

21W.758-Genre Fiction

Class #1

What is genre fiction?

Is it a marketing category?

Is it real?

What defines something as genre?
(Literary fiction?)

Name genres -

currently popular?

formerly popular?
(Western?)

most sales? (Romance!)

Herlequin sales model -

Cycles of styles -

Some genres die & are reborn,

some go through styles

Some go through periods of
mainstream popularity

Many genre writers write in more
than one genre, mostly under
multiple names -

12:30

Why do we like it?

What we know
What we don't know

As readers, we love identifying that
which we know well (often place,
procedure, etc.)
and that which is exciting, new & alien.

→ genre fiction - we're thinking
popular / fun to read

Does fun to read = easy to write?

no

literary & genre?

your genre(s)

favorite books / authors

think about specific elements
what about this element / genre

Class 2 -

How do we recognize a work as belonging to a genre?
Where do the edges blur?
Are there any "pure" works?

Genre as a lens to interpret/
focus/understand
contemporary experience.

We write from now -
what we imagine of the
past or the future is
informed by the present,
by our social and personal and
economic & political concerns -
Examples!

popularity of preternatural romance -
Vampire & sexuality
(from V. (Torian/Dracula))

Exercise - take an incident from your
own real life -
write within your genre -

Laetz & Johnson -

Get lots wrong

(terrible sentences!!)

Very cliché notion of fantasy -
they clearly don't know the genre -
be angry!)

~~But~~ -

Fictional = incoherent???

vs. true crime

goes
to reality

But - they do pose some real
questions -

what makes something fantasy
Pern (Dragons)

or SF or mystery or horror
that element is central to the

structure & construction of the story

what do we mean by "central"

what is window-dressing

Class #3

Reader-Writer contract -

What do you as a Reader expect from a book of your genre?

How much are you willing to suspend disbelief?

For what?

Play by the rules

Play fair

So what must you as a writer provide?

full world

5 senses

full sensory experience

Characters we care about

everything makes sense

"They all got run over by a truck and died. The End."

problems are Real -

Something is at STAKE for the Characters

You've done your research

Dangers of research!!!

too little

too much

Writer will play by the rules
the writer sets up -

Dangers of world building
too descriptive
too diverting

You need to know EVERYTHING, but your Reader does not need to know everything
(I just learned the history of the dirigible for my steampunk book - I don't know how much I'll use -)

Detail, detail - the specific & important details

Use 3 sensory details to describe a restaurant so I know what kind of food it serves, how fancy, who is there -

Subgenres - list for your genre
(we can list on the board)
Some subgenres are popular
crossovers (historical
mystery)

Remind them to watch for
Reveals in 9 Tailors!

Class 4-

Structures, Secrets, Sayers -
Playing by the Rules
Revealing Information

Characters must change & grow
(why episodic to isn't as "good" as
arc of story)

Short Story - the moment of a single
realization/revelation

Longer work - more full change or
changes/revelations

Every person has secrets

most people's secrets are "stupid" -
i.e. - other people don't care so much.
But we care about our secrets

While the central plot revolves around

"What does the character want?"

there is Always "What is the character hiding"

2. Stories - in mystery, but more
subtly in All Genre

the story today of uncoussing

the hidden secrets ~~of the~~
the past

There is always a past -

okay - what are the stories in
Sayers?

Lord Wimsey's story -

The Rector's story?

Will's story (& Mary's) Thoday's

The story in the past -

Deacon's story

the emeralds

Cranton's story

Suzanne's story

The revelations -

The bells in the chamber (the sound)

Mary Thoday had been married to Deacon
(who was presumed deceased)

Was this story satisfying?

Why?

We have all the information

When did you put it together?

What were the central pieces?

Lit. US. genre -

inward examination of middle class suburbia us. -
archetypal outward directional action as metaphor

class 5 world building
trope vs. cliché

trope - (dictionary.com)
"a significant or recurrent theme"

a significant or recurrent permission
assumption

free pass of the genre
FTL

magic
complicated murder

cliche - overuse betrays lack of original
thought

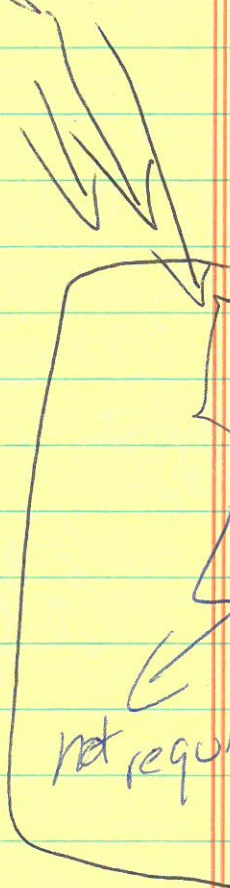
Redemption
Meaning

Looking in while
ACTING OUT - Genre

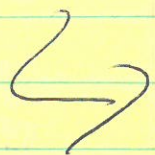
not required

Genre & funfic -
dangers & uses

start here
Purpose of
Story telling



In Your Genre -
list 2 tropes &
2 clichés -



Storytelling seems innate to
humanity - in all cultures
what we tell stories about,
and How, differs - but we all
do -

Impose meaning & Pattern

search for Redemption

Central trope of Action/Adventure -
Inward/ ← Campbell's Hero's Journey
Outward

Hero's Call - Refusal

Oracle

Guardian on the Threshold

(must fight)

die & go into death

↳ defeat & go alive to
shadow

tests & opposition

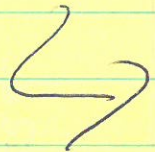
"magical" aid/helpers

reward! mystical marriage
forbidden knowledge
steals "elixir"

return ¹¹

save the world

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forbidden knowledge
steals helmet

return ¹²

Save the world

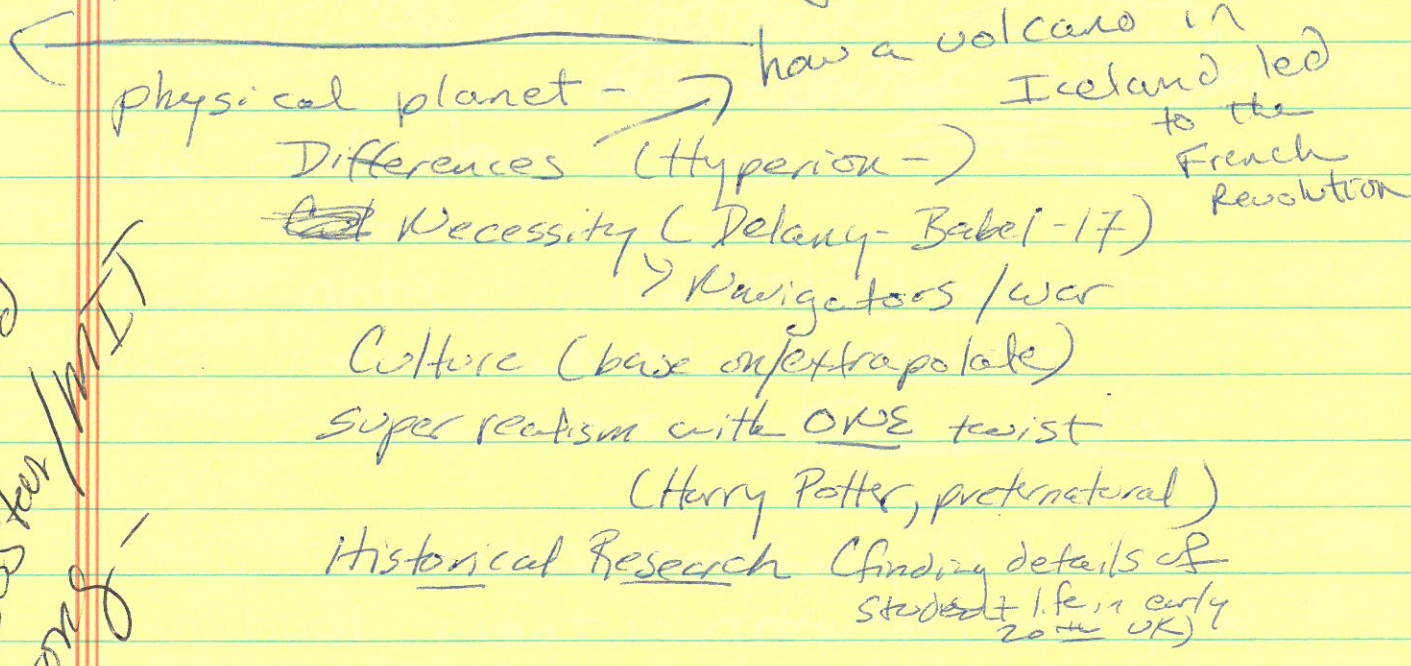
8 month eruption in 1783
Lakagigar (Laki)

FORMAT

Class 6 World building I

Cliches are laziness
(Fancie can be good but promotes
lazy habits)

places to start building a world -



When Hollywood gets Baster/ MIT wrong!

Sex & Stuff Books
(Best sellers w/ Brand names)
Mainstream but ALSO world building

Delany - Babel 17 -
Reveals! - Structure -

World -
tropes? originality?

Which tropes does
Defany use?

world →

normal —————→ weird

Details! -

list/name some details that
he uses to build the reality
of his world

Class 7 - workshop Roles

to play by the rules you have
to have rules

The rules have to make sense

The rules have to be consistent
writing yourself into a corner

"They were all run over by a truck and died"

WORLD, PLOT & CHARACTER ARE
ALL INTERDEPENDENT

The outsider

We notice what's Different

We notice what's wrong

We notice what we Don't Like

By characters noticing (& whining?)
about what is different, wrong, &
don't like, they can let us
know in contrast what is Normal,
what they consider Right, and
what they DO like.

fingers & hand diagram

As we discover the
underlying connections / sense of
the rules working

Cross Genre (Too Many Magicians)

How many genres does Garrett
FULLY SATISFY in
Too Many Magicians?

(fantasy, mystery, alternative history, spy)

In cross genre, we don't just borrow tropes or ideas, but fulfill ALL THE EXPECTATIONS of that genre.

Let's consider each of Garrett's genres and think how he does this -

World building - alt. hist. & fantasy -

2 changes - 1 hist, 1 fantasy -
how does he reveal his world?

how does he use the different genres to play off each other - to reveal information that we need for a different genre (he does this constantly.)

How many different techniques of revelation did you notice?

Apprentice/journeyman - "stranger" - to a specialty, not to the world -

He sets you in the situation as if you already know the information, and then fills in relevant detail as if it were important to a different matter -

Does Garrett play fair?

Revelation - you don't always know
what's going to be important -

Reveal Major points very early -
The bells ~~to~~
Ashley's precognition

Setting up who you like & who
you don't for good guy /
bad guy

we like to dislike the bad guy, but we
also know it's - unsophisticated

RULE - EVERYTHING in fiction
MUST DO MORE THAN ONE
thing -

transitions -

beginning of every shift MUST
give

who, where, when

because we ALWAYS know THIS

As long as you set this up
clearly, your transitions will
work!

Dialog!
summary
indirect
* direct

- Evesdrop!!
(and record good
stuff!)

Sound natural, not be natural
brief, natural rhythm

content
set mood
reveal character
reveal theme
be action -

* reveal the past - (flashback, remember -
talk!)

When we speak we reveal -
class, education, background
region, emotion (tone)

no
Adverbs

a specific place (type) ^{→ Grandma's kitchen}

smell

verb

Part leaving the dentist's office, which smelled of mint, he went to the airfield to check on the dirigible, which ~~was in pursse shape for~~ ^{was in pursse shape for} he remembered. But he wanted to see it alone, without Althea. And there he saw a man ~~in~~ flying leathers inspecting the craft, a stranger. (Thomas Byrne)

"She's not much," Byrne said.

"When we're done with her, she'll fly like nothing you've ever seen," Part insisted.

agents -

Characters want

Characters Act

Characters CHOOSE -

fact and fancy exercise - @ 500 words -

write down a short autobiographical incident, alternate 1 sentence of objective fact ~~and one sentence~~ with focused details, without bias or interpretation. The next sentence should be personal opinion; it should reveal feeling; it should respond to the factual sentence but it need not respond directly.

The best fiction to come from this exercise has been when the sentence pairings are tangential or associative rather than cause and effect.

agents -

Characters want
Characters Act
Characters CHOOSE -

Person 1
Exercise for ~~Person~~-

What DIDN'T happen

Person 1 (fantasy life)

~~Person~~ - assign each person a
Fantasy for ~~Person~~ - "Character"
Wizard

romance on Mercury
Space pilot / trader

You are "Character"
~~Person~~ -

Person 2
Exercise for ~~Person~~-

WHAT is "Character"
~~Person~~?

Robot?

fully biological clone?

How is he viewed by his
Society?

By Kauru?

How is "Character 1" ~~Water (met.)~~ diff from "Character 2" ~~Water (rep)~~?

What in pockets?
images?

Exercise for ^{Person 3}~~Kate~~ -

Images / Collage -

Start with the port of
the game -

What other images do
you get?

Make an image collage -
Move out from the
port -

Port suggests -

image ←
↑

→ images → ↑
images

rejection
24 hour rule
rejection letters (kinds)

2 kinds of exercises -

accessing right brain
creativity

(we're very good at getting to
and using left brain, but
right brain is a black box)

left brain - working on language skills

"You Lie"

Improv scene game to
explore character.

Author is "X" (Character)
Others are people in X's life who
want something.

Improv Scenes.

Author can stop any scene
by saying "You lie"

but then tells us why -
what really happened!

what's in ~~the~~ its pockets?

off the top of your head, very quickly,
list ten things in the character's
pockets/backpack/bag -

~~de Courdevon -] Centralité pères~~
~~WGS-~~

Opposition -

Slowing down -

Flexing

Show, don't tell

PAC 104 - an entire Subject -
event -

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