

2019-20 Umbrella #2: Creative Writing Novella Project

The second creative writing umbrella project involves studying, planning and writing a complete novella that's between 20,000- 26,000 words in 12 pt standard font and margins. Additionally, you are responsible for evaluating peers' novellas as they are in progress. The umbrella project takes place over the course of the entire school year and works directly in tandem with your quarterly contract assignments*.

Quarter 1

During first quarter, there will be a heightened focus on planning and learning the fundamentals of novella-writing.

Meeting 1—Overview of Novellas and Novel-writing & Idea Development

Discuss components of the academic year-long project. Brainstorm plot ideas, central characters, etc.

Meeting 2— By this meeting, basic plot and character ideas should be established. This workshops will walk students through the various narrative and stylistic considerations of their novellas. Treatments will be reviewed. Students will be assigned a treatment for their central novella concept.

Assignment: novella treatment

Meeting 3—Once the basics of the story are developed, the next area of focus is time in fiction. We will review the various ways to handle time, as outlined in *The Art of Time in Fiction*. Once you establish how they want to handle this in your novella, you are encouraged to read the related section in the book.

Assignment: Establish time focus with written rationale

Contract writing: First 15-20 pages of the novella

Quarter 2

Novella Critique Groups: Each student is responsible for reading plot outlines and the first 15-20 pages of group members' novellas.

Workshops:

Advanced Outlining. We will review the idea of scene structure and how it is repeated, etc., within an advanced outline.

Assignment: Develop an advanced outline, drawing from all or some of the ideas from the sample outline and workshop.

Contract writing—This quarter you must complete any necessary revisions to the first 15-20 pages of the novella, as well as write an additional 20-25 pages. By the end of 2nd quarter, each student should have at least **40 pages written**.

Quarter 3

Novella Critique Groups: You will be responsible for reading the most recent part of group members' novellas, from approximately page 20-page 40.

Workshop: Scene and Sequel—This workshop will cover how to move more seamlessly between scenes, covering the succession of conflict and resolution.

Contract writing—You must complete any necessary revisions to the first 40+ pages of the novella, as well as write an additional 25 pages. By the end of 3rd quarter, each student should have at least **60 pages written**.

Quarter 4

Novella Critique Groups: You will be responsible for reading the most recent 20 pages of group members' novellas (within the first three weeks of the quarter).

Workshop: Character study/development & Novella Endings At this point, you need to focus on how to wrap up the novella, which also means you will need to figure out a way to leave the reader with the final impression about the central character's change, growth, etc. Therefore, this workshop will primarily consist of students examining, retrospectively, the path(s) of their character(s), asking: How has the character shifted? Where is the character headed? What is the final impression you want to leave about the character's growth over time?

Contract writing—The novella must be completed at this time; therefore, you must finish any/all remaining pages to wrap up the novella. Students will not receive full credit on the project if the novella isn't completed in its entirety; meaning: just because there 80-90 pages, doesn't mean the novella is complete. It can't leave the reader hanging, not even in cliff -hanger fashion, unless such a technique is central to the narrative.

Final Submission

When you hand in your complete novella in May, it should be a fully edited, clean copy as though it is a polished manuscript for an editor. Your final editor/reviewer will be your supervising creative writing teacher or a hired reader with expertise in novellas. We will review each of the novellas in their entirety during the summer. Other than skimming it for basics and completion requirements, Azar and Moss will not provide comments on the novella until the final review once the novella is complete.

**Unless you choose to do so, you are not required to complete any additional writing, other than the development of your novella, for your contract assignments.*