

Writing 301

“THE ART OF FICTION: SHORT FICTION--FORM AND PRACTICE”

with Visiting Writer in Residence Fall Quarter 2010

ZAKES MDA

Monday and Wednesday 2:00-3:20 pm



ZAKES MDA

Zakes Mda is a South African writer, painter, filmmaker and music composer. He has published sixteen books, eight of which are novels and the rest collections of plays, poetry and a monograph on the theory and practice of theater-for-development. His works have been translated into 20 languages, including Catalan, Korean, Serbian, Norwegian and Italian. They have won a number of awards, including the Amstel Playwright of the Year Award, the Commonwealth Writers Prize for Africa, the Zora Neale Hurston/Richard Wright Legacy Award and the American Library Association Notable Book. His novel *Cion*, set in southeast Ohio, was nominated for the NAACP Image Award. He commutes between the USA and South Africa, working as a professor of creative writing at Ohio University, a beekeeper in the Eastern Cape, a dramaturge at the Market Theater, Johannesburg, and a director of the Southern African Multimedia AIDS Trust in Sophiatown, Johannesburg.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is open by application only to undergraduates.

The course is designed to guide you through the key aspects of the narrative. The focus is on short fiction -- its form and practice. We will examine its basic techniques and structure through an extensive analysis of student work and established models. Most of the class periods will assume a workshop format and focus on student work. You will be expected to do class presentations on the elements of fiction and on the model stories from our prescribed text. By the end of the course you should be able to write a conventional short story with round and flat characters, with adequate motivation and justification underlying their actions, and conflicts that develop in a narrative/emotional arc to a climax. This means that this class is not interested in pieces that are sustained only by voice or in open-structure stories. Our focus is on the traditional narrative structure.