

# Short Story Writing

**This is a sample syllabus. Actual course topics and assignments may vary by instructor and class.**

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## **Week 1**

Introduction to class. Basic elements of effective short fiction. Creating strong characters and scenes.

Assignment: Choose from a list of writing exercises and write a scene.

## **Week 2**

Plot. Successful dramatic narrative tension. How to create effective plots and narrative tension that pulls your reader along.

Assignment: Submit a synopsis for the two short stories you want to work on in this class. As you map out your story, keep in mind plot and dramatic tension. Ask yourself how does the protagonist change by the end of the story?

## **Week 3**

Point of view. A review of different point-of-view strategies and how they are most effectively used in the form of a short story.

Assignment: Post an excerpt of one of your short stories (two to four pages), which clearly illustrates the point of view of your narrative. Consider using a point of view that you haven't written in before.

## **Week 4**

Dialogue. Learning to listen to your characters and how to write authentic dialogue.

Assignment: Post your first complete short story, employing authentic dialogue when possible. Story length should be between seven to twelve pages.

## **Week 5**

Overview of types of short fiction, including experimental short fiction.

Assignment: Go to the bookstore or library and review the literary magazine selection. Select at least one literary magazine where you could see your work published. Post your second short story (between seven and twelve pages in length).

## **Week 6**

Short-fiction marketplace. An overview of the online and print markets for short stories.

Assignment: Revise both your stories, and post a cover letter that you plan to send along with each story when submitting to literary magazines.