

## **Creative Writing: Introduction to Poetry and Fiction**

CRWRI-UA.815, Section 011, Fall 2017

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:30-10:45

Instructor: Rachel Mannheimer

Contact: rem430@nyu.edu

Office hours: TBD

**Objective:** This class is intended as an introduction to the study and practice of creative writing. We will write regularly. We will read (largely) contemporary literature — poems, short stories, and occasional novel excerpts — to familiarize ourselves with the current literary landscape, to see *what* people are writing and *how* they are writing it, and what techniques or approaches we can learn/borrow/adapt from them. We will share writing with each other in a workshop setting, facilitating thinking about readership, communion and community, and how to revise and edit our own and others' work.

### **Course structure and assignments:**

**Craft Tuesdays:** We will discuss the week's assigned readings, with an eye to the craft of each. You will be expected to come prepared with a short response (one page, double-spaced). This doesn't have to be an essay, per se, just questions and observations you might hope to discuss further in class. You can focus on one text we've read or look at them comparatively.

After our discussion, I will also give you a writing prompt for a short, creative response to the reading. We may start this in class, if time allows. You will write a page or less, poetry or prose, to be turned in to me the following Tuesday. This is intended to keep you writing and generating — and one of these short pieces can certainly be expanded into a piece for workshop, if you hit on something you like!

**Workshop Thursdays:** We will be divided into workshop groups of 5 students; you will each be workshopped four times. Your workshop submission can be your choice of poetry (1-2 poems, up to 3 pages) or fiction (one story, 3-10 pages). However, you must submit a workshop piece in each genre at least once. Pieces to be workshopped must be printed and brought to class the week prior, so your classmates will have time to read and thoughtfully respond. In responding to your classmates' work, you are encouraged to write in the margins; you will also give each writer a short (1/2 page - 1 page, double-spaced) letter with more general comments. (Please bring two copies of this letter, one for your classmate and one for me.)

**Materials:** All texts will be uploaded to NYU Classes; you are responsible for bringing printed copies to class.

**Grading:**

Participation: 20%

Weekly assignments: 50%

Workshop submissions and final portfolio: 30%

**Grading guidelines:**

Participation: This includes attendance, contribution to in-class discussion, and meeting with me for office hours at least once.

Weekly assignments: This is the biggest part of your grade, and includes critical responses to the texts we read, creative responses to the prompts given, and written responses to your classmates on their workshop writing.

Workshop submissions and portfolio: You will not be graded on the *quality* of your writing. However, I do want your writing to reflect thought, effort, and care. It doesn't have to be finished, but refined to the point where it will benefit from the close reading of your peers. Your final portfolio will bring together five pieces of writing you're most proud of, three of them showing substantial revision. (Please provide both first and final drafts of revised pieces). A brief cover letter will reflect on where you are as a writer, what you've learned, the revision process, and what you still hope to improve on.

**Class policies:**

Attendance: Attendance is part of your participation grade, and is important to make every effort to be in class on time. More than two unexcused absences will affect your grade by one half-letter, and two late arrivals (10 minutes late or more) equal an absence. If you do anticipate being tardy or absent, it is always best to let me know ahead of time.

Technology and electronics: Engagement with each other is crucial in this class, and technology should not get in the way of that. No laptops or phone use, please.

Plagiarism: NYU's policy on academic integrity will be strictly enforced.

Workshop etiquette: This is basically just an extension of regular human etiquette. Treat your classmates and their writing with respect. Focus first on what is working in each piece; positive feedback is criticism, too! On the other hand, 100% positive feedback is not particularly constructive. Strive for balance: it is usually precisely that which is successful in a piece of writing that helps us identify points of uncertainty or inconsistency. Good work is created by taking risks and trying new things. Help your classmates feel safe taking these risks with you.

**Provisional class schedule:**

Tues., September 5 Introductions. Discussion: Why we write; genre

Thurs., September 7 Workshop practice. Discussion: Drafts and revisions of poems. In-class readings: Marianne Moore, "Poetry"; Emily Dickinson; Marie Howe, "The Map"

Tues., September 12 Hybrids. Readings: Claudia Rankine, Maggie Nelson, Joy Williams

Thurs., September 14 Workshop Group A

Tues., September 19 Form: Sonnet, Sestina, Pantoum: Shakespeare, Olena Kalytiak Davis, Terrance Hayes; Marie Ponsot, Ciara Shuttleworth; Natalie Diaz

Thurs., September 21 Workshop Group B

Tues., September 26 Beginnings: Ocean Vuong, Elif Batuman

Thurs., September 28 Workshop Group C

Tues., October 3 Observation: Odes/Ekphrasis: Steph Burt, Sharon Olds, Roger Reeves, Ben Lerner

Thurs., October 5 Workshop Group A

Tues., October 10 Translation/Adaptation: Paul Legault, Aimee Bender

Thurs., October 12 Workshop Group B

Tues., October 17 Region: Joan Kane, Frank O'Hara, Teju Cole

Thurs., October 19 Workshop Group C

Tues., October 24 Tone and Humor: John Ashbery, Tommy Pico, Lorrie Moore

Thurs., October 26 Workshop Group A

Tues., October 31 Dreams and Desire: Michael Dickman, Richard Siken, Leopoldine Core

Thurs., November 2 Workshop Group B

Tues., November 7 Dialogue: Samuel Beckett, Sally Rooney

Thurs., November 9 Workshop Group C

Tues., November 14 Character: Noelle Kocot; Claire Vaye Watkins

Thurs., November 16 Workshop Group A

Tues., November 21 Travel: Elizabeth Bishop, Otessa Moshfegh

Thurs., November 23 NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Break)

Tues., November 28 Family: Philip Larkin, Rita Dove, Jenny Zhang

Thurs., November 30 Workshop Group B

Tues., December 5 Friendship: James Schuyler, C.P. Cavafy, Z. Z. Packer

Thurs., December 7 Workshop Group C

Tues., December 12 NO CLASS (Legislative Day - Classes meet according to Monday schedule)

Thurs., December 14 Final class, party, reading. Please bring your final portfolio — we will share aloud from them (and turn in to me!)