

ENGLISH 312/001

Professor Mark Brazaitis

Office: 219 Colson Hall

Office telephone: 304-293-9707

Office Hours: Thursdays 3 to 4 p.m. and by appointment

Email: Mark.Brazaitis@mail.wvu.edu

Class Hours: Thursdays 4 to 6:50 p.m.

Class Location: Clark Hall 320

Objective: In this class, you will learn how to become a better fiction writer. To become a better fiction writer, you must dedicate yourself to both writing and reading fiction, and this class will allow you to do both.

Writing requirements: Over the course of the semester, you will read more than a dozen short stories and two novels and write three short stories (plus a revision of one of these). In addition, you will be evaluated on the written feedback you give to your classmates.

Quizzes: Whenever a published short story or novel is assigned, you will be quizzed on it. This brief, objective quiz is designed to give credit to students who do the reading and to encourage everyone to participate in class discussions about the works we read. Although there will be no make-up quizzes, your worst quiz score, including a quiz you might have missed, will be eliminated. If you are unable to attend a class and you would like credit for the quiz, you may email me (as an attachment) a 250-word summary of the reading before class.

Texts: *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (James M. Cain); *I'm Thinking of Ending Things* (Iain Reid); *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* (Daniyal Mueenuddin); and *Interpreter of Maladies* (Jhumpa Lahiri).

Grades: Grades in this class will be based on the following: quizzes (20 percent), feedback given to fellow students (10 percent); short stories (60 percent); revision of short story (10 percent).

Attendance: You are expected to attend all classes. If you miss more than three classes, it's a problem. If you miss more than five classes, you will be in danger of failing the class.

Extra credit: You may attend and write a one-page review of one or both of the "special events" listed below. A review consists of a summary of the event as well as your opinion of the event. (Please type your review. It should be between 1 and 2 pages.) The extra credit assignment counts for four extra points on one of your stories.

Note on your writing: You are expected to produce quality *literary* writing. Please, no genre writing (science fiction, romance, horror, fantasy) unless that writing features three-dimensional characters. The world you create in your fiction doesn't necessarily

have to be realistic but your characters must be human (or anthropomorphic) and complex.

Class Schedule and Day-to-Day Assignments

Thursday, August 22. The essentials of good fiction writing.

Thursday, August 29 Read: Pages 1 to 110 in *I'm Thinking of Ending Things* by Iain Reid.

Thursday, September 5 Read: Pages 111 to the end of *I'm Thinking of Ending Things* by Iain Reid.

Thursday, September 12 Read: *The Postman Always Rings Twice* by James M. Cain.

Thursday, September 19: No class—writing day.

Thursday, September 26: **Due**: Your first story, with enough copies for everyone in the class (approximately 15—I will give an updated number by September 12). Your story must be between **5 and 15 pages**, typed and double spaced. Read: “Nawabdin Electrician” and “Our Lady of Paris” by Daniyal Mueenuddin in *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* and “A Temporary Matter” and “When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine” by Jhumpa Lahiri in *Interpreter of Maladies*.

Special Event: Monday, September 30 — writer Megan Steilstra will read at 7:30 p.m. in the Milano Reading Room of WVU's downtown campus.

Thursday, October 3: Workshop

Thursday, October 10: No class – fall break.

Thursday, October 17: Workshop

Special Event: Monday, October 21 — writer Silas House will be reading at 7:30 p.m. in the Milano Room of WVU's downtown library.

Thursday, October 24: Workshop Read: “Saleema” and “About a Burning Girl” by Daniyal Mueenuddin in *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* and “Interpreter of Maladies” and “A Real Durwan” by Jhumpa Lahiri in *Interpreter of Maladies*. **Due**: Your second story, with enough copies for everyone in the class. It must be between **5 and 15 pages**, typed and double spaced. Lecture: Flash fiction

Thursday, October 31: Workshop

Thursday, November 7: Workshop

Thursday, November 14: Workshop

Thursday, November 21: Due: Your third story, with enough copies for everyone in the class. It must be between **3 and 5** pages, typed and double spaced.

Saturday, November 23 through Sunday, December 1 —Fall Recess – Enjoy!

Thursday, December 5: Workshop

Thursday, December 12: Workshop

Monday, December 16: Due: revision of one of the three works you submitted. Please email it to me as an attachment by midnight.

Inclusivity Statement

The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in your classes, please advise your instructors and make appropriate arrangements with [the Office of Accessibility Services](https://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu/).
(<https://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu/>)

More information is available at the [Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](https://diversity.wvu.edu/)
(<https://diversity.wvu.edu/>) as well.

Important Telephone Numbers

1. [911](tel:911) (9-911 from campus phones)
2. Department of Public Safety / Campus Police: [\(304\) 293-2677](tel:(304)293-2677)
3. Environmental Health and Safety: [\(304\) 293-3792](tel:(304)293-3792)
4. Health Sciences Safety Office: [\(304\) 293-6924](tel:(304)293-6924)
5. Carruth Center for Counseling and Psychological Services: [\(304\) 293-4431](tel:(304)293-4431)
6. Faculty-Staff Assistance Program: [\(304\) 293-5590](tel:(304)293-5590)
7. Parents Club Hotline: [1 \(800\) 988-0096](tel:1(800)988-0096)
8. Student Health Service: [\(304\) 285-7200](tel:(304)285-7200)

Student Emergencies Numbers

In the event of emergencies involving WVU students, students and parents should contact the Office of Campus and Community Life at [\(304\) 293-5611](tel:3042935611).

If the emergency occurs outside normal business hours (Monday-Friday, 8:15 am – 4:45 pm), please call the Department of Public Safety at [\(304\) 293-3136](tel:3042933136) where someone is on call 24 hours a day.