

# HUMS 648

## TAKING THE PLUNGE: A NOVEL WRITING WORKSHOP

### WRITING

**Twice** during the semester each student will be responsible for handing in one chapter (approx. 15-25 pages) of a novel-in-progress for workshop discussion. Additionally, each student will be asked to present a rough outline and a synopsis of the envisioned novel.

All work is to be typed, double spaced. Each student is responsible for supplying each member of the class with a copy of the outline, synopsis, and two chapters. We will establish a **fixed** schedule for “workshopping” the chapters of the student novels. The novel chapters are to be photocopied and distributed (or emailed) one week prior to the date the material is to be discussed.

### READING

*Ethan Frome*, by Edith Wharton  
*The End of the Affair*, by Graham Greene  
*Lucky Jim*, by Kingsley Amis  
*Ordinary Love & Good Will*, by Jane Smiley  
*Bel Canto*, by Ann Patchett  
*On Chesil Beach*, by Ian McEwan  
*Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft*, by Janet Burroway

Please note that the way in which we read and discuss the novels will be quite different from what transpires in literature classes. We will be **using** these very different works of art, attempting to rend them for technical information rather than meaning.

**Reading assignments will be given at each class meeting. If you should miss a class, please contact another student about the reading assignment.**

### HELP

Writing is a solitary pursuit. Writing a novel can be frighteningly isolating. If you need to talk through the maddening number of potentialities that exist in crafting a very, very long story, please, let me know. I'm happy to arrange to meet before class and/or talk with you over the phone.

## **PARTICIPATION**

This class will be run as a workshop. The learning environment is more communal than in most academic courses. As a member of this cooperative, each student is entitled to a careful and considerate reading of his or her work. Along with that entitlement comes an obligation. Everyone is expected to be fully present in class, to arrive at the table having read and considered the work to be discussed that day. **You will be responsible for a detailed written commentary on each of your fellow students' manuscripts. Your job in this course is to function as both writer and editor.**

## **GRADING**

**Given the structure of this course, attendance and class participation are crucial.**

**If you miss more than one class, your grade will be reduced by five points (e.g., a B becomes a B-). If you miss 2 classes, your grade will be reduced by 10 points, and so on. If attendance is problematic for you, you could easily end up with a failing grade in this course.**

**Class participation will count for 40% of your total grade. Each student is expected to come to class ready and willing to share her/his ideas on what is to be discussed that day.**