

The Best Short Stories of 2023: The O'Henry Prize Winners

Winter 2024, Lifelong Learning Collaborative

Syllabus

The short story is a complex form of fiction. In her introduction to *The O'Henry Collection of Short Stories 2023*, Lauren Groff notes that the short story form is infinitely malleable, gorgeously economical, endlessly surprising, long enough to lose oneself in, but short enough to deliver a satisfying gut punch. In this course we will take up the challenge of evaluating the gut punch of a variety of contemporary short stories presented in this anthology.

Course Format

For our exploration of the short story, each participant will present a synopsis of a story of choice and guide the group discussion of that story. Two stories will be discussed each class session, 55 minutes for each, 10-minute break between. The presenter will email a list of questions to structure the discussion to the Course Coordinator by the Sunday before the presentation date so that they can be distributed to class members prior to the class. Stories will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis, so it is advised to get the text and choose a preferred story as early as possible. A request to take a pass on leading the discussion of a story will be respected.

Resources/Expenses

The text, *The O'Henry Collection of Short Stories, 2023*, edited by Lauren Groff, is available from local bookstores for \$18.00, and \$16.00 from alibris.com, which obtains books from independent book stores.

Course Coordinator:

Patricia Becker, a retired University of Wisconsin-Madison professor, has coordinated several previous LLC short story classes and previously coordinated an English literature course for the Madison, WI equivalent of LLC. ptbecker@wisc.edu (608)320-7166