; write an informal draft/plan
3. WHAT: the individual talent. Blend your theme with notes from personal diaries, lived experiences, eavesdropping, personal insights	1		1				2	7	Students rework the chosen themes in light of their notebook/diary
4. HOW: three genres: poetry, short story, flash fiction. Overview of the genres (e.g., form, purpose, characteristics).	1		1				2	7	Students translate their drafts into each genre (2x3 = 6 texts)
5. HOW: poetry. Metrical vs. free verse. Rhymes, elements of sounds. Metaphors and associative writing. Proverbial truths (aphorisms).	1		1				2	7	Students enrich their poems with the devices learned

6. HOW: poetry. Imitation and parody exercises based on an anthology of canonical poems (covering: ballads, sonnets, haiku, riddle, epigram, ekphrasis, sestina)	1		1				2	7	Students choose one sub-genre and write an imitation/parody
7. WORKSHOP with local poet			2				2	7	Open session – tips and advice from local published poet. Students prepare questions beforehand.
8. HOW: short story. Character-building and description. Examples from literature.	1		1					7	Students describe their favourite characters from books/movies/TV series following the schema provided (social role, gender/ethnicity/culture, personal traits).
9. HOW: short story. Narrative pace. Experiments with time. The use of description to slow down time; retelling the same event with different tempos. Historical present vs. simple past.	1		1				1	7	Students experiment with time; rewrite their short story draft in different tempos
10. HOW: short story. Tellability. The point of narration. Infer the ‘point’ or interpretation from a set of short stories. Give a ‘point’ to your own story.	1		1				2	7	Students reflect on the ‘message’ or ‘point’ implicit in their story
11. HOW: short story. Dialogue. Constructing a natural dialogue. Categories of speech and thought presentation. Examples from literature. Elements of conversation analysis.	1		1				2	7	Students record a casual conversation (‘eavesdropping’) or their own facebook chats. Then they turn it in a fictional piece by twisting it
12. WORKSHOP with local writer			2				2	7	Open session – tips and advice from local published writer. Students prepare questions beforehand.
13. HOW: flash fiction. Characteristics. A hybrid between poetry and short story. Consonances with personal narratives. Examples from literature.	1		1				1	7	Students derive a piece of flash fiction from their short story, making it elliptical / absurdist
14. HOW: flash fiction. Writing practice.	1		1				2	7	Further writing practice.
15. HOW: polishing and editing your writing. Examples of revisions from famous writers. Peer-assessment. Share the drafts of your portfolio and self-reflective report to the tutor.			2				2	13	Students read their texts out loud, make changes to enhance their meaning/rhythm.
16. WORKSHOP with editor of local magazine/publishing house			2				8	7	Open session – tips and advice from editor of magazine or publishing house. Students prepare questions beforehand.
Total	13		19				32	118	

Assessment strategy	Weight, %	Deadline	Assessment criteria
Provision of feedback to peers (optional)	20	Mid-term (28 Oct)	- Quantity and quality of comments and edits – 70% - Ability to tactfully convey constructive criticism – 30%
2000-word portfolio (consisting of poems, short stories or flash fictions, or a combination of them) (compulsory)	60	End of term (13 Jan)	- Style and quality of writing (e.g., command of literary techniques, patterning, rhythm, pace, variation) – 25% - Understanding of genre functions (e.g., conformity to genre structure or meaningful departure from it) – 25% - Originality (e.g., deviation from stock motifs, mixing styles and genres, refreshing perspective) – 25% - Ability to engage the reader (intellectually, emotionally, aesthetically) – 25% PASS is set at 31/60 pts.
700-word self-reflective report (compulsory)	20	End of term (13 Jan)	- Generation of insights – 33% - Demonstration of self-critical skills – 33% - Personal tone reflecting the creative experience/process – 34% PASS is set at 9/20 pts. OVERALL PASS is set at 48/100 pts. insofar as both the portfolio and the report reach the minimum score for a pass Table of conversion: 93-100 = 10; 85-92 = 9; 75-84 = 8; 65-74 = 7; 64-55 = 6; 54-48 = 5

Retake policy

The retake can involve either the portfolio or the report or both, depending on the part that has been failed according to the thresholds indicated above. The retake will take place in the first half of February 2023.

The policy applies to home students and international students alike. Exceptional cases/circumstances need to be discussed directly with the lecturer well in advance of the end of the course.

Retakes are only allowed for students failing the exam, not to improve one's grade. See section above for the minimum score required for a pass.

Author	Year of publication	Title	Issue of a periodical or volume of a publication	Publishing place and house or web link
Compulsory reading				
Cosgrove, Shady	2018	Controlling the Clock – how showing and telling impact time in short-short fiction	<i>New Writing</i>	https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14790726.2019.1566369
Dufresne, John	2018	<i>Flash! Writing the Very Short Story</i>		W. W. Norton & Company
Hanauer, David	2010	<i>Poetry as Research: Exploring Second Language Poetry Writing</i>		John Benjamins
Kroll, J. and G. Harper (eds)	2013	<i>Research Methods in Creative Writing</i>		Palgrave Macmillan.
Scott, Jeremy	2013	<i>Creative Writing and</i>		Palgrave Macmillan

		<i>Stylistics: Creative and Critical Approaches.</i>		
Optional reading				
Boland, Eavan & Strand, Mark (eds.)	2001	<i>The Making of a Poem: A Norton Anthology of Poetic Forms</i>		W. W. Norton & Company
Carter, Ronald	2011	<i>Language and Creativity. The Art of Common Talk.</i>		Routledge
Culpeper, Jonathan	2001	<i>Language and characterisation in Plays and Texts</i>		Routledge
Goldberg, Natalie	1986	<i>Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within</i>		Shambhala Publications
Jordan-Baker, Craig	2018	Language, landscape and setting	<i>New Writing</i>	https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14790726.2019.1574837
Mayers, Tim	2016	Creative Writing Studies: the Past Decade (and the Next)	<i>Journal of Creative Writing Studies</i> 1:1	https://scholarworks.rit.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1009&context=jcws
Nicholes, Justin	2017	Measuring Writing Engagement and Emotional Tone in L2 Creative Writing: Implications for Interdisciplinarity	<i>Journal of Creative Writing Studies</i> 2:1	https://scholarworks.rit.edu/jcws/vol2/iss1/2
Toolan, Michael	2009	<i>Narrative Progression in the Short Story</i>		John Benjamins