

"Intro to Fiction" Anthology

"INTRO TO FICTION" ANTHOLOGY

Readings from Marginalized Voices and Identities

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ENG 104Z, Intro to Fiction, Anthology, grew out of two distinct yet complementary desires:

1. to provide students with an anthology of free, open-resourced *contemporary* literature and
2. to include marginalized voices across race, ethnicity, and genders.

For the first goal: it is *really* difficult to find free, open-sourced, high quality fiction written by writers who are still alive. There's a good reason for this: most living writers wisely (and often desperately) hang onto the rights to their published works, in the hope of scratching out a nominal existence. I fully support and protect all authors' rights to every penny they can earn from their works, both in the classes I teach and in the creation of this anthology. By including these open-sourced works, my hope is that students will discover authors to keep reading and eventually—joy of joys—purchase the books once they are fully employed citizens with cash to burn. Or maybe my students will discover a love of reading and use public libraries the rest of their lives. Either one is a win!

For the second goal: there's no denying the ability of great literature to transcend boundaries of nationality, race, gender, age and pretty much any other identity. While Hemingway doesn't do much for my students, they love Norman Maclean and Raymond Carver. "Babylon Revisited" breaks their hearts. Tim O'Brien causes them to rethink military recruitment posters. At the same time, there's also no denying the huge, affirming appeal of reading about someone—fictive or non-fictive—who looks and talks and lives the way you do. This is especially important for community college students who have been told or sensed or fear that they are not "college material." To encounter characters in literature that share their identity, whatever it is, can be transformative.

These days fewer than 40% of my students identify as male. Of those who do, at least 25% are non-Caucasian; 20% have one or more disabilities; over half are poor; and many identify as LGBTQ+. Even rudimentary math reveals that the works in most fiction anthologies fail to represent the backgrounds, lived experiences and futures of the vast majority of my students.

My students dive deep into characters who struggle with racism; whose parents work as maids or fruit pickers; whose children venture out on the streets wondering if they will come back. They find access through authors who aren't afraid to use their first language, who find strength in voicing their vulnerability. All of my students learn when James Baldwin's character Sonny plays the blues. We all come together recognizing that not everyone's brain works in the same way...and accept how wonderful that can be.

So here it is: my attempt to collate a few modern-to-contemporary, diverse, accessible works of fiction that include and illuminate voices that need to be heard.

A few notes:

- Many of these works are drawn from websites that may not remain viable in perpetuity.
- Many individual works are part of much larger open sources, such as reading lists, literary magazines and other OERS. I have identified these and encourage any reader to explore further and perhaps expand this anthology, which is truly a work on progress.
- I did not include works found in E-books from my community or college library, but e-books can be an excellent source of contemporary, diverse literature (depending, that is, on your geo-political location).
- I consider this anthology to be the beginning of a dynamic collaboration. Make it your own, add and subtract to the offers, and share it with others.

Let's converse and collaborate over our mutual love of literature and all that it can do!

Leigh Hancock

Introduction to Literature: An Anthology



INTRODUCTION FOR STUDENTS

Dear Students,

Welcome to the *Introduction to Fiction Anthology*. You are most likely accessing this book to fulfill assignments for a course in literature. Or maybe you're just looking for new, relevant fiction to read. Either way, I'd like to explain a few things about this text, beginning with why I put these readings together. As a community college instructor, I have spent *years* looking for an online, free short fiction (stories) written by writers who are still alive and well. I have also looked for stories written by voices across the spectrum of race, ethnicity, gender and abilities, stories that speak to my students' lived experiences. Both criteria are extremely hard to find, especially in an open-source text, i.e., one that can be offered for free to students.

But first: what is open source? Open source textbooks are created and offered to students, instructors and the public under what is called an "open license." This means that the author or editor of the text does not expect or require payment when the text is used. Publishers and distributors are also not receiving payment, so the text is usually offered free of charge—although print versions may come with a low fee. Either way, these open sourced materials provide huge savings to students at a time when textbook costs have soared; Open Source materials remove financial burdens for all students .

There are numerous places online to find fictional works by writers who are no longer living, primarily because the copyright for their works has expired. In other words, works by authors like Shakespeare and Mark Twain can be accessed online without any charge. But contemporary, living writers *need* to charge for their works; that's how they support themselves. (They also support the huge publishing industry, but that's another story.) The links provided here lead you to rare, open sourced (i.e., free) stories by living writers. I hope you enjoy them.

As you read these stories, I hope you will do three things:

1. Take the time to enjoy and even reread them. They're worth it.
2. Make a note of stories that really grab you, and look for more works by that author.
3. Consider supporting authors you really like by purchasing their books.

A few notes:

- Many of these works are drawn from websites that may not remain viable forever. I apologize in advance for any broken links.
- Many individual works are part of much larger open sources, such as reading lists, literary magazines and other OERS. I have identified these and encourage you to explore other works on these websites

- I did not include works found in E-books from my community or college library, but e-books can be an excellent source of contemporary, diverse literature.

Compiling an anthology takes time and effort. This anthology was created with support from Open Oregon, a program which is program is funded by the Community College and Workforce Development Office of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission and the Oregon State Legislature.

1.

LATINX LITERATURE

Open Sourced, Contemporary Latinx Authors

Here is a list of ten works by mostly living writers of Latinx descent. For every one here, there are dozens more that could be added, but this is a good start. As you access these works, please note the websites or publications that host them, as many of them are great sources for authors of other identities. I list a few in the final chapter.

- [“The Husband Stitch”](#) by Carmen Machada
- Other works by [Machada](#)
- [“The Eyes of a Blue Dog”](#) by Gabriel Garcia Marquez
- [A Manual for Cleaning ladies](#) by Lucia Berlin
- [“Antojos”](#) by Julia Alvarez
- [“A Centimeter or Two a year by Matias Capelli](#)
- [Seven stories](#) by Junot Diaz
- [The House on Mango Street](#) by *Sandra Cisneros*
- [“City of Clowns”](#) by Daniel Alarcon
- [“Headlights”](#) by Samanta Schweblin

2.

FICTION BY BLACK AUTHORS

The works listed below represent a brief mix of classic and contemporary works by Black authors. For every one, there should be ten more, but what's here is a good representation of some of the strongest Black voices of the last century.

["Spunk"](#) by Zora Neale Hurston

[*Fire: A Quarterly Devoted to Younger Negro Artists*](#) (1923)

["The Lesson"](#) by Toni Cade Bambara

["Sonny's Blues"](#) by James Baldwin

["Recitatif"](#) by Toni Morrison

[*Twelve Stories by Black Writers*](#)

["Cell One"](#) by Chimamanda Adichie

["Cattle Haul"](#) by Jessmyn Ward

["The Book of Martha"](#) by Octavio Butler

["Girl"](#) by Jamaica Kincaid

3.

NATIVE AMERICAN LITERATURE

Native American Authors

Literature by Native American authors, while always rich and important, has experienced a huge resurgence, with more and more voices entering print than ever before. A few of the authors listed below—Erdrich, Silko—have been writing for decades, but most of these featured authors are less than a decade on the scene. Their voices are dynamic and diverse, dispelling the myth that Native Americans have a single story to tell. Most of them have published novels, which are well worth the addition to any curriculum; while almost impossible to find as OER, buying these novels does support indigenous writers who need to be heard.

Louise Erdrich [“American Horse”](#)

Leslie Marmon Silko [“Tony’s Story”](#)

Tommy Orange [“The Team”](#)

Teresa Mailhot’s Excerpt from [“Heart Berries”](#)

Eddie Chuculate. [“Yoyo”](#)

Rebecca Roanhose, [“Welcome to Your Authentic Indian Experience?”](#)

Daniel H Wilson, [“Crystalline”](#)

“Burn” by Morgan Talty

[Reckonings: Contemporary Short Fiction by Native American Women](#)

4.

ASIAN LITERATURE

Asian (American) Authors

The term Asian (American) authors denotes perhaps the most diverse voices in this anthology, with authors having roots across regions of the Asian continent. Yet this chapter still barely scratches the surface of the Asian American experience, and is offered with the humble hope that others will contribute and expand what's here.

["Two Kinds"](#) by Amy Tan

["Who's Irish?"](#) by Gish Jen

[*Pachinko*](#), excerpted chapters, by Min Jin Lee

["Kartika,"](#) by Neha Chaudhary-Kamdar

["The Fox Spirit's Retelling"](#) by Wen Wen Yang

["A Temporary Matter"](#) by Jhumpa Lahiri

["My Dear You"](#) by Rachel Khon

["A Flawless Silence"](#) by Yiyun Li

["Sweetheart Sorrow"](#) by David Hoon Kiim

[*Are You Listening? Voices from the Middle East*](#) – Story Anthology

5.

STORIES BY WRITERS WITH DISABILITIES

Authors with Disabilities

This chapter differs from the others in that most of the links lead to publications that feature authors with disabilities. Since many disabilities are invisible, and since some authors prefer not to have their disabilities revealed, I chose to list here publications featuring authors with disabilities.

[\(Dis\)Ability: A Short Story Anthology](#) This source features the short stories of twenty writers with disabilities.

[Kaleidoscope Magazine](#) creatively focuses on the experiences of disability through literature and the fine arts.

[Literature and Disability](#) by Alice Hall. A scholarly exploration of disability in literature

[“Trail Soup”](#) by Teresa Milbrodt

[Wordgathering: A Journal of Disability Poetry and Literature](#)

6.

LGBTQ+ LITERATURE

LGBTQ+ Authors

A regrettably short list of LGBTQ authors. More to come!

[*The Early Stories of Truman Capote*](#)

[*The Price of Salt*](#) by Patricia Highsmith (novel)

[*On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*](#) by Ocean Vuong

[*Stone Blues*](#) by Leslie Feinberg

[*Free LGBTQ Reads*](#) (*hyper-linked list*)

7.

A FEW CLASSICS

Classics that Speak to Universal Themes

These are a few OER works that have spoken to my students of marginalized identities \.

[“A River Runs through It”](#) by Norman MacLean

[“Cathedral”](#) by Raymond Carver

[“The Yellow Wallpaper”](#) by Charlotte Perkins Gilman

[My Antonia](#) by Willa Cather

[“Babylon Revisited”](#) by F.S. Fitzgerald

[The Things They Carried](#) by Tim O’Brien

Resources

Here are a few of the most reliable sources I've found for OER fiction:

[Project Gutenberg](#) – Free texts by writers who have passed into the public domain

[Open Culture](#) Free e-books by non-living but in some cases modern writers

[Granta Magazine](#)

[Apex Magazine](#)

[New York Times](#)

[Oprah](#)

[The Partisan Hotel](#)

[Classic Shorts](#)

The New Yorker (this one is tricky, as you can only access so many stories per month)

There are many online sources that offer free texts, but you have to register. I did not include these in this list or anthology.