



ENGL 318/ROST 390

The Writing of Fiction: Writing Rome

John Felice Rome Center

Spring 2025

Tuesdays | 9:00-12:00pm

Professor Elizabeth Farren

Email: efarren@luc.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:00pm (by appointment only)

Course Description

This On-Site, Writing Intensive, Core Course will discuss techniques of fiction writing and offer guidance in generating original fiction that utilizes the city of Rome as inspiration. Students will examine works of literature that reflect the city's vast influence on Western creativity and culture throughout the ages while simultaneously navigating the Eternal City, itself. Students are encouraged to look beyond the veneer of the Rome depicted in travel guides and observe the ways that the Mediterranean city, so thoroughly rooted in history and the concept of "empire", struggles with contemporary European issues. On site classes take place amidst the quintessential intersection of the ancient, medieval, and modern world, inviting students to respond to, participate in, problematize, and incorporate Rome's layered history and influence—as well as their own experience of it—into their prose. Through the studied practice of descriptive writing and the examination of the Rome setting as a vital literary component, students will produce their own fictional interpretations of the Eternal City. (Note: English 318 is an elective for non-English majors and English majors not in the CW Concentration & a requirement for English majors in the CW Concentration.)

Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the technical vocabulary and critical skills necessary for discussing, analyzing and formulating arguments about fiction writing, and will produce a portfolio of their own original fiction. Through experiential learning, students will gain a deeper understanding of the multidimensional and ongoing influence of the city of Rome upon Western culture, history, art, and ideas and, in particular, literature and literary fiction

Knowledge Area(s) satisfied: Artistic Knowledge

Skill(s) Developed: Critical Thinking & Dispositions, Writing

Required Text / Materials

Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft, Janet Burroway – 10th Edition, The University of Chicago Press (ISBN 13: 978-0-226-61669-8/ISBN-10: 0-226-61669-X)

The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone, Tennessee Williams- Vintage Classics (ISBN-10 : 0099288621/ ISBN-13 : 978-0099288626

Assigned Readings posted on Sakai

Optional Text

Call Me By My Name, Andre Aciman—Faber&Faber (ISBN-10 : 9781786495259

ISBN-13 : 978-1786495259

Attendance Policy



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In accordance with the JFRC mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, all courses adhere to the following absence policy. Prompt attendance, preparation and active participation in course discussions are expected from every student.

- For all classes meeting once a week, students cannot incur more than one absence.
- For all classes meeting twice a week, students cannot incur more than two absences.
- For all classes meeting three times a week, students cannot incur more than two absences.

This course meets once a week, thus a total of one unexcused absence(s) will be permitted. **Unexcused absences beyond these will result in 1% lowering of the final course grade, for every absence after the “approved limit.” Unexcused absences beyond these will result in 1% lowering of the final course grade, for every absence after the “approved limit.” The collective health of the JFRC is everyone’s responsibility. DO NOT ATTEND CLASS IF YOU ARE ILL.**

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Assessment Components

- Participation /Preparedness 15%
- Conscientiousness of self-editing 15%
- Homework (Reader Responses & other assignments) 20%
- Final Portfolio (term compilation, between 20-30 pages) 50%

Grading

94-100: A
90-93: A-
87-89: B+
84-86: B
80-83: B-
77-79: C+
74-76: C
70-73: C-
67-69: D+
60-66: D
59 or lower: F

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are unacceptable at the JFRC and will be dealt with in accordance with Loyola University Chicago’s guidelines. Please familiarize yourself with Loyola’s standards here:

http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml. You are responsible to comply with the LUC Student Handbook.

Late or Missed Assignments

Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the authorization of the instructor. ***As per the JFRC academic policies, students who miss any scheduled exam or quiz, including a final exam at the assigned hours will not be permitted to sit for a make-up examination without approval of the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.***

Permission is given rarely and only for grave reason; travel is not considered a grave reason. Make-up exams will only be given for documented absences.

Accessibility Accommodations

Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center requiring academic accommodations should contact the Office of the Dean at the John Felice Rome Center, the first week of classes.

Course Schedule

NB: This is a sample schedule and is subject to change due to the availability of scheduled museum and other unforeseen interruptions. The official schedule will be distributed in class and made available on Sakai.

Friday Class Day: February 14th

<p>Date & Meeting Point For suggested routes to site visits see Sakai</p>	<p>Weekly Readings & Assignments Where indicated, assignments are to be uploaded to Sakai no later than 9:00am on class meeting days. All students must have a JOURNAL. Reader Responses may be written directly into the journal or typed and pasted in. Late assignments will not be accepted. Short stories are available on Sakai.</p>
<p>Week 1: Tues. Jan 21 Meeting Point: JFRC</p>	<p>Week 1: Tues. Jan 21 Class Intro: Descriptive writing, showing not telling, reading like a writer, & looking at “Micro-fiction”.</p>
<p>Week 2: Tues. Jan 28 Meeting Point: Antico Caffè del Teatro Marcello, Via di Teatro Marcello, 42 goo.gl/maps/iiHAWv7T7uo</p>	<p>Week 2: Tues. Jan 28 Homework: Read Ch. 2 Seeing is Believing & Read “Roman Fever” (Wharton, Sakai) & “Twin Beds in Rome” (Updike, Sakai); be prepared to discuss. Reader Response 1). I wish for you to look at the above stories and focus on places where the writer is “showing” and not “telling” and why that is effective. Choose passages from both stories, and write a 1-2 paragraph response for EACH story. Strive to analyze the stories from a writer’s POV and what the writer is doing to show emotions, show mood, and creates atmosphere by deciding which details to include, and which to leave out. Focus on how the reader shows and does not tell. I prefer that you handwrite reader responses into your journal, but if your handwriting is really illegible, you may type, print, and then paste it into your journal. NO AI! If I suspect AI use, you will be forced to redo the assignment and consequences will follow.</p>
<p>Week 3: Tues. Feb 4 Meeting Point: Tiber Island/TRASTEVERE Caffè Tiberino,</p>	<p>Week 3: Tues. Feb 4 Homework: Read Ch. 3 and 4 Characterization Part 1 and 2 (WF); “The Saint” (Garcia Marquez, Sakai) and “Long Distance” (Savas, Sakai) and be prepared to discuss.</p>



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<p>Via Ponte Quattro Capi 17</p> <p>https://goo.gl/maps/d6VhDUADx2R2</p> <p>SNAPSHOT DUE (no. of copies TBA)</p>	<p>Reader Response 2: Consider how character is constructed; what do we see, and what don't we see of the characters? What do we know about each character and what techniques has the author used to show us this? How does dialogue help us understand these people? How are these characters complex 3D people? Write & print snapshots. See Guidelines. Bring copies to class. All creative work must be uploaded to Sakai. Student copies may be single spaced, whereas my copy must be double spaced, single sided, and titled according to MLA standards.</p>
<p>Week 4: Tues. Feb 11 Meeting Point: JFRC</p> <p>Workshop for Snapshots</p>	<p>Week 4: Tues. Feb 11</p> <p>Homework: Peer Reviews of Snapshots: Read & prepare thoughtful, concise critiques for the snapshots. (Typed or by hand, signed.) You will return it to the writer after workshop w/your comments. See guidelines for suggestions about how to approach critiques. Please be prepared to offer both oral & written critiques in class. Everyone is required to participate.</p> <p>*NOTE: I will oversee the quality of responses. If they are unsatisfactory, you will be required to type ALL the responses for the short story workshop & upload them to Sakai for approval. Consider yourselves warned.</p>
<p>Week 4: Fri. Feb 14</p> <p>Meeting Point: Bar Gusto Massimo</p> <p>Via del Circo Massimo, 5</p> <p>https://goo.gl/maps/jpRcQuSdzPB2</p>	<p>Week 4: Fri Feb 14</p> <p>Homework: Ch. 7 Point of View (WF); "Behold the Key" ; (Malamud, Sakai); "Boy in Rome" (Cheever, Sakai). Also, please begin thinking about and planning your "Roman Story."</p> <p>Reader Response 3: Write a two paragraph response on the role of point of view in each story. Answer the following questions: How does the use of first person POV in the Cheever story work successfully for this narration and what does it add (or subtract)? How does the use of third person POV work successfully in the Malamud story, and what does it add or subtract ? Be specific and quote from the text to demonstrate your observations. Please post this in your journal.</p>
<p>Week 5: Tues. Feb 18 NO CLASS</p>	<p>Week 5: Tues. Feb 18 NO CLASS</p>
<p>Week 6: Tues. Feb 25 Meeting Point: Basilica di San Clemente: https://goo.gl/maps/e5NQqoKcgvqzy1Es8</p> <p>READING/WRITING JOURNAL DUE</p>	<p>Week 6: Tues. Feb 25</p> <p>Homework: Ch. 5 Fictional Setting (WF), "The San Clemente Syndrome" (Aciman, Sakai) . NB "The Clemente Syndrome" is a chapter from the longer novel, Call Me By Your Name. You are welcome to purchase and read the novel in its entirety as well, though this is not a requirement. Please continue work on your Roman story.</p> <p>Reader Response 4: "The San Clemente Syndrome". Write a 1 page, approximately 250 word response to the above chapter and how it employs setting. How does the chapter's setting change, alter, and create the narrative</p>



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	<p>(or not)? How does the writer use Rome in this story? How does the writer use setting to transport you to a particular place. Please choose clear textual examples to prove your points. Please post this in your journal. Please post this in your journal. Also, please make sure to bring your journal with you to class, as you will be turning them in today. (I will return them upon return from Fall Break.)</p>
<p>Week 8: Tues. Mar 4</p> <p>Meeting Point: Pepy's Bar, Piazza Barberini 53, (Metro A to Barberini) https://goo.gl/maps/yJumjBdBDehewng87</p> <p>Museum visit: Palazzo Barberini</p> <p>ROMAN STORY DUE (no. of copies TBA)</p>	<p>Week 8: Tues. Mar 4</p> <p>Homework: 1) Read Tom Bissell's "A Bridge Under Water" (Bissell, Sakai) and be prepared to discuss it. 2) Write and submit the first draft of your Roman Story (see guidelines). Class copies may be single spaced, double-facing/ back/front & may have reduced font size. However, my copy & Sakai copy MUST be formatted per MLA guidelines (12 point font, double spaced, single sided, etc). Upload to Sakai. Bring copies for your classmates and one for me.</p>
<p>Week 9: Tues. Mar 11 SPRING BREAK</p>	<p>Week 9: Tues. Mar 11 SPRING BREAK</p> <p>Homework: Please read and critique your classmates' Roman Stories</p>
<p>Week 10: Tues. Mar 18 Meeting Point: JFRC – Workshop</p> <p>Prepare critiques for Group 1</p>	<p>Week 10: Tues. Mar 18</p> <p>Homework: Read the Roman Stories & prepare concise, thoughtful, constructive critiques for workshop – focusing on voice, point of view, plot, dialogue, tone, language, or any aspect you feel needs attention. Read & prepare critiques for Group 1. (Order TBD).</p>
<p>Week 11: Tues. Mar 25 Meeting Point: JFRC – Workshop</p> <p>Prepare critiques for Group 2</p>	<p>Week 10: Tues. Mar 25</p> <p>Homework Complete the Roman Story critiques for Group 2. (Order TBD)</p>
<p>Week 12: Tues. Apr 1 Class meets at 945am</p> <p>Meeting Point: Piazza di Spagna (Spanish Steps) by Keats Museum (or café across street); https://goo.gl/maps/Lp5snPWXkNM2 Note: we will also visit Villa Borghese park.</p>	<p>Week 12: Tues. Apr 1</p> <p>Homework: Read Ch. 6 Plot and Structure & <i>The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone</i> (Williams); be prepared to discuss it. Please bring book to class.</p> <p>Reader Response 5: Discuss the structure of Williams's novella & analyze how the author has constructed a beginning, a middle, and an end; consider how the novella is organized, and what the author has done to create rising and falling action. How does the ending work for the novella? Please post this in your journal.</p>
<p>Week 13: Tues. Apr 8</p> <p>Meeting Point: Cimitero Accatolico/Non-Catholic Cemetery; OUTSIDE entrance, Via Caio Cestio, 6</p> <p>Map Link: https://goo.gl/maps/hgGsCkZXYVn</p>	<p>Week 12: Tues. Apr 8</p> <p>Homework: On your own time, research John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley or Gregory Corso, read a few poems by each, and then select a poem to share in class. Be prepared to discuss why you have chosen that particular work.</p>



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<p>MICROFICTION/POSTCARDS DUE: Selected Poem due; 1 copy of postcard present in class presented in class</p>	<p>Microfiction 2 “Postcard” Due: See guidelines. Don’t forget to scan / photocopy BEFORE you submit it so you can put the copy in your portfolio. Please include your name on the card or on a post-it. NOTE: this assignment is FICTION– Do not write a card to someone known to you, but from one fictional character to another.</p>
<p>Week 14: Tues. Apr 15 Class meeting time TBA</p> <p>Meeting Point: Castel Sant’ Angelo Lungotevere Castello 50</p> <p>https://goo.gl/maps/SxkWD6Zekk</p>	<p>Week 13: Tues. Apr 15</p> <p>Homework: Read Ch. 9 Revision and Theme (WF) & “The Benefit of the Doubt”(Wolff, Sakai) & “Exmatriates” (Scego, Sakai)</p> <p>Reader Response 6: Write 2 pages (total) in response to your favorite technical aspect of each story. Think about the writerly techniques these authors are using: voice, language, POV, tone, characterization, setting, plot, etc. Is there anything you might do differently as a writer? Be prepared to discuss.</p>
<p>Week 15: Tues. Apr 22 Last Class Meeting Point: 9am Rinaldo’s @JFRC</p> <p>-List of 10 Things (presented in class) -Postcards returned -Class Reading: Please select a short section or work from any of your pieces during the term (even free writes) to share with the class.</p> <p>LIST OF 10 THINGS DUE:</p> <p>JOURNALS DUE: Please turn in your journals.</p> <p>PORTFOLIOS DUE ON FRIDAY APRIL 25th: No late portfolios. No exceptions. Please note that you must turn in an electronic copy (PDF) to SAKAI to receive full credit. See Guidelines.</p>	<p>Week 14: Tues. Apr 22 Last Class</p> <p>Homework part a). Journals are due on Tuesday Dec 3rd, so make sure that you have copied or transferred any pieces that will appear in your portfolio before turning it in.</p> <p>Your final portfolio is due Friday April 25th</p> <p>Homework part b) DUE IN CLASS & PRESENTED IN CLASS: Write a List of 10 things you hate about Rome & 10 things you love about Rome. Bring copy to class & include in portfolio. Note: Be creative. Remember that even a list can be a work of art, if written descriptively. (For example, move beyond gelato or things like ‘paying for water’ – this is not interesting! That said, if gelato absolutely has to be on your list, then be specific, e.g. the specific gelato flavor + where/when and how you like to eat it. Make the list unexpected and intimate. I encourage the list to include full sentences, even short paragraphs if necessary. Have fun!</p>
<p>Arts Night: Date and time TBD Class reading</p>	<p>Writing Rome, Reading Rome: Students should select a short piece, or an excerpt to share with the JFRC community. Can be from your journal or from any of your assignments. Aim to read for approximately 5 minutes</p>
<p>Week 16: Exam Week – No exam.</p>	<p>No exam for this class</p>
<p>**Written Assignments, where noted, must be uploaded to Sakai by the due date (9:00am). Always bring assigned stories (reader) to class. Always bring journal to class.</p>	<p>You are required to create a file name/extension for assignments with your surname and assignment title. All assignments should be DOCX or DOC files, with the exception of your final portfolio, which can also be a PDF file. Let’s imagine you are turning in your Roman story: Example: LAST NAME FIRST NAME ROMAN STORY. All of your assignments should be titled in this fashion (with the appropriate assignment title).</p>

Suggested Routes for Meeting Points

You can search the Roma ATAC website for info on buses and trains, along with Moovit and Google Maps for other options, but these are tried & tested:

ATAC ROMA: <http://www.atac.roma.it>

BUS ROMA app: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/bus-roma/id1299545626>

Meeting Point: Antico Caffè del Teatro Marcello, Via di Teatro Marcello, 42

Bus #913 (Augusto Imperatore) to Piazza Cavour; Switch to Bus #30, whose stop is on Via Cicerone in front of Piazza Cavour (Laurentina MB). Take #30 to Teatro Marcello/Ara Coeli in Piazza Venezia. Exit bus. Facing the Palazzo Venezia & Campidoglio, walk to your right, to last caffè by Teatro Marcello).

<https://goo.gl/maps/iiHAvV7T7uo>

Meeting Point: Isola Tiberina, Caffè Tiberino, Via Ponte Quattro Capi 17, Suggested Route: 23 or 280 Bus to Lungotevere Alberteschi (1 stop past Garibaldi bridge/Viale Trastevere): Map Link:

<https://goo.gl/maps/d6VhDUADx2R2>

Meeting Point: Bar Gusto Massimo, Via del Circo Massimo, 5

Suggested Route: Metro B to Circo Massimo (Switch from Metro A at Termini; caffè is in front of metro B stop).

Map Link: <https://goo.gl/maps/jpRcQuSdzPB2>

Meeting Point: Basilica di San Clemente:

Suggested Route: Metro B to Colosseum or Metro A to Manzoni. The Basilica entrance is an 8 minute walk from the Colosseum Metro stop, and an 11 minute walk from the Manzoni metro stop. Map Link:

<https://goo.gl/maps/e5NQqoKcgvqzy1Es8>

Meeting Point: Pepy's Bar, Piazza Barberini

Suggested Route: Metro A to Barberini (walk to opposite side of piazza.) Map Link:

<https://goo.gl/maps/1xhxDWXjVL12>

Meeting Point: Piazza de Spagna (Spanish Steps) steps by Keats Museum

Suggested Routes: Metro A to Spagna or 913 to Piazza Cavour + walk (15 minutes). Map

Link: <https://goo.gl/maps/Lp5snPWXkNM2>

Meeting Point: Cimitero Accatolico/Non-Catholic Cemetery, Via Caio Cestio, 6

Suggested Routes: FS train Balduina to Ostiense (8:02/8:24/ 8:32/9:02) or 23 to Staz. Ostiense, or Bus 280 to Caio Cestio + walk. Map Link: <https://goo.gl/maps/hgGsCkZXYVn>



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Meeting Point: Castel Sant Angelo, Lungotevere Castello 50

Suggested Route: 913 to Piazza Cavour and walk (7 minutes). Map Link:

<https://goo.gl/maps/xAv3ZBhdR4o28n6v7>