

A Picture Is Worth 1,000 Words: And That's It.

Thanks for joining us! Before we get started, here is a bit about how this course will work.

The Idea Behind This Course

This course is meant as an introductory course to my teaching style, and my theories behind the writing process. Maybe you've never written anything before. Maybe you write every day. We can all learn from each other.

I write, read, and listen to a lot of short stories. One trap that I notice a lot of people falling into is trying to cram too much into a word or time limit. If you stick by the saying "A picture is worth 1,000 words," I believe you can accurately gauge how long your story needs to be to do the material justice.

One plot line + One character + One scene = 1,000 words.

The concept is as simple as that.

This course will focus on techniques to maximize your word impact while minimizing your word count.

Course Outline

Week one: February 14th – February 20th

Topic: *Small ideas don't have to be small*

Week two: February 21st – February 27th

Topic: *Setting the scene*

Week three: February 28th – March 6th

Topic: *Fully developing a character in minimal time*

Week four: March 7th – March 13th

Topic: *Trimming the fat and finding the real story.*

Weekly Course Materials

On each Sunday morning (beginning February 14th), new material will be available online. Each week includes the following:

- **Lesson** : the aspect of writing and the creative process that I want you to focus on in your work that week. Available as both a podcast and as a text file.
- **Watch**: a short film that I feel highlights that week's concept in film. Selections from Pixar and random YouTube users will be used.
- **Read**: A story from (in my opinion) some of the best writers of short short fiction that illustrates the week's concept.
- **Write (1)**: Writing exercises for you to do on your own to start the creative ideas flowing.
- **Write (2)**: The story you will turn in each week for workshop.

Weekly Stories

Each person in class will write and post a story of no more than 1,000 words by **Thursday 5pm**. The story assignments will be intentionally broad, and can be either fiction or creative non-fiction (please no poetry or scripts / screenplays). I will provide private feedback on each story, but we will also use these for the basis of discussion each week so you can receive feedback from others taking the course.

Weekly Forums and Chats

I believe that workshop and discussion are integral parts of any writing course. This is not incredibly easy to replicate in an online class, but through the use of both live chat sessions and forum discussions, I think we can do it.

Live group chat sessions will be on **Wednesdays 7pm - 9pm** and **Saturdays 2pm - 4pm**. We'll do some free writing exercises, discuss that week's topic, everyone will have a chance to ask questions, and we can workshop pieces.

Forums and discussion boards will be available for each week, and we'll start a discussion thread for each story.

I strongly encourage you to participate in live chats and the forums.



Final Story

Your final story must be completed by **March 13th**. There are only three criteria that must be met:

1. The word count is 1,000 words or less.
2. It must have a title.
3. You are happy with, and proud of, it.



Podcast

A podcast of the final stories (if you choose to be included) will be released on **March 21st**. If you provide me with an mp3 recording, it is free. If you elect to have a local professional do a reading of your story (trust me, the experience of hearing someone else read your words is incredibly), the cost is \$10. The podcast will be available as a free download on iTunes.

Are you ready? Let's do it!