

Creative Writing: Introduction to Fiction and Poetry
CRWRI-UA.815, Section 016
Fall 2017, MW: 9:30 AM - 10:45 AM

Instructor: Wilson Ding
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Office Hours: TBD and by appointment

Course Overview:

“Remember, a writer writes, always.”

–Larry, as played by Billy Crystal in the 1987 film *Throw Momma From the Train*

The purpose of this class is to encourage your writing, both in poetry and prose. Our readings will take us abroad, away from North America, to peer into the works of other writers — both past and present — who come from a wide range of literary traditions. We will spend time questioning the stylistic choices made by these authors and then examine the choices that we make in our own work with the view that we may be more cognizant of our own creative process.

Course Structure

Monday: Craft of Writing/Craft of Poetry

What happens?

Our class time on Monday will be used for discussing allocated readings and for in-class presentations. Our readings will comprise of writers of the past and present from a wide range of literary traditions. We will pay close attention to the elements of style, how they differ from North American traditions, and, most importantly, ask ourselves how effective the Author is in persuading/enlightening/moving/entertaining us: the all-important reader. To do this we will undertake semi-rigorous analysis of the tools and mechanics at the sentence level and see how (if) it works within the machinery of the section/chapter/piece.

What is expected from you?

For class, please bring printed copies of the day’s readings to class. Additionally, please write down at least three sentences that you liked (or disliked) and be prepared to share them in class.

Wednesday: Workshop

What happens?

The focus of workshop is to discuss and critique the work of your fellow writers. Each student will be workshopped two to three times over the course of the semester, at least once for fiction and at least once for poetry. There are no

conditions on what you can and cannot write. In fact, you're encouraged to experiment and experiment widely, as you will see with the authors on our reading list.

What is expected from you?

For students not being workshopped you will be required to participate in in-class verbal discussions of the work submitted. Additionally, you are expected to submit a one page double-spaced letter (between 200 – 250 words) along with an annotated copy of the work with suggestions and edits. Please provide me a printed copy of this letter as it will form part of your grade. Feedback must be thoughtful and constructive. There is no point in simply saying that you liked or disliked something. Provide reasons. The writer will appreciate your carefully considered feedback and will be more likely to reciprocate when it is your turn to be workshopped.

Students being workshopped must submit their writing on the Wednesday prior to their workshop date. You must print out copies of your work to be made available for everyone in the class. Submissions for fiction must be between 8 – 15 pages double-spaced. This may include short stories and/or sections of a longer work. Submissions for Poetry must include 2-3 poems (not Haikus) and must not be longer than 10 pages.

More will be said about workshop etiquette when we meet in class.

What your final grade will comprise of:

- 1) Written Submissions for workshop in both Poetry and Fiction (40%)
- 2) Class Participation and Written Feedback to your fellow writers (30%)
- 3) Attendance (10%)
- 4) Final Portfolio (20%)

Administration and Expectation

Attendance: Students are expected to attend all classes in which they are enrolled. If you are unable to attend a class, please let me know in advance. One unexcused absence is within acceptable parameters. Further absences will only be acceptable in cases of serious illness (with accompanying medical certificate) or family emergency. Unexcused absences will result in the loss of one full letter grade from your attendance grade. Two instances of tardiness (being more than ten minutes late to class) will be equated to one absence. If you are fifteen minutes late to class, it will be counted as an absence. If you must miss a class due to familial obligation, religious reasons, or civic duties, you must e-mail me about said absence a week in advance. Absences for other reasons will not be considered excusable. Missing a day in which you are to be workshopped will result in a 10% cut to your entire grade as well as a full letter grade reduction to your attendance grade. If you know you will miss a day that you are scheduled to be workshopped, please contact me and we will reschedule.

Behavior in class: I expect all students to conduct themselves with integrity and participate in a manner that is respectful to all students. Bullying and harassment of any kind on other students is completely unacceptable and may lead to disciplinary action.

Technology: You will not need laptops or tablets for this class. Your essential tools as a writer are a pen and paper. Printouts will be provided in class. Phones must be on silent and put away to avoid disruption in class. This class requires your active participation, be engaged and present.

Consultation and Office Hours: I require all my students to meet with me at least once over the course of the semester. This consultation will contribute towards your participation grade. More importantly, this is an opportunity for you to raise any lingering questions or concerns that you may not have wanted to in class. I would advise scheduling consultation in the week after your scheduled workshop so that we may go over any additional concerns over your work.

Final Portfolio: Your final portfolio will consist of the revised versions of your work submitted to workshop during the semester. This will comprise of two works of short fiction (or chapter of a longer work) and at least three poems. Your final portfolio shall not exceed 40 pages double-spaced.

Extra Credit: You can receive extra credit by attending a reading at NYU or elsewhere in the city, writing a two page double-spaced response on the experience and what you heard, and attaching a ticket stub, flyer, program, etc. These count as extra reading responses. Up to 2 per student. Hand in extra credit assignments to me in the first 5 minutes of the following class period. If you've got time, do it! It's fun and super easy to boost up your grade. I will post all upcoming reading events at the NYU Writers House on the class email thread.

Late Work: All written submissions must be submitted on time to avoid significant reductions in grade. For each day an assignment is late you will lose a full letter grad on that assignment.

Plagiarism: Just don't. NYU has a zero tolerance plagiarism policy and any student found to have plagiarized will be forcing my hand. Trust me, it won't be a fun time for anybody involved.

Required Readings

Fiction:

Anton Chekov – *Oysters, Lady with the Dog*

Clarice Lispector – *The Hour of the Star, The Fifth Story*

Samuel Beckett – *First Love*

Italo Calvino – *If on a Winters Night a Traveller*

Bioy Casares – *The Invention of Morel*

Yasunari Kawabata – *Thousand Cranes*

Jorge Luis Borges – *The Library of Babel, The Immortal, The Garden of Forking Paths*

Raymond Radiguet – *The Devil in the Flesh*

Essays:

Zadie Smith – *That Crafty Feeling*

Jorge Luis Borges - *This Craft of Verse* (Audio)

Poetry:

Mary Oliver — *Poetry Handbook*

Arthur Sze – Quipu

Arthur Rimbaud – Illuminations

Pablo Neruda - selected poems

John Keats - On First Looking into Chapman's Homer

Charles Simic - selected poems

Anne Carson - The Autobiography of Red

Tomaz Salamun - The Four Questions of Melancholy