H3388: Writing Workshop: Fantastical Fiction
Student Syllabus

Saturday 3:00-4:50pm
Room 5-231

Teacher: Nathaniel Bokenkamp
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Description

The focus of this class is on helping you create a work of creative fiction, and improving it through the workshop process. You will also read the work of other students and help them improve as well. We will learn about the concepts of fantastical fiction, and what it means in contrast to realism and other styles.

Workshops

The work you create and the workshops in which we discuss them are the most important parts of the class. For those of you unfamiliar with the workshopping process, in the second class meeting we will discuss the purpose, ideas, and expectations of workshops and conduct a brief model workshop on that day's reading.

Snacks
It is my understanding that there will be some.

Creative Work

In order to hold workshops, we need your creative work to discuss! Your creative works can be in the form of a short story, novel chapter, poem, screenplay, or any other sort of written creative work. Your piece does not have to be in a fantastical genre, but remember that many of our discussions in class will center on that style of work. Try to keep your work to 12 pages or less, so that others have time to read it. Please talk to me if you feel your work needs to be longer than that.

It is very important that you get your work submitted on time, so that I can make copies and hand them out to the class. These deadlines will be spelled out on the workshopping sign-up sheet on the first day of class.

1st class – 4/17
- Introductory lecture on fiction: genre, literary and fantastical.
- **Sign up for workshopping slots**
- Writing exercises: to get you in practice and in the mood for writing.
- **Reading for 4/24:**
  - ➢ **Handout:** "The Second Bakery Attack" by Haruki Murakami
  - ➢ **Handout:** "24 Views of Mount Fuji" by Roger Zelazny
  - ➢ **Handout:** Craft reading (TBD)

2nd class – 4/24
- Workshops: A Workshopping Workshop
  - ➢ **Handout:** Workshopping procedure and example response letter
  - ➢ **Handout:** Basic proofreading and mark-up
- Practice workshop: "The Second Bakery Attack" by Haruki Murakami
- Writing exercises: Tabloid headlines and idea-generation
- **If you are being workshopped on 5/1, your piece needs to be handed in today**
- **Reading for 5/1:**
  - ➢ **Student works**
  - ➢ **Handout:** "Everything Ravaged, Everything Burned" by Wells Tower

3rd class – 5/1
- **Workshopping of student works!**
- Discuss: "Everything Ravaged, Everything Burned" by Wells Tower; characters, emotion, anachronism, and relatability.
- **Reading for 5/8:**
  - ➢ **Student works**
  - ➢ **Handout:** "The Library of Babel" by Jose Luis Borges
- **If you are being workshopped on 5/8, your piece needs to be handed in today**
- Writing exercises: Details, invention, and randomness.

4th class – 5/8
- **Workshopping of student works!**
- Discuss: "The Library of Babel" by Jose Luis Borges; high concepts and plots.
- **If you are being workshopped on 5/15, your piece needs to be handed in today**
- **Reading for 5/15:**
  - ➢ **Student Works**
  - ➢ **Handout:** *Snow Crash*, 1st chapter, by Neal Stephenson

5th class – 5/15
- **Workshopping of student works!**
- Discuss: *Snow Crash*, 1st chapter, by Neal Stephenson; style, voice, and awesomeness.
- Writing exercises: Writing-party-fun-times!

A fantastical reading list
Not for class, just for fun! These are all great reads.

Chris Adrian – *The Children's Hospital*
Chris Adrian – *A Better Angel* (short stories)
Johnathan Lethem – *The Fortress of Solitude*
Michael Chabon – *The Yiddish Policeman's Union*
China Mieville – *Perdido Street Station*
Margaret Atwood – *Oryx and Crake*
William Gibson – *Pattern Recognition*
George R.R. Martin – *A Game of Thrones*
Cormac McCarthy – *The Road*
Jose Luis Borges – *Labyrinths* (short fictions)
Haruki Murakami – *The Elephant Vanishes* (short stories)
Gabriel Garcia Marquez – *100 Years of Solitude*
Kazuo Ishiguro – *Never Let Me Go*
Neal Stephenson – *Anathem*