

Introduction to Fiction & Poetry  
CRWRI-UA.815.013  
Tuesdays & Thursdays: 8 AM—9:15 AM  
**Location TBD**

Instructor: Maria Mazza  
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Office hours: by appointment

“All the world’s a stage  
And all the men and women merely players;  
They have their exits and their entrances,  
And one man in his time plays many parts.”

– William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*

### **Course Overview:**

The goal of this course is to improve your writing. Our means to this end is threefold:

1. Writing: Workshop our own fiction and poetry and participate in writing exercises
2. Evaluation: Critique our peers’ fiction and poetry
3. Craft: Study established writers’ fiction and poetry

### **How does workshop work?**

We will establish a workshop schedule to carry us through the semester. You will need to note both the dates you will be workshopped and the dates your pieces are due to the class. On the day your pieces are due (one week before you are being workshopped), you will bring in enough copies of your pieces for me and your peers.

Your feedback of your peers’ work is crucial to your course grade. In addition to reading your peers’ work for workshop days, you will also compose a peer feedback letter and print 2 copies, one copy for your peer and one copy for me. This letter will contain both the positive (things you liked about the work) and constructive criticism (things that you think can be improved). Try to avoid general statements like “I liked this.” and instead try to offer reasoning: “I liked this because...” Keep in mind that tone is important; we are here to grow as writers, not to hurt each others’ feelings.

### *Logistics of workshop:*

- Your piece(s) should be stapled, double-spaced, 12-point font, with page numbers on each page and your name at the top of the first page. If your piece has a title, don’t forget to tell us what it is.
- For fiction, your pieces should be 9–15 pages in length and can be short stories or excerpts of longer works; for poetry, please submit **roughly 3 pages per submission period**
- Your peer feedback letters should be ½ to 1 page, typed. Remember, print 2 copies
- Also note that you will annotate/line edit your peers’ work in addition to typing a peer feedback letter

- All NYU rules about plagiarism and academic integrity apply to this class. All instances of plagiarism will be reported

### **What is craft, and how will it work?**

In your previous English courses, you may have studied novels, short stories, and poems with a focus on reading comprehension. In craft, we approach literature through the lens of the writer; in this way, we examine what established authors have done successfully so we may learn from these successes. How has this writer played with structure? How did that writer's characterization move the plot forward? How has this writer dealt with the passage of time?

#### *Logistics of craft:*

Come to class prepared to discuss the assigned reading(s). This means you will have:

- Read the piece(s) before class
- Come to class with a list of 5 sentences you liked for fiction weeks and 3 lines you liked for poetry weeks, and be prepared to talk about why you liked them

### **The Day to Day**

On **Tuesdays**, we will workshop. Please consult our class workshop schedule and note which days you will be workshopped and which days your work is due to the class.

On **Thursdays**, we will work on craft and participate in writing exercises. I may ask you to finish some of our in-class writing exercises at home, and we will also revisit these exercises for our portfolios.

Bring a notebook and a pen, as well as any workshop pages/readings we will need for the day, with you to each class.

### **Office Hours**

I am available to discuss your writing and this course by appointment only. Please email me to schedule a time to meet.

### **Technology Policy**

Participation and peer feedback is crucial to this course. For this reason, laptops and cellphones are not permitted during our class time. If I see you using technology in class, this will affect your Attendance and Participation grade.

### **Required Texts**

**We will be reading texts by Lorrie Moore, George Saunders, Jhumpa Lahiri, Suzanne Collins, Lin-Manuel Miranda, William Shakespeare, George Ella Lyon, and others.**

### **Grading**

- Workshop Entries—40% (10% per submission)
  - o You will produce 2 fiction and 2 poetry submissions this semester. No late submissions will be accepted. If there is a problem with your submission date, please contact me.

- Peer Feedback and Participation—30%
  - Peer Feedback: This grade is calculated based on the typed peer feedback letters as well as your comments during in-class workshops. Everyone is expected to contribute to our workshop discussions.
  - Participation: In addition to participating in workshop discussions, you must also engage in our craft discussions. Everyone has opinions; I want to hear yours.
- Attendance—10%
  - Workshops thrive on communication among peers, and for this reason, attendance is crucial. You get two free absences over the course of the semester. Every unexcused absence after that will dock 1/3 off of your grade. (This means an A will drop to an A-, an A- will drop to a B+, etc.) An excused absence includes a formal doctor's note or similarly official document. If you are late (arriving to class 15 minutes after we have begun our discussion), this counts as an unexcused absence. If you are going to miss a class (excused or not), you must email me to let me know—no exceptions.
- Final Portfolio—15%
  - On our last day of **the semester**, you will hand in your final portfolio **to my mailbox**. This will consist of one rewritten workshop piece and one rewritten poem. We will discuss this more in depth as we near the end of the semester.
- Writing Assignments—5%
  - We will be working on a number of short writing exercises throughout the semester.
- Extra Credit—5%
  - If you attend two NYU readings and write a 1-page response (due to me, typed, no later than one week after the reading), you will be eligible for extra credit. I will provide you with a schedule of the NYU MFA readings that will take place at the Lillian Vernon Creative Writers House (58 West 10<sup>th</sup> Street).

### **Safe Space & Etc.**

It's hard to have a group of people reading and critiquing your work. Keep this in mind when you're evaluating your peers' work. Be honest, but do so in a thoughtful and constructive way. I will not tolerate language or work in class that can be offensive, cruel, or demeaning.

For craft discussions, don't be afraid to voice your opinions or concerns, including if you are confused or unsure if your opinions are "correct." The most thought-provoking discussions result when we engage in honest and open conversations.

## **Schedule/Important Dates**

Tuesday, September 4—first day of classes  
Monday, Sept. 17—last day of add/drop  
Tuesday, Oct 9—NO CLASS (courses meet on a Monday schedule)  
Thursday, Nov. 22—no class, Thanksgiving  
Friday, Dec. 14—last day of the semester  
December 15–16 are reading days; December 17–21 are exams

Tuesday, September 4  
Thursday, September 6  
Tuesday, September 11  
Thursday, September 13  
Tuesday, September 18  
Thursday, September 20  
Tuesday, September 25  
Thursday, September 27  
Tuesday, October 2  
Thursday, October 4  
Tuesday, October 9—NO CLASS (Classes meet on a Monday schedule)  
Thursday, October 11  
Tuesday, October 16  
Thursday, October 18  
Tuesday, October 23  
Thursday, October 25  
Tuesday, October 30  
Thursday, November 1  
Tuesday, November 6  
Thursday, November 8  
Tuesday, November 13  
Tuesday, November 15  
Thursday, November 20  
Tuesday, November 22—NO CLASS (Thanksgiving recess)  
Thursday, November 27  
Tuesday, November 29  
Thursday, December 4  
Tuesday, December 6  
Thursday, December 11  
Tuesday, December 13  
(28 classes total)