

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Course Syllabus

Instructor Name:	Caroline Smadja
Email:	Smad9168@pacificu.edu

Course Title and Description: European Masters of the Short Story

We'll focus this time on European masters of the short story. As with the previous classes I designed for OLLI, women and men writers will be equally represented.

We'll begin the class with "A Misfortune" by Russian Anton Chekhov, hailed the greatest short-story writer of all times and credited by many contemporary writers, Tobias Wolff not the least of them, for being a main source of inspiration. Next, we'll read Danish author Karen Blixen's "Babette's Feast," which was made into a wonderful movie in 1987. Like many women of the 19th and 20th centuries, Blixen often wrote under a male pen name (Isak Dinesen) Irish writer James Joyce's "A Little Cloud" will be the focus of Week 3. We'll then discuss Anais Nin's "The Mouse." Nin, famous for her diaries, began to write in her native Spanish, then switched to English once she moved to NYC. On Week V, we'll read a short story by famous Italian author, Italo Calvino. French writer Colette, the first woman of letters to be given a state funeral, will conclude this class with her story "Armande."

Each week will center on one specific story. In order to foster as lively and candid an exchange as possible, each session will first involve a group discussion based on study questions handed out one week in advance. Participants will be asked to analyze the story in terms of style, themes, point of view, etc. Typically, this interaction takes over an hour. The instructor will then provide additional information on each authors' life and body of work, through video and/or radio clips whenever available.

Week by Week Outline:

1. Anton Chekhov, "A Misfortune" <http://www.eastoftheweb.com/short-stories/UBooks/Misf.shtml>
2. Isaak Dinesen/Karen Blixen "Babette's Feast"
3. James Joyce, "A Little Cloud," <https://americanliterature.com/author/james-joyce/short-story/a-little-cloud>
4. Anais Nin, "The Mouse" <https://www.shortstoryproject.com/the-mouse/>
5. Italo Calvino, "The Enchanted Garden"
https://archive.org/stream/CALVINODifficultLoves/CALVINO%20Difficult%20Loves_djvu.txt
6. Colette, "Armande"

Objectives of the Course: To discover six short stories by late 19th/20th century European writers of outstanding talent, and learn about each of these writers' life and work in the process.

Audio/Visual Needs: Computer hook ups & internet access in order to show video clips, possibly PPT slides as well, of these authors and their locale.

Instructor Bio – Caroline Smadja has been teaching literature at OLLI since the Fall of 2015. Her extensive career as a teacher/trainer includes 10 years as a lecturer at Golden Gate University in San Francisco. Over 20 years ago, she specialized in teaching adults, working with learners of all backgrounds and nationalities. She holds an M.A. in English from University Paris VII, an M.A. in History from UC Davis and completed her MFA in Creative Writing at Pacific University, OR in 2014. A French native with an international profile, her main interests and areas of expertise include: Literature; writing & editing; cross-cultural communication & understanding; public speaking; language teaching; and history. Caroline is a published author of fiction, poetry and non-fiction.

Class structure: mostly lecture/ mostly discussions/ **combination, with an emphasis on class discussion and participation:**

Off site field trips planned as part of the class? No

Ideal class size: 20-25 students (smaller classes can be more interactive)

Handouts/suggested reading - Four out of these short stories are available online. Scanned copies of the stories not available online will be available on OLLI's website one week before class at the latest.