

**NYU in Dublin 2006**  
**V41.9185.002 Creative Writing**

**Instructor: Professor Michael Carragher**  
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**Syllabus**

This course proposes to look at creative writing in both its theoretical and practical aspects. Practical work will consist of consideration of students' writing in workshop situations, with subsequent revision in the light of critical evaluation, and will account for 50 percent of the grade, as described in detail below. Illustration of various aspects of the creative writing process will be taken from both student drafts and selections in *The Penguin Book of Irish Fiction*, edited by Colm Tóibín. Students should also try to obtain copies of Ursula Le Guinn's "The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas," widely anthologised, and John McGahern's "Why We're Here," published in his *Collected Stories* (and other collections and anthologies). These readings will also give students a sense of what may make Irish writing distinctive, and give an introduction to the canon of Irish fiction. (To this end, Tóibín's introduction should also be read.) Besides, to be a writer one must read widely.

The aim is to use Mondays to discuss theory, Wednesday to deal with practical workshop-proper aspects of our work, but inevitably a creative writing workshop will depart from strict schedule. The proposed order of dealing with the various aspects of creative writing will be as follows (suggested readings in parentheses):

Week 1: emotion—from the discovery process to the final draft. "The Dead" (379); "Guests of the Nation" (526); "The Country Funeral" (834); ["The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" (889)].

Week 2: character. As above, plus "A Dead Cert" (509); "Kathleen's Field" (732); "Homes on the Mountain" (673); "Music at Annahullion" (758).

Week 3: structure, plot and point of view. "The Dead" (379); "Guests of the Nation" (526); "The Country Funeral" (834); "A Belfast Woman" (767); *The Butcher Boy* (969); *Burning Your Own* (1027); ["A Rose for Emily" (469); "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" (889)].

Week 4: setting, scene and summary. "Home Sickness" (328); "Guests of the Nation" (526); "The Country Funeral" (834); "Homes on the Mountain" (673); "Music at Annahullion" (758); ["The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" (889)].

Week 5: dialogue and voice. *Castle Rackrent* (95); *A Portrait of the Artist* (407); *Tarry Flynn* (544); "Homes on the Mountain" (673); "The Country Funeral" (834); *The Butcher Boy* (969);

Week 6: mood, theme. *Castle Rackrent* (95); *The Picture of Dorian Gray*" (336); *A Portrait of the Artist* (407); "Guests of the Nation" (526); *Tarry Flynn* (544); "Topping" (895); *Cowboys and Indians* (1034).

Grading: all assignments *must* be submitted by the last day of class (August 4). Grade is broken down as follows:

- Creative submission (50%): unless by prior agreement, this will be a prose piece—short story or memoir—long enough to allow for reasonable evaluation of the student's creative merit (say five to ten pages), typed and laid out according to the attached guidelines. *Both first workshop draft and "final" draft must be submitted.*

- Class journal (30%): focus should be on aspects of creative writing as discussed in class, on commentary upon sample stories from the anthology, and on observations upon workshop submissions and critical commentary. The aim should be to show an understanding of the essential elements of creative writing.
- Brief treatise on one's own submission (20%): analysis of how one's story was discovered, developed and re-drafted, with commentary on insights into the creative process thereby gained, and perhaps a conclusion that looks at how the story might be developed further.
- *N.B. Students are expected to carefully prepare their final drafts. Spelling, grammar and usage are expected to be correct.*

**Office hours:** 2:00-3:00, Monday and Wednesday, in the Pavilion, unless alternative arrangements are made.