

**INTRODUCTION TO CREATIVE WRITING
POETRY AND FICTION
Fall 2018, T/Th 12.45 – 1.15pm**

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Office Hours: By Appointment

In this course, we will dive into the art and craft of writing poetry and fiction. Get ready to read a lot and write a lot. Together, we will lean into our imagination and sharpen our literary skills so we can better write about ourselves and about the world. One of the best ways to become a strong writer is to become a more skillful reader. Over the semester, we will read poems and short stories *as writers*. We will study and discuss the work of dead writers, contemporary writers, as well as student writers. In our readings, we will pay attention to the approaches, methods, and techniques in literature in order to build our own toolbox as poets and writers.

Every week will be divided into two sections: craft seminars (Tuesdays) and workshops (Thursdays). During craft seminars, we will discuss assigned weekly readings and examine a range of various literary strategies and devices. On workshops days, a rotating group of student writers will submit and share a poem or short story for peer feedback. Together as a class, we will read, praise, question and challenge each other's work in a spirit to bolster individual strengths, but also build new strengths.

Learning Goals

1. Explore and experiment with a range of poetic and literary techniques, devices, and forms.
2. Develop skills and vocabulary to interpret and analyze poetry and fiction as writers.
3. Read a rich assortment of poetry, fiction, and hybrid literary works.
4. Write, write, write and take responsible risks in writing.

Course Requirements

1. **Attendance, Participation, & Office Hours (20%)** You are expected to come to class having read all assigned texts and prepared for discussion. Each of us is responsible for creating a productive learning environment. If, due to illness, emergency, religious holiday or any other reason, you cannot attend class, please be in touch with me directly as soon as possible so that you can be prepared for the next class. Please be aware that more than one excused absence will jeopardize your grade. You are required to meet me at least once for a meeting over office hours.
2. **Class assignments (40%)** include weekly reader responses, peer critiques, a writer's notebook, and in-class writing exercises:

Online Reader Response: Every week you will post a reader response on NYU Classes Forum about assigned readings by 9pm the day before class. In each 300-400 reading response, you will discuss the week's readings. The purpose of the online responses is for you to articulate opinions, ideas, points of interests, questions, and linkages across the texts. I may ask you to draw on your reader response during class discussions. You are required to complete 10 reading responses over the semester.

Peer Critiques: Every week you will print out your peer workshop poems. Prior to workshop, you will closely read and comment on each student text. You will describe what you think is happening in the text, but also share what you find interesting, exciting, confusing, etc.

Short Writing Assignments: You will regularly be assigned short assignments in correlation to the week's craft discussion. These assignments may come in the form of imitations poems, short prose pieces, or in class writing exercises.

Writer's Notebook: Each of you will be required to keep a notebook recording daily observations - sights, sounds, smells, over heard dialogue, etc. The purpose of this notebook is to activate your sensory mind and attend to the environment around you. This awareness can enrich your imagination and writing. At the start of every class, each of us will share a 'small noticing' or observation from our notebooks.

3. **Workshop Submission** (40%)

During the semester, your work will be workshopped once every three weeks. It is up to you if you would like to submit a poem or a short story, but you will be required to submit at least one piece of writing from each genre.

Workshop submissions are due by Monday midnight on the week you are scheduled to submit. All writing must be uploaded to NYU Classes under the Workshop folder.

Texts and Materials

All readings are uploaded on NYU classes in the "Resources" folder. You are required to print and bring hard copies of all assigned readings and peer writing to class.

Late Policy

You are expected to submit all assignments on time. There is no exception for late work.

Lo-Tech Zone

Please keep all phones, laptops, and tablet silenced and in your bag, unless directed otherwise.

Academic Integrity & Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a serious violation with serious consequences. It is absolutely unacceptable and will be reported to the university administration.

Course Schedule

Readings are Subject to Change

Week 1: Introductions

Sept 4: First Day!

Sept 6: Selections from Carl Phillips *The Art of Daring: Risk, Restless, and Imagination*, Rainer Rilke *Letters to Young Poet*

Week 2: Image and Metaphor

Sept 11: Selections from Basho, Ezra Pound "In a Station of the Metro", Aracelis Girmay "Running Home, I Saw the Planets," Terrance Hayes "The Deer", Yusef Komunyakaa "Facing It," Yi-Yun Li "Golden Boy, Emerald Girl"

Short Assignments: In Class: Write 3 Haikus. Out of Class: Write Image Poem Imitation

Sept 13: Workshop Group A

Week 3: Narrative & Plot

Sept 18: Sharon Olds "The Feelings", Robin Coste Lewis "On the Road to Sri Bhuvaneshwari," Guillaume Apollinaire "The Little Car," B.H Fairchild "The Hill," Junot Diaz "Ysrael"

Sept 20: Workshop Group B

Week 4: Voice

Sept 25: Ada Limon "The Leash," Carrie Fountain "Yes," Richard Siken "Scheherazade," Adrienne Rich "Driving into the Wreck," Chen Chen "Winter," Frank Bidart "Ellen West," and TBA

Sept 27: Workshop Group C

Week 5: Persona & Character

Oct 2: Duy Doan "The Richshaw Boy," Carolyn Forché "The Colonel," Jenny Xie "Separate Set of Signs," Lucille Clifton "jasper texas 1998," Jorge Borges "Borge & I," Daniel Orzoco "Orientation"

Short Assignment: Write Persona Poem

Oct 4: Workshop Group A

Week 6: Intertextualities and Influence

Oct 9: Marie Howe "Seven Devils," Mohja Kahf "Hagar Poems," C.P. Cavafy "Days of 1903," Marilyn Hacker "Days of 1959," Roger Reeves "Someday I'll Love Roger Reeves", Ocean Vuong "Some Day I'll love Ocean Vuong"

Oct 11: Workshop Group B

Week 7: Forms & Structure

Oct 16: Charles Wright's "Improvisation on Form and Measure," Marilyn Hacker, Natasha Tretheway "Incident", Natalie Diaz "My Brother at 3 a.m." Agha Shahid Ali "Tonight"

Short Assignment: Write a poem in a chosen form. Explain the form you use.

Oct 18: Workshop Group C

Week 8: Interdisciplinary and Hybrid Forms

Oct 23: Selections from Claudia Rankine *Don't Let me be Lonely*, Anne Carson's *Autobiography of Red* and Maggie Nelson's *Bluets*, Virginia Woolf Excerpts from *The Waves*

Oct 25: Workshop Group A

Week 9: Rhythm & Pace

Oct 30: Dana Levin "Where it Breaks: Drama, Silence, Speed, and the Accural," Terrance Hayes "Wind in a Box," Sally Wen Mao "Mad Honey Song", Melvin Dixon "Heartbeats," Gish Jen "No More Maybe"

Nov 1: Workshop Group B

Week 10: Silence

Nov 6: Jori Graham "Some Notes on Silence," Solmaz Sharif "Reaching Guantanamo," Li-Young Lee "Eating Alone," Barbara Ras "What It Was Like," Jhumpa Lahiri "A Temporary Matter"

Nov 8: Workshop Group C

Week 11: Vernaculars

Nov 13: Marwa Helal "poem to be read from right to left," Harryette Mullen "Any Lit", Harryette Mullen "Sleeping with the Dictionary," Tiphonie Yanique "Dictionary," Junot Diaz "The Cheater's Guide to Love"

Nov 15: Workshop Group A

Week 12: Ekphrasis and Art

Nov 20: Class Visit to Grey Gallery for Writing Exercise. Readings: Frank O'Hara "On Seeing Larry Rivers' Washington Crossing the Delaware at the Museum of Modern Art", Teyhimba Jess "Hagar in the Wilderness," Monica Youn "Drawing for Absolute Beginners," Sharon Olds "I Go Back to May 1937"

Short Assignment: Write an Ekphrasis Poem.

Nov 22: NO CLASS/THANKSGIVING

Week 13: Experiments & Risks

Nov 27: Selections from Airea D. Matthews, Cathy Park Hong, Bhanu Kapil, Jennifer Egan "Black Box"

Nov 29: Workshop Group B

Week 14: Revision

Dec 4: Listen to Rickey Laurentiis talk "Necessary Cuts" on Poets House website. Readings TBA

Short Assignment: Radically revise 2 poem or 1 short story from the semester.

Dec 6: Workshop Group: C

Week 15: Revision, Reflection, and Performance

Dec 11: Discuss Revision Assignments. Discussion on Performance

Dec 12: Class Reading + Reflection