

EN 6779 3.0 Seminar-Workshop in Creative Writing: Fiction

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Along with matters of craft -- language, character, drama, figure, structure -- this course considers questions that confront writers of contemporary literary fiction. Readings will be drawn from a range of fiction and critical works, spanning regions and genres. We'll try to think precisely *about realism in fiction and its persistence as a mode of presentation and understanding*, and we'll consider how its conventions are challenged by other ways of telling: experimental writing, speculative stories, nondominant traditions, and newly emerging forms. Other questions: How do we explore the implications of writing on the border between invention and private reality? Where does the factual meet the fictional, and how has this distinction become harder to mark? How do we engage creatively with a world in crisis?

In the context of these matters, and of readings of fiction and critical nonfiction, students will write creative and critical work. Typically, this would be a work of short fiction or part of a novel (4,000-6,000 words), and a short critical paper (1500-2000 words). In-class work will take the form of workshops or seminars.

Tentative Readings:

Readings are likely to include essays or fiction by Chimimanda Ngozi Adichie, Elif Batuman, Billy-Ray Belcourt, Roberto Bolaño, Anna Burns, Anne Carson, Teju Cole, Don DeLillo, Amitav Ghosh, Mohsin Hamid, Robert Hass, Ben Lerner, Gerald Murnane, Maggie Nelson, Patricia Lockwood, Zadie Smith, and others.