“Writers of New York”

Introduction to Creative Writing: Fiction & Poetry
(CRWRI-UA.815.013)
Fall 2017

Instructor: Claire Martin

Days: TuTh 2 – 3:15 PM
Location: GCASL 384
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Office Hours: By appointment

Spiel

In this class, we will explore New York City through the eyes of the writers and poets who lived or were influenced by it from within the last 50 years. The objective of this course is to facilitate creative writing by means of lived experience, personal and cultural influences, ekphrastic responses and self-direction. No art form should exist lonely inside of itself. Nor should it feel polarized by “an elite.” The best writers are individuals who can appreciate more than just the Canon of literary arts, who learn and draw from all areas of their lives. Good writing comes out of careful observation. Therefore for this course, you will be expected to thoughtfully engage each artistic work, produce your own work and learn how to critique it. This is not a “traditional” writing course. However, do expect this class to be equally rigorous and held to a strict academic standard.

Readings

Required Texts:
Coeur de Lion by Ariana Reines
for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf
by Ntozake Shange

All other poetry, fiction and nonfiction reading materials will be posted as PDF files.

Other Materials

Throughout the course you will be required to listen to songs, analyze photographs, paintings, etc. Equal attention will be paid to these art mediums as well as the reading materials. Such consideration is paramount for your success in this course. These materials will be made available in class.
This class is a writing course. I expect the writing standards to be high in terms of editorial proofreading, development of ideas and effort. You will be required to submit a monthly reflection with a one-page minimum written on the assigned materials. These responses will be due at the beginning of class in hard copy (see schedule). Responses should show an intellectual evaluation of the works: what they are doing, how they make you feel, if you find them successful, what conversations they inspire, other questions you have, etc. You must write about a minimum of two works from the current month.

You will need a notebook designated for this course and this course only.

Tuesday class time is divided between reading discussion and writing exercises. One half of class will be dedicated to in-class writing prompts, communal or individual. The other half of class is reserved for writing craft discussions centered on the required readings.

Thursday is workshop day. Workshop groups will be broken into Group A and B on the first day of class. Workshop groups will rotate every Thursday as outlined (see schedule). Everyone will be workshoped a total of 6 times.

You will be required to submit four poems and two short stories. Poems can be any length. Short stories are capped at 7 pages. If you miss class during your scheduled workshop you will sacrifice half your points for that workshop. Half credit will be given to late submissions (submitted day of).

You must distribute hardcopies of your pieces. They are due the Tuesday before your assigned workshop. All of us will read your piece, comment on the work in pencil, and return it to you after your workshop is finished. Everyone must sign their name along with their comments.

***A note on comments: I will NOT tolerate rude, patronizing, snobby or mean-spirited comments. If you feel personally attacked, or if I feel a particular comment spoken in class is any of the afore mentioned, the person responsible will be addressed with serious consequences.

A final portfolio of your revised poems and short stories are due on the last day of class. Please include the original copy with my comments and your revised versions. Also a final reflection is required, outlining how you have developed creatively as a writer throughout the semester.
Housekeeping

Attendance: You are allowed two excused absences per semester. Any absences beyond that will negatively affect your grade a half point. So if you earned an A but missed 3 classes, you will receive an A-, a B but you missed 4 classes, you would end up with C+. Come to class.

If you're sick or mentally unwell or whatever other reason and you can provide legitimate documentation, then email me and we can, of course, figure something out. Communication is key. But university policy still rules.

Tardiness: Don't be late please. Anything after 15 minutes is counted as a half absence. Anything after 30 minutes is an absence even if you do show up. Again, communication is essential. Please let me know ahead of time by email.

Technology: No cell phones, laptops, tablets or any devices unless otherwise noted.

Plagiarism: This is a creative writing course, stress on the word "creative." Come up with your own ideas. To avoid getting kicked out of school, please familiarize yourself with the NYU Plagiarism Policy.

Content: This class is structured around artistic expressions that may present "adult" content.

Participation: Speaking your mind is important. In fact, some of your grade depends on it! If you are shy, make it a point to say something once a week. Participation is an ESSENTIAL aspect of a healthy workshop.

Formatting: Monthly reflections should be single-spaced (see example). Poems can be spaced any way you feel is appropriate. Short stories are to be double-spaced.

ABCs

Grading: There are 500 points possible for this course.

Attendance/Participation 15%  75 pts
Workshop Submissions 30%  150 pts
Monthly Reflections 30%  150 pts
Final Portfolio 25%  125 pts
**The Schedule**

**T** Sept. 5th – Introductions / Workshop Sign-up  
Th Sept. 7th – First Workshop Run-Thru

**T** Sept. 12th – “Franny” by J.D. Salinger  
Th Sept. 14th – **Group A** workshop

**T** Sept. 19th – Selections. *Lunch Poems* by Frank O’Hara  
Th Sept. 21st – **Group B** workshop

**T** Sept. 26th – Selections. *Sonnets* by Ted Berrigan  
Th Sept. 28th – **Group A** workshop

**T** Oct. 3rd – *for colored girls…* by Ntozake Shange  
Th Oct. 5th – **Group B** workshop / **Monthly Reflection** due

**T** Oct. 10th – Selections. *Little Birds* by Anaïs Nin  
Th Oct. 12th – **Group A** workshop

**T** Oct. 17th – Selections. *Satan Says* by Sharon Olds  
Th Oct. 19th – **Group B** workshop

**T** Oct. 24th – Selections. *Just Kids* by Patti Smith  
Th Oct. 26th – **Group A** workshop

**T** Oct. 31st – “The Bloody Chamber” by Angela Carter  
Th Nov. 2nd – **Group B** workshop / **Monthly Reflection** due

**T** Nov. 7th – Selections. *My Feelings* by Nick Flynn  
Th Nov. 9th – **Group A** workshop

**T** Nov. 14th – Selections. *When Watched* by Leopoldine Core  
Th Nov. 16th – **Group B** workshop

**T** Nov. 21st – Selections. *This Is How You Lose Her* by Junot Díaz  
Th Nov. 23rd – No Class

**T** Nov. 28th – *Coeur de Lion* by Ariana Reines  
Th Nov. 30th – **Group A** workshop / **Monthly Reflection** due

**T** Dec. 5th – Selections. *Night Sky w/ Exit Wounds* by Ocean Vuong  
Th Dec. 7th – **Group B** workshop

**T** Dec. 12th – Meditation, Tarot and Automatic Writing  
Th Dec. 14th – TBD / **Final Portfolio** due