

Introduction to Fiction and Poetry
CRWRI-UA.815.014
TR: 9:30 AM - 10:45 AM

Instructor: Elliott Case
Email: esc464@nyu.edu
Office Hours: By Appointment

Hello and welcome! The objective of this class is for us to grow as writers and as readers, learning elements of the craft through weekly themes. Discussions will address both content and form of the poems, stories, and other work we read. We will experiment, think with both sides of our brains, and explore just what the written word can do.

Class Structure:

For most of the semester, Tuesdays will be dedicated to craft discussions and Thursdays are workshop days. The exceptions are the first two weeks, which are dedicated entirely to craft; and the last two weeks, which are dedicated entirely to workshop. Workshops are divided into three groups: A, B, and C.

- **Craft:** Please bring at least **one page of notes** for discussion on the readings. These don't have to be formal, essayistic writing, but the content should show sincere engagement with the assigned texts. You can include general feelings and impressions, quotes you'd like to talk about, literary devices or motifs that stood out to you, other pieces of artwork (books, movies, songs) the text reminded you of, connections with other work we read in class—you get the idea! These notes are intended as a reference or jumping off point for you during discussion, but I will collect them at the end of the class. If you have trouble speaking up in class, this lets me know you still engaged with the work; on the flip side, if an idea you were really excited about didn't get touched on, this is a way I can hear about it without the natural flow of discussion being disrupted (Office Hours are great for this too—but more on that later). In addition to being prepared for craft discussion, if your story or poem is being workshopped that week, bring **16 printed copies** to the beginning of Tuesday's class (exceptions for the last cycle of workshops is noted in the Dates section of the syllabus).
- **Workshop:** Bring annotated copies of your classmates' work into class for discussion. The students whose pieces are being workshopped will read their piece (or an excerpt, for longer fiction and prose). This should not be the first time you read the poem, however—please make the majority of your notes before class. Workshop can be a vulnerable thing, both for the writer whose work is being discussed and the writers who are giving feedback—it can be hard to toe the line between honest and harsh, kind and complimentary to the point of unhelpfulness. While mentioning what aspects of the story or poem did/didn't resonate with or “work” for you can be part of workshop, try to go further than that. Read your classmates' work the same way we read the work of published authors—with attention to voice, metaphors and motifs.

Assignments

Workshop submissions: You should have **at least one piece of fiction and one poem**; the rest is your choice, but please be mindful of the length of fiction pieces read in class. To save time

and paper in workshop for everyone, longer fiction stories can be emailed in entirety to the class and an excerpt can be printed and read out loud to focus on.

Journal: Buy a journal—any size, any kind—and write in it for the duration of the semester. You can write bits of conversations you hear, dreams you had, what you ate for lunch, what your best friend said to you on the phone, what’s making you mad, etc. Turn in one short (roughly a page) excerpt to me on Week Seven, and one more with your final portfolio (see below). This doesn’t have to be “good” writing. If you only write these two pages, I’ll never know—however, getting in the habit of writing things down will improve your craft more than anything else.

Reading:

Final portfolio: Your portfolio, due on the last day of class, should include a revision of each of your workshoped pieces, as well as a copy of each original draft. You will be graded on the care and effort put into the revisions. Also included will be a short excerpt of your journal, as well as typed-up versions of our in-class writing assignments.

Office Hours

Students are expected to meet with me at least once during the semester. This is a great time to ask a question about the reading we didn’t get to, get an eye on a post-workshop revision, or voice any other curiosities or concerns about class topics.

Grading

Attendance and Participation - 40% (400 points)

- This means showing up to class on time, with readings or workshop materials already annotated, ready to talk and listen and care. If you absolutely have to miss class, inform me ahead of time or as soon as possible.

Workshop Submissions and Written Assignments - 40% (400 points)

- Turning in your pieces on time and with clear effort invested in writing them.

Final Portfolio - 20% (200 points)

Extra Credit - up to 100 points

- **Literary Event:** NYC has a lot of incredible and free readings, book fairs, and panels—including at our very own Lillian Vernon Creative Writing House. I will provide you with links to calendars of both local and NYU events. Write a couple paragraphs on your experience attending the reading.

Disability Disclosure Statement

Academic accommodations are available to any student with a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility, learning disability, or who is deaf or hard of hearing. Students should please register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980.

NYU's Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities
726 Broadway, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10003-6675
Telephone: 212-998-4980
Voice/TTY Fax: 212-995-4114
Web site: <http://www.nyu.edu/csd>

Student Wellness Policy

Unless we see explicit evidence in workshop that the speaker of a work is the writer themselves, we assume the speaker is fictional. However, certain content relating to murder, depression, suicide, sexual assault, or severe mental distress, such as seems to be a possible cry for help, will likely prompt the instructor's attention. Please send an email putting this work in context before submitting work, especially for workshop, that may be interpreted as such. If you do feel you need someone to talk to at any point in the semester, please feel safe to reach out to me and I can guide you to the NYU Wellness Center.

Plagiarism

Why would you do this? I will be required to give you a failing grade and report you to the NYU administration. Besides, it's a *creative writing class*. I couldn't think of anything more ridiculous to cheat on.

Schedule

SEPTEMBER

WEEK ONE:

Tue 3rd: Syllabus, introduction.

Th 5th: Poetry and the Moon, How To Become A Writer

WEEK TWO:

Tue 10th: Persona and Voice: "Girl" by Jamaica Kincaid and "American Poem" by Eileen Myles

Th 12th: Persona and Voice: Poems from "Sad Boy Detective" by Sam Sax and "There Are More Beautiful Things Than Beyonce" by Morgan Parker

WEEK THREE:

Tue 17th: Narrative Arc: "The Second Bakery Attack" and Hawkeye (2013) #11, "Pizza Is My Business"

Th 19th: Workshop Group A

WEEK FOUR:

Tue 24th: Setting, Place and Era: Poem Packet and The Sixth Borough
Th 26th: Workshop Group B

OCTOBER

WEEK FIVE:

Tue 1st: Setting, Place, and Era: The End of Emnity, The End of Peril, The End of Strife, a Haven
Th 3rd: Workshop Group C

WEEK SIX:

Tue 8th: Family: "Fun Home," poem packet incl. "Winter Stars" (Larry Levis) and "Sussuros A Mi Padre" (Erick Saenz)
Th 10th: Workshop Group A

WEEK SEVEN:

Tue 15th: Monday schedule, no class
Th 17th: Craft discussion & in-class exercise

WEEK EIGHT:

Tue 22nd: The Hero's Journey / Myth, Legend, and Archetype
Th 24th: Workshop Group B

WEEK NINE:

Tue 29th: Myth, Legend, and Archetype part 2
Th 31st: Workshop Group C (costumes and candy permitted)

NOVEMBER

WEEK TEN:

Tue 5th: Love, Friendship and Infatuation: "My Bitch!" (Danez Smith) and "Object Permanence" (Nicole Sealy) , "I fight with my girlfriend because the fascists want us dead" (Raquel Salas Rivera)
Th 7th: Workshop Group A

WEEK ELEVEN:

Tue 12th: Love and Infatuation part 2: Autobiography of Red
Th 14th: Workshop Group B

WEEK TWELVE:

Tue 19th: Dream Worlds and Metaphor: Sara or the Existence of Fire (Never Angeline North, fka Sara June Woods)
Th 21st: Workshop Group C

WEEK THIRTEEN:

Tue 26th: Make up material or in-class exercise (Groups A and B pieces due)
Th 28th: Thanksgiving, no class

DECEMBER:

WEEK FOURTEEN:

Tue 3rd: Workshop Group A (Group C pieces due)

Th 5th: Workshop Group B

WEEK FIFTEEN:

Tue 10th: Workshop Group C

Th 12th: Portfolios due. Closing reflections, reading & celebration!