**Syllabus for CRW 2100  
Introduction to Fiction** I

**Mixed Mode**

**Valencia College   
Spring 2024**

“An artist has contrived to lure me out of myself into an illusion of reality more fulfilling than any lived reality can be.”

--Peter Schjeldahl, *The New Yorker*

**Instructor** Diane Orsini

**Office**  5-145, West Campus

**Course Information** CRW 2100, Section CRN 21944

**Time and Place** R 10:00 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. in 5-114

**Office Hours** M W 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. online via Canvas, Atlas, or Outlook at [dorsini@valenciacollege.edu](mailto:dorsini@valenciacollege.edu)

T R 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. in 5-145 or online at [dorsini@valenciacollege.edu](mailto:dorsini@valenciacollege.edu)

T R 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. in 5-145 or online at [dorsini@valenciacollege.edu](mailto:dorsini@valenciacollege.edu)

F 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. online via Canvas, Atlas, or Outlook at [dorsini@valenciacollege.edu](mailto:dorsini@valenciacollege.edu)

**Phone** 407-582-1172. So that we both have a written record of the question and the answer, the best method of contact is email from your Canvas account.

**Email**  [dorsini@valenciacollege.edu](mailto:dorsini@valenciacollege.edu)**.** I read email from Canvas, Atlas, and Outlook only.

**Required Textbooks** None. In each assignment, you will find links to all the materials we will need this semester—courtesy of our Valencia librarians!

**Web Site for Agendas** https://dorsini.typepad.com/intro\_to\_fiction/

**Catalog Description**

Prerequisite: ENC 1101, ENC 1101 H, CRW 2001 (Intro to Creative Writing).

“Introduction to Fiction is a fiction-genre specific class. Students will write original work to be submitted for critique and will critique the work of other students in interactive workshops during class. Students will be introduced to the conventions of fiction through selected readings” [(Catalog).](http://valenciacollege.edu/catalog/current/)

**Course Description**

The goal of this course is to help students develop mastery over the elements of fiction and thereby realize their artistic ambitions. Those elements include:

* Character presentation through action and dialogue
* Character development
* Plot (Story Arc)
* Point of View
* Theme
* Setting and symbol
* Style

The class will also analyze published authors to learn from their techniques. In all classes, we strive to incorporate Valencia’s core competencies of Think, Value, Communicate, and Act. These competencies are particularly meaningful in an art class.

**Attendance and Deportment**

***Attendance Policy***

The [Valencia College Attendance policy](http://catalog.valenciacollege.edu/academicpoliciesprocedures/classattendance/) states that students are expected to attend every class, beginning with the first class meeting. Students whose names appear on my printed class roll on the first day but ***do not show*** will be marked with a non-negotiable absence that might lead to withdrawal. Those who do not show or contact me at all during the first week will be withdrawn as ‘no-shows.’ Please read the full [policy at this link](http://catalog.valenciacollege.edu/academicpoliciesprocedures/classattendance/).

***Attendance is directly related to success in this course*.** I reserve the right to withdraw any student with three or more absences before the [withdrawal deadline](http://catalog.valenciacollege.edu/academicpoliciesprocedures/courseattemptscoursewithdrawal/).

If a student prefers the withdrawal (**W**) to the grade of F, he or she is advised to

initiate the process or contact me to do this if the decision has been made *after* the

withdrawal deadline. I will not initiate withdrawal of any student after the deadline has elapsed and will record the final course grade as F.

***Students are expected to be on time.*** If a student is aware that on-time attendance might be a problem, he or she is advised that an online version of the course might be a better option.

***All quizzes must be taken during the posted quiz windows***; makeup quizzes are not available without my explicit consent. Considering the generous quiz window afforded us by Canvas, I will consent only in cases of ***documented, extreme emergency***. Remember that the only “excused absences” the college recognizes are jury duty, military service, and childbirth (not ‘work’ or ‘childcare,’ alas).

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***If you intend to come to class, please try to be on time***. We will do as much of the work in class as possible.

***Deportment***

**My good manners:**

* I will be on time to class. If I am ever late, I will issue ten bonus points to the students who are on time when I was not.
* I will answer your emails within 48 hours of receipt.
* I will check email at least once over the weekend.
* I will return your graded work within fourteen days after submission upload the score sheet and draft to your Canvas account.
* I will post all your scores in Canvas so you’ll always know where you stand in the class. The best surprise is no surprise.
* I will not text or answer calls while conducting class. You will have my full and undivided attention.
* If I watch a YouTube video in class, I will make sure that you can see it, too.
* If for any reason I cannot make it to class, I will, if possible, set up the announcement and assignment at Canvas and in an email canceling that class meeting.
* I won’t eat in front of you unless I bring enough for you, too.
* I promise to teach you to the best of my ability.

**Your good manners:**

* In return, you promise to learn to the best of yours.
* You will check your Valencia email accounts daily to see if I have sent notifications and updates.
* Out of respect for the other students, you will come to class on time and only when you are feeling well enough to be in a room full of other people.
* You will stay for the entire class meeting.
* If you’re late to class, you take responsibility for notifying me at the end of that class period.
* You will take care of all bathroom and refreshment needs either before class or after, not during.
* Like me, you will set your phone on vibrate and turn off all electrical devices including laptops and IPad/Notebooks, etc. before class begins.
* You will not make or answer phone calls in class.
* You will follow [Professor Leddy’s](file:///Users/dianeorsini1/Library/Containers/com.microsoft.Word/Data/Library/Preferences/AutoRecovery/mleddy.blogspot.com/2005/01/how-to-e-mail-professor.html) excellent example when composing emails.
* You won’t eat in front of us unless you bring enough for everybody.
* If you miss a deadline and must access a Crap Happens coupon to submit a late assignment, you will compose a polite, explanatory email in the style of Dr. Michael Leddy asking me to open the assignment to you.

**Deadlines, Missing Assignments, and Late Penalties**

**Deadlines and Penalties**

Each of your assignments must be submitted to Turnitin Originality in Canvas by midnight on the due date.

Technological problems are not an excuse for late work, so be cautious when accessing the quizzes from your device. If you have concerns about the reliability of your device, there is a chance [**Valencia College**](https://dev.valenciacollege.edu/apps/laptop-checkout/index.php) can help you. Click on the link, log in at Atlas, and see what’s available to you—but do it fairly quickly.

***Assignments, quizzes, online discussions, and the final exam must be completed by posted deadlines.* You are invited to access your Crap Happens coupon to avoid any late penalties; the Crap Happens coupons are explained below. If late attempts should exceed the Crap Happens coupons assigned to you, please know that *pieces will be penalized 5 points per day for the first week; after one week, they are no longer eligible for a grade. If a student misses the extra-credit workshops, he or she will not be permitted to make up the bonus points.***

Remember to upload ***readable*** files. A blank page, a corrupted file, or a submission that is not in the required ***.doc or .docx*** or that Canvas cannot open is ***not*** on-time work and will receive a score of zero. This is not negotiable.

***If you do not submit the final examination by the Valencia College deadline***, you will receive a zero for the assignment. You cannot access a Crap Happens coupon after ***December 1***.

***As the student, you are responsible for keeping up*** with all written and reading and for all learning materials presented in class when you are late or absent. I will not bring to your attention what you have missed; Canvas will do that job for both of us.

***Do not ignore Business Office deadlines.*** You cannot make up any work missed because the Business Office withdrew you for nonpayment.

**The “Crap Happens” Coupons**

Your goal should be to complete all work on time. Sometimes, however, life thwarts your best intentions, so you have three opportunities to make up missed assignments.

To access a **Crap Happens Coupon**, please notify me that you would like to use one; the ones on Page 13 are just there to amuse you. I will open the assignment for you, and you will be given an extra week to complete the missing work with no point penalties.

Some restrictions apply: for example,

1. A Crap Happens Coupon will not be made available to replace an assignment disqualified because of plagiarism/AI detection. In that instance, the zero stands.
2. Due to the required public-debate aspect of the Discussion posts, ***Discussion posts do not qualify for Crap Happens Coupons.*** If you attempted to submit a late piece, then no one will read it, and you will have missed the opportunity for feedback.
3. Also, you must request your Crap Happens Coupon within ***24 hours*** of the missed assignment deadline and use it during ***the seven days following the original due date*** of an assignment. It will not be possible, therefore, to use all three Crap Happens Coupons during the last week of classes.
4. Crap Happens Coupons have an expiration date: the last day to turn in any late work is ***Friday, December 1.*** No late work will be accepted during Finals Week.

View the **Crap Happens Coupons** at the end of this syllabus. Remember that the expiration date for ***Spring 2024*** is ***Thursday, April 18.***

**Email Policy**

Since the Valencia server screens all Atlas correspondence for viruses and inappropriate material, I will open and read only those messages that you send from your Canvas, Outlook, or Atlas account. ***I will delete unread any messages from other email sources.***

Checking your Valencia email accounts should become a daily priority. Do not let your mailbox become so choked with old email from past semesters that the server cannot deliver new messages.

**Computer Issues**

For your comfort, ease, and convenience, I have posted all quizzes in [Canvas.](https://online.valenciacollege.edu/login/canvas)

Because of this, you ***must ensure that you have reliable Internet access when taking these quizzes.*** Do not, for example, take a quiz on a Smartphone in the back seat of a friend’s car on the way to the Raymond James Stadium. Take the quiz in the parking lot when you get there.

A student will occasionally complain that he or she has been “kicked off” in the middle of a quiz; if that happens, that student must instantly contact me via Atlas. ***I will re-set a quiz only once per student per semester, only if the glitch is Canvas’s fault and properly documented by Canvas itself, and only if the quiz window is still open;*** when the quiz window closes, the answers are released, and a Crap Happens coupon assignment will be your only option.

If the quiz window is closed, the student must prepare a lengthy and time-consuming alternate assignment; by comparison, the quiz in Canvas will be the more desirable experience.

If any student has been “kicked off” once, he or she should not expect to take another quiz on that same computer and is advised to come to campus to take all remaining quizzes at Valencia. If that same student is “kicked off” a second time or more, he or she must expect to live with whatever score he or she earned prior to the glitch—there will be no quiz in the alternate format.

**CAVEAT I:** this re-set policy will be enacted ***only*** when that first glitch is properly documented; it is not an offer to provide you with one free re-set in the case of your having forgotten to take a quiz.

**CAVEAT II:** Technological problems will also not be accepted as an excuse for late ***written*** work. Please make sure that your technology is good to go before the semester starts.

**CAVEAT III:** consider using [Google Drive](https://www.google.com/intl/en_US/drive/start/index.html?authuser=0) as a hedge against unimaginable computer-related disasters such as crashes, theft, bad break-ups, etc.

**Academic Honesty in a Fiction-Writing Class**

**You can’t use someone else’s stuff. Period. Don’t do it.**

***All work submitted for credit in this class must be the product of the individual student’s own original thought, creativity, and composition***. This means that you can’t pass off a piece written by your best friend, squeeze, parent, or Toni Morrison. You also can’t allow a ‘friend’ to help you ‘organize’ a piece because the friend, who is even less interested than you are, might resort to ‘borrowing’ someone else’s work from the internet. Under no circumstances may you use any AI ‘enhancements.’

**You also can’t use any of your own stuff created prior to this semester. Period. Don’t do it.**

License your work for a screenplay; adapt it on contract to a comic book publisher. Feel free to deploy it as you want. However, while you’re here, know this fact: ***Valencia requires that all work submitted during a semester must be created by the individual student during that semester.*** In this course, ‘creating’ is presented through ‘writing.’

Materials you created for another class or that you posted to a fanfic site or wrote ten years ago for an online competition you didn’t win are not eligible for a score. Yes, you wrote it. But since you didn't write it during this semester to satisfy a course requirement, your piece is unfit for academic purpose.

To be administratively clear: plagiarism is academically and artistically indefensible. Any assignment showing signs of plagiarism ***will be graded zero.*** It will also be disqualified from a Crap Happens Coupon. A second offense will result in a final course grade of F. Since Valencia College subscribes to [**Turnitin Originality,**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turnitin) which scans for recycled, repurposed, plagiarized, and AI work, you must upload your work through that program in your Canvas account to ensure artistic and academic integrity.

If you’re struggling with time management, contact me; I’d rather open a Crap Happens Coupon for you than bust you for a semester-destroying mistake.

**AI**

**You shouldn’t use it, and you already know that. Let’s talk about why.**

You chose this class and paid for it because someone told you that you had talent. By now, you realize a few things: that person was right about you, it’s great to have talent, and talent makes writing harder, not easier. Why? Because talent insists on reading the work over and over to eliminate the dead air, the holes in the plot, and the overwritten dialog. Talent tells you that your sentence is flabby, but talent excels at showing you how to tighten that sentence until you can bounce a quarter off the verb.

So--what makes writing easier? Proficiency. How do you achieve proficiency? By showing up to do the work even when the work is hard and by resisting the wiles of a computer program that doesn’t love you back. To prove that AI doesn’t love you back, I went right to the virtual horse’s mouth and asked Chatgpt to explain the concerns Chatgpt itself had about using AI in a creative-writing course:

Why AI writing is wrong for creative writing:

1. Lack of Originality: AI writing tools are programmed to generate content based on pre-existing data and algorithms. While they may be able to produce text that is grammatically correct and coherent, they lack the ability to produce truly original content. This can result in writing that is formulaic, predictable, and lacking in creativity.
2. Lack of Emotional Depth: Creative writing often relies on emotions and experiences to convey a message or tell a story. AI writing tools are not capable of experiencing emotions, and as such, cannot convey them in a genuine way. This can result in writing that is devoid of emotional depth and fails to connect with readers on a personal level.
3. Ethical Concerns: AI writing tools can be used to produce content that is misleading or inaccurate, leading to ethical concerns. There is also the risk of plagiarism, as the AI may unknowingly generate content that is similar to existing work.

The concerns are correct and cleanly-phrased, but the language is so boring that all I got is “Don’t do it.” If you resort to AI, you are defeating the very reason you chose this course in the first place.

This choice is entirely yours to make, and only you can decide what kind of artist you want to be. Just know that Valencia College has academic standards you must meet. ***Therefore, any submission showing any degree of AI-generated material will be ineligible for a score*** on the same grounds as any other assignment showing any other kind of plagiarism: the work will not satisfy a course requirement and is unfit for academic purpose. It too will be disqualified from a Crap Happens Coupon.

These policies are not negotiable.

**Withdrawals**

If you decide to drop this course for any reason, you must initiate the process yourself or submit a formal request via email for my intervention. Otherwise, you will receive an ***F*** at the end of this session. ***The deadline this session for withdrawing is Friday, March 15.***

Before you make that decision, please talk to me first so that I can help you avoid to catastrophic financial complications you might not be aware of.

**Grades**

This is how your grades are determined and how you will receive them:

* Look for your graded work 14 days **after the deadline**.
* The numerical score will be posted in Canvas; when you get your score, click on it. You will receive written notes as well as a detailed score sheet with specific commentary uploaded to your Canvas account. If for any reason you cannot see these assessment tools, notify me at once, and I will send the material on through Canvas. You are expected to read the notes on your pieces and all the notes in the Comments box and apply the insights to upcoming work.
* [**Canvas**](http://learn.valenciacollege.edu/) will score your quizzes after the deadline has elapsed.

Valencia College requires that no less than a C be earned as a final grade; in this course, that means ***a minimum of 700 out of the possible 1000 points.*** You must complete all the written assignments, take all the quizzes in Canvas, and pass the final exam with a score of 70 or higher.

The workload includes the following:

* + - Three original fiction pieces
    - Participation in a writing community via online workshops
    - Preparation for the development and future marketing of a longer narrative (the Book Jacket)
    - Four multiple-choice quizzes in [Canvas](file:///Users/dianeorsini1/Library/Containers/com.microsoft.Word/Data/Library/Preferences/AutoRecovery/learn.valenciacollege.edu)
    - Final Exam (the Query Letter)

Your final grade in this class will be based on the total number of points you earn on all the writing assignments, quizzes, and the final exam. None of these assignments is optional. Here is the breakdown:

**Coursework Preparation: 100 points/10%**

**Fiction Assignments: 300 points/30%**

**Multiple-Choice Quizzes: 400 points/40%**

**The Book Jacket: 100 points/10%**

**Final Exam (Query Letter): 100 points/10%**

As you can see, there are at least 1000 available points. Students must earn at least 700 points for a grade of C or higher.

You final course grade will depend entirely upon the number of points you earn from the writing assignments, quizzes, and the final exam. ***None of these assignments is optional.***

In determining the Final Grade posting, I use the following scale:

A = 900-1000 points recorded in Canvas

B = 800-899

C = 700-799

D = 600-699

F = 599 and below

Points are points. There is no averaging up or averaging down. If your final point count comes in at 899 points, you will have earned a B. Ignore the Percentage column because it is meaningless.

To succeed, keep on top of the quizzes and take full advantage of the extra-credit opportunities available to all students. This class ***does*** **not** ***offer*** individual extra-credit opportunities or rewrites for assignments that received bad scores; the successive assignments constitute the re-write opportunities. Learn from your mistakes and move on.

No grade will be dropped or curved. To earn the highest possible score, read **all** of the assigned materials, follow **all** of the directions at the website, model your own work on the student samples available for the assignments, [**email me with questions prior to submission**](http://portal.valencia.cc.fl.us/cp/home/loginf), use **the college writing centers (East, Lake Nona, Osceola, West, Winter Park, and online)** when necessary, and proofread carefully for sentence errors.

Before you press "Submit," confirm that you have attached the right file(s). An unreadable or blank file or a file in an unapproved or unintelligible format will earn a score of zero. A resubmission will require a Crap Happens Coupon.

The wonders of Canvas have made it possible for you to know your point total any time you want. The best surprise is no surprise.

**Final Examination**

The ***final exam*** is a test of analytical and creative ability. Students will create a query letter to a publisher using the information specified on the Final Exam post. Your score will depend on your ability to persuade me to take the meeting.

This semester, your final exam is due by midnight on ***Thursday, April 25.***

**Late or Missing Assignments**

***If you miss a deadline for a writing assignment***, the assignment will receive a five-point deduction per day for the first week. Any story submitted more than seven days after the original due date will receive a zero for a grade. Prevent all this with a Crap Happens coupon!

***If in a moment of TikTok-induced panic, you ‘accidently’ upload a blank sheet of paper, or if your submission is not presented in the required format (.doc, docx), the assignment will be scored zero.*** It is your responsibility to upload a readable, assessable copy. If you’re in a time crunch, just ask for a Crap Happens coupon to make up the work.

***If you miss a quiz***, you cannot make it up, although you will qualify for a Crap Happens coupon alternate assignment. The alternate assignment will be tedious, so keep up with the course calendar.

***If you miss the window for a bonus-point assignment,*** you cannot make it up. You can’t access a Crap Happens coupon for these assignments.

***If you do not submit the final examination by the Valencia College deadline***, you will receive a zero for the assignment. No exceptions. This won’t necessarily cause you to fail the course, but it will hurt your final total of earned points.

***Technological problems will not be accepted as an excuse for late work.*** If your own computer is out of commission, make arrangements with [**Valencia College**](https://dev.valenciacollege.edu/apps/laptop-checkout/index.php) to get a laptop for the semester.

***As the student, you are responsible for keeping up with all written and reading assignments***. I will not bring to your attention what you have missed, so print the Calendar of Assignments and draw a line through each after you have submitted it via Canvas.

**For Your Own Protection**

Take responsibility for recordkeeping:

* + When you send email from Canvas or [**Atlas**](http://portal.valencia.cc.fl.us/cp/home/loginf/), always check **"Save a copy to the 'Sent' folder."**
  + After you upload a piece, confirm that the piece did in fact upload.
  + In a designated folder in your Atlas account, **keep copies of all the emails from me containing your pieces and score sheets as well as all emails** ***you have sent me*** until you have received your final grade.
  + Practice basic writing hygiene: ***BACK UP YOUR WRITING EVERY WEEK AT GOOGLE DOCS OR ONEDRIVE.***

**Format**

How you present your work to me will indicate more about you than you realize, so be sure ***to make a good show***. How? Follow these easy directions.

* Double-space all your work.
* Indent all your paragraphs, taking care to indent new paragraphs for each speaker/character or change of action.
* If you have a PC, take care to eliminate the automatic extra lines between paragraphs. Go to your Page Layout tab and reduce the line spacing from 10 pt. to 0 pt. ***Failure to do so incurs in a five-point format deduction.***

First Name Last Name Last/Keyword/1

Professor Orsini

Writing Assignment I: Action (for example!)

Date

Dazzling Title

* Make sure that subsequent pages have your last name, keyword, and the page number in the ***top right-hand*** corner:

Last/Keyword/2 \*

\* The shading makes the formatting more visible in this document. You have to shade ***your*** headers!

**Materials**

You will need the following materials:

* Drafting work: a legal pad or artist’s drawing pad (this is my own preference)
* A USB Flash Drive dedicated to your drafting process
* [Google Drive](https://www.google.com/intl/en_US/drive/start/index.html?utm_medium=ha&utm_source=en-oa-na-us-bk&utm_campaign=en&authuser=0) account (or OneDrive—whatever is the most automatic for you.)

**Just In Case: Valencia’s Resources**

**The Office for Students With Disabilities.** If you’re registered with this office, remember to send me a copy of the official OSD letter and let me know what accommodations will work best for you.

**The Online Resource for CRW 2100, Intro to Fiction, in** [**Canvas.**](https://online.valenciacollege.edu/login/canvas) Here you can find all your quizzes and many (though not all) course materials that are also available at the course website. Make yourself thoroughly comfortable with both.

**Canvas Help.** If you have a problem with any of the quizzes in Canvas, call **407-582-5600.**

**Laptop Assist.** If you need a device, see what [Valencia College](https://dev.valenciacollege.edu/apps/laptop-checkout/index.php) might still have for you.

**Student Assistance Program**. [BayCare](http://www.baycare.org/behavioralhealth) Behavioral Health Student Assistance Program offers free help with stress, anxiety, depression, adjustment difficulties, substance abuse, time management and relationship problems. Call **800-878-5470** if you are interested.

**Disclaimers**

If your name is still on my class roll as of ***Friday, January 12***, I will accept that as proof of your agreement to abide by the stated terms of this syllabus.

Please note that, as the instructor, I reserve the right to alter the course syllabus and outline. However, if I make any changes at all, I will notify you ***at once*** through Atlas email. I will never spring a new set of rules on you at the last minute.

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| **Crap Happens Coupon**  Request an alternative assignment if you missed a quiz or extension of a deadline  Void after **Thursday, April 18**. Redeemable (if unused) for **5 bonus points** after **Monday, April 22**. |

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| **Crap Happens Coupon**  Request an alternative assignment if you missed a quiz or extension of a deadline  Void after **Thursday, April 18**. Redeemable (if unused) for **5 bonus points** after **Monday, April 22**. |

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