

ENGLISH 618A

Professor Mark Brazaitis

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9-9:50 a.m., and by appointment

Email: Mark.Brazaitis@mail.wvu.edu

Class Hours: Monday 7-9:50 p.m.

Class Location: 223 Colson Hall

Objective: In this class, you will learn 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.

Requirements: Over the course of the semester, you will read a novel (Lionel Shriver's *The Post-Birthday World*), stories from three collections (Carmen Maria Machado's *Her Body and Other Parties*, Ashley Wurzbacher's *Happy Like This*, and Daniel Alarcón's *The King is Always Above the People*), and other work.

Grades: Grades will be based on the effort you put into all aspects of the class. I expect everyone to earn an 'A.' If you are doing less than 'A' work, I will let you know.

Submitting Work: Your stories (or novel chapters) are due a week before they are critiqued and will be handed out in class. You should make photocopies for everyone in the class and your instructor. If you fail to hand in your story on time, it's your responsibility to get your story to your instructor and your classmates well ahead of the next class. (Emailing your story is not acceptable). If you miss a class during which stories are handed out, please contact the author about getting the story. You may turn in a maximum of thirty pages per submission period (as long as it is a continuous work—i.e. a very long story or a series of novel chapters). You may turn in three short-shorts (1500 words or fewer) at a time.

Feedback on Your Peers' Work: You should provide a page or so of typed (12 point) comments on each piece you critique. In-text comments are helpful and appreciated but not required. Your comments should be professional, courteous, and clear. Should workshop members fail to provide adequate feedback, or should the feedback fail to be professional, courteous, and clear, a system of undergraduate-style grading of feedback will be implemented.

Workshop Method: Do not address the writer by name. Refer to the writer as "the writer" or "the author." When called on, be prepared to offer one positive comment (what you thought was effective about the work) and one suggestion (what could be improved in the work and how). Do your best not to repeat the comments of your classmates.

Your Work: I would love to read everything you've ever written. Unfortunately, I have to restrict myself to what you submit to this class. Exception: if you've asked me to chair or serve on your thesis committee.

Class Schedule and Day-to-Day Assignments

Monday, January 13 Introductions - Writing exercise – Practice Workshop – Course Expectations

Monday, January 20 No class – Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Monday, January 27 Workshop Read: “The Husband Stitch” in *Her Body and Other Parties* and “Ripped” in *Happy Like This*.

Monday, February 3 Workshop Read: “The Thousands” and “The Battle of Rocky Rontal” in *The King is Always Above the People*.

Monday, February 10 Workshop Read: “Inventory” in *Her Body and Other Parties* and “Fake Mermaid” in *Happy Like This*.

Monday, February 17 Workshop Read: “The Provincials” in *The King is Always Above the People*.

Monday, February 24 Workshop Read: “Mothers” in *Her Body and Other Parties* and “Happy Like That” in *Happy Like This*.

Monday, March 2 Workshop Read: “Republica and Grau” in *The King is Always Above the People*.

Monday, March 9 Workshop Read: “The Resident” in *Her Body and Other Parties* and “Make Yourself at Home” in *Happy Like This*.

March 14 – March 22 Spring break – enjoy!

Monday, March 23 Workshop Read: from the beginning through both chapter 3s in *The Post-Birthday World*.

Monday, March 30 Workshop Read: from chapter 4 through both chapter 5s in *The Post-Birthday World*.

Monday, April 6 Workshop Read: from chapter 6 through both chapter 8s in *The Post-Birthday World*.

Monday, April 13 Workshop Read: from chapter 9 to the end of *The Post-Birthday World*.

Monday, April 20 Workshop Read: “The Auroras” in *The King is Always Above the People*.

Monday, April 27 Workshop Discussion on publishing

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](https://www.wvu.edu/911) (9-911 from campus phones)
2. Department of Public Safety / Campus Police: [\(304\) 293-2677](https://www.wvu.edu/304-293-2677)
3. Environmental Health and Safety: [\(304\) 293-3792](https://www.wvu.edu/304-293-3792)
4. Health Sciences Safety Office: [\(304\) 293-6924](https://www.wvu.edu/304-293-6924)
5. Carruth Center for Counseling and Psychological Services: [\(304\) 293-4431](https://www.wvu.edu/304-293-4431)
6. Faculty-Staff Assistance Program: [\(304\) 293-5590](https://www.wvu.edu/304-293-5590)
7. Parents Club Hotline: [1 \(800\) 988-0096](https://www.wvu.edu/1-800-988-0096)
8. Student Health Service: [\(304\) 285-7200](https://www.wvu.edu/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](https://www.wvu.edu/304-293-5611).

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](https://www.wvu.edu/304-293-3136) where someone is on call 24 hours a day.