Instructor: Hannah Hirsh  
Email: hlh329@nyu.edu  
Office hours: By appointment  

Objective  
In this class, we will approach texts not as critics, but as writers. This means that we will focus less on questions of literary interpretation, and more on analyzing the strategies of successful writers and thinking of ways to adapt these strategies to our own work. The class will be divided into equal parts craft and workshop. On Tuesdays, we will discuss the weekly readings with a focus on a specific element of craft (image, metaphor, narrative, perspective, etc.) On Thursdays, we will discuss the work of our classmates, providing thoughtful and constructive feedback while sharpening our own critical thinking skills.  

Required Texts  
Selected readings will be available on NYU Classes. Please print out hard copies before class.  

Grading  
Class Participation – 30%  
This class is discussion-based. In order for it to run smoothly, you must come to class prepared, having read all of the assigned reading, with at least three questions or observations about the texts. Be mindful of the page count for a given week, as some will be more than others.  

Written Work – 40%  
Your written work for this class will consist of a weekly writing exercise, comments on your classmates’ workshop pieces, and four workshop assignments. Your comments should be thoughtful close readings that include line edits as well as a short paragraph summarizing your thoughts; we will discuss how to write helpful and focused comments at the beginning of term. For your workshop assignments, you may choose to write either fiction or poetry, although you must write in each genre at least once. Workshop submissions are due Thursday at 11:59 PM the week before your piece is being workshopped. Short stories should be 7-10 pages, double-spaced; poems should be no more than 2 pages. Please include your name, the date, and your workshop group at the top of all workshop submissions. Pieces that demonstrate an obvious lack of care and effort will be graded accordingly.  

Final Portfolio – 25%  
Your final portfolio is an opportunity to demonstrate your growth as a writer over the course of the semester. It should consist of revised copies of your poems and stories; the
original drafts with my comments; and a 3-4 page double-spaced personal statement reflecting on what you’ve learned since September, how your writing has changed, how you’ve changed as a reader, and how you used what you learned to make decisions concerning revision. Please also include a cover page and table of contents.

Recitation – 5%
Humans memorized and recited poetry for thousands of years before writing was invented. The oral tradition of poetry is an important one, and learning a poem by heart is an opportunity to deepen your relationship with a text that is meaningful to you. Students will sign up for a recitation date during the first week of class, and full points will be awarded to those who recite at least 14 lines of poetry during the semester.

Your midterm grades will be posted on November 5th. If you are unhappy with your grade at that time, please schedule a conference with me so we can discuss how you can improve over the second half of the semester.

Attendance
Class begins promptly at 11 AM. Please plan to arrive 5 minutes early. If you are more than 10 minutes late to class, you will be considered tardy. Two tardy arrivals will count as one unexcused absence. You are permitted one unexcused absence without penalty for the semester; after that, each following absence will result in a reduction of your final grade by one-third of a letter grade.

Office Hours
Students are required to meet with me at least once throughout the semester. Office hours will be scheduled by appointment.

Late Work
Late work will not be accepted, except under extenuating circumstances. Please turn in work on time.

Plagiarism
Don’t even think about it. Plagiarism will result in an automatic failing grade and be reported to the university.

Food
I would prefer that people not eat in class; however, snacks will be permitted as long as they do not become a distraction. Please refrain from eating while your peers are reading their work aloud.

Technology
Phones and laptops are not permitted during class. All readings and written assignments must be printed in advance.
Schedule & Readings

Week 1
Tuesday, September 4 – Introductions & Syllabus
Thursday, September 6 – Advice, Instructions, & Lists

Week 2
Tuesday, September 11 – Image & Metaphor
Thursday, September 13 - Workshop Group A

Week 3
Tuesday, September 18 – Perspective & Voice
Thursday, September 20 - Workshop Group B

Week 4
Tuesday, September 25 – Narrative & Pacing
Thursday, September 27 October 4 – Workshop Group C

Week 5
Tuesday, October 2 – Rhythm, Repetition & Sounds
  ➢ “Spring in Fialta” (Nabokov), “I’m Over the Moon” (Brenda Shaughnessy), “Some Feel Rain” (Joanna Klink), “There Are Birds Here” (Jamaal May), “Memento Mori” (Catherine Barnett), “How to Draw a Perfect Circle” (Terrance Hayes)
Thursday, December 13 – Workshop Group A

Week 6
Tuesday, October 9 – No class (Legislative Day)
Thursday, October 11 – Workshop Group B

Week 7
Tuesday, October 16 – Place & Setting

Thursday, October 18 – Workshop Group C

Week 8
Tuesday, October 23 – Line Breaks & Poetic Forms (Poetry Only)

Thursday, October 25 – Workshop Group A

Week 9
Tuesday, October 30 – Adolescence & Coming of Age

Thursday, November 1 – Workshop Group B

Week 10
Tuesday, November 6 – Death & Elegy

Thursday, November 8 – Workshop Group C

Week 11
Tuesday, November 13 – Character Development (Fiction Only)

Thursday, November 15 – Workshop Group A

Week 12
Tuesday, November 20 – Myth, Magic, & Dreams

Thursday, November 22 – No class (Thanksgiving Recess)
**Week 13**

Tuesday, November 27 – Questions of Genre


Thursday, November 29 – Workshop Group B

**Week 14**

Tuesday, December 4 – Description, Odes & Ekphrasis


Thursday, December 6 – Workshop Group C

**Week 15**

Tuesday, December 11 – Influence, Appropriation & Erasure

- “Argos” (Joy Williams), “Leisure, Hannah, Does Not Agree With You (2)” (Hannah Gamble), “Blackacre” (Monica Youn), “Lying in a Hammock at William Duffy’s Farm in Pine Island, Minnesota” (James Wright), “Lying in a Hammock at Blue Mountain Center” (Maureen McLane)

Thursday, December 13 – In-class reading and party