

# John Campion

## Short Stories of FLANNERY O' CONNOR *An Examination of Techniques and Content*

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Tuesdays—September 25, 2018—October 30, 2018, 10:00 a.m.—12:00 noon,  
Lafayette Library & Learning Center 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Lafayette, CA

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### Description

Through lectures, class discussion, and close reading, we'll look at some of Flannery O'Connor's disturbing and comic short stories—embodying a critique of Southern society and the flawed vessels who live in it. We'll follow the pathetic ways her archetypal characters avoid individual pain and responsibility for their actions. But in unexpected moments we might also discover one of the reasons for O'Connor's greatness as she shares a secret knowledge that there is an opening for the spirit operating at the heart of experiences apparently most alien to it. Focusing on the *how of reading* (not just the what) we'll try to be better prepared to approach some of the most surprising discoveries in literature.

These masterworks have shaped all of modern and contemporary fiction. And to get a handle on them within a limited time frame, we'll look closely at the deep content of a few of these works (rather than many). We'll familiarize ourselves with the philosophical context these works move in, and focus our attention on the how of reading—the techniques this writer deploys to deliver his unique vision. This should help to guide us in the future, as we move to approach the rest of her fascinating works.

Participants will be encouraged to keep a journal of ideas and reflections—and to share them with others, both in and out of class.

### Course objectives:

1. Read, examine, and discuss a few short stories of Flannery O'Connor
2. Try to understand O'Connors' main themes and ideas and her means of delivering them.
3. Through class lecture and discussion, attempt to evaluate her place and importance and discover how they can shed light on our own experience and history.