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Office Hours: Thursday 2:00-3:30p58 W. 10th Street, Room 203

Introduction to Creative Writing – Fall 2019
CRWRI-UA.815.019

Location?

Tuesday/Thursday: 12:30 PM - 1:45 PM

Required Texts

- *The Discovery of Poetry: A Field Guide to Reading and Writing Poems* by Frances Mayes
ISBN-13: 978-0156007627 ISBN-10: 0156007622
- *The Story and Its Writer: An Introduction to Short Fiction 2019 Edition* by Ann Charter
ISBN-10: 1-319-10560-2 ISBN-13: 978-1-319-10560-0
- Supplemental work is uploaded to NYU Classes.

Course Overview

In this course, we will write, workshop, and revise poems and stories. We will also read a selection of literature as writers, asking not what does this poem or story “mean,” but how do the author’s stylistic choices “build meaning.”

Course Objectives

- To identify formal qualities in works of poetry and fiction
- To build a vocabulary to discuss poems and stories productively
- To write original and moving poems and stories
- To provide rigorous and compassionate feedback on the work of our peers

Structure

The first half of the semester will be devoted to poetry, the second to fiction. On Tuesdays we will discuss assigned readings in “craft” classes. Our primary objectives in these discussions will be to share observations about the specific decisions and techniques the author has made, and to explore how these elements inform our encounter with the work.

In order to foster productive in-class discussions, you will be required to submit brief Reading Responses on each author assigned, every Tuesday. (Greater than 300 words. Include your word count.) Because class participation is a part of your grade, there will be opportunities to read aloud from your responses, if you like. You’ll choose up-to-three sentences to type-up at the top of your response to focus your analysis, in place of a title. Then answer the following questions:

- 1) What most stands out to you about the way this passage was written, and why?
- 2) What emotion is the author is trying to instill in the reader here, and what aspects of the way words are put together help to achieve this?

Additionally, on Tuesdays, you will turn in a little writing exercise. I encourage you to use these as a springboard for your workshop drafts. Your task is simply to fill one page (single-spaced), or write a complete poem draft, per the given prompt(s). (You are NOT required to turn in Writing Responses on the weeks that you are scheduled to hand out copies of your story/poem for workshop. In lieu of the writing response, simply turn in a blank sheet of paper that says your name, the date, and the following sentence: “I am exempt from Writing Responses this week because I am handing in my

work to be workshopped on Thursday.” (We’re never exempt from Reading Responses.)

On Thursdays, we will workshop your developed poem and story drafts. Over the course of the semester, everyone will workshop two poems and two stories. Pieces for workshop will be distributed on Thursday in preparation for (usually) the following Thursday’s class. On the day of workshop, you must bring typed feedback for each writer detailing:

- 1) What you felt while you were reading the piece: give a “play-by-play” of your reading process
- 2) The most prominent stylistic element of the piece—how do these stylistic elements serve the piece?
- 3) What you most want to know more about/ note any moments of confusion.

For these responses, I expect >300 words. Include your word count. Print two copies of each response, one for the writer and one for me.

Draft Poem & Story Assignments

Stories should be between 4-10 pages, typed & double-spaced. Poems can be of any length, single-spaced. Bring 16 copies of each piece in preparation for workshop. You may not email your work.

Event Review

You are encouraged to put your feelers out in New York City’s dizzying literary community. During the course of the semester, for extra credit, you might attend a literary reading, then type a page-long, single-spaced review/write-up about your experience. I will provide heads-ups on upcoming readings, but feel free to research these on your own.

Absences and Tardiness

Attendance is expected at every class meeting, without exception. More than two unexplained absences will result in a 10% decrease in a student’s final grade. For every three instances you are more than ten minutes late to class, this will equal one absence. (Absences owing to a medical or other emergency circumstance shall be accompanied by a doctor’s (or other official’s) note.)

Conferences

Students are required to meet with the instructor during posted Office Hours (or by apt.) at least twice during the semester. Students should come prepared with specific topics for discussion.

Plagiarism

There is a zero-tolerance plagiarism policy for both academic papers and creative pieces. All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the department, without exception.

Electronics in Class

All electronic devices must be silent and out of sight during “workshop” days. I prefer that you use pen and paper for note-taking during “craft” days. If I perceive that use of an electronic device is interfering with your ability to fully engage with class discussions, I may require you to put it away.

Grading

Class Participation & Conferences: 5%

Peer Responses: 25%

Writing and Reading Responses: 25%

Drafts: 25%

Final Portfolios: 20%

Course Schedule

*After class discussion, we may substitute out some readings—
this schedule is subject to change.

September

Week One

Tuesday, 3rd Introductions, Games. Capps, Leidner, Hugo, Lyon.

Thursday, 5th

For today, read:

- Invitation and Chapter 1 in *Discovery*. Focus: “Intro to Poetry”- Bauer; “Those Winter Sundays”- Hayden; “A Father at His Son’s Baptism”- Gerstler; “Atlas of a Difficult World”- Rich
- Pgs. 402-407 in *Discovery*
- From Supplement (NYU Classes): “In Childhood, Certain Skies Refined my Seeing” - Sinclair; “Notes on Staying” - Nguyen; “Two Autumns, St. Louis” – Levin

(Writers 1,2,3,4 and 5 distribute poems for next Thursday)

Week Two

Tuesday, 10th: Reading & Writing Responses are due.

- Chapters 2 and 3 in *Discovery*. Focus: “Autumn Begins in Martin’s Ferry” –Wright, “Upstate” –Walcott; “Allegro” -Tranströmer “University of Iowa Hospital, 1976 -Mayer
- From Supplement (NYU Classes): “You Ask How” –Flynn; “Mistaking the Sea for Green Fields” –Capps; “What the End is For” –Graham

Thursday, 12th: Workshop of Poem #1 by writers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5

(Writers 6,7, 8, 9 and 10 distribute)

Week Three

Tuesday, 17th: Reading & Writing Responses are due.

- Chapters 4 and 5 in *Discovery*. Focus: “Resemblance” –Williams; “The Negress...” –Dubie; “For a New Citizen of These United States” – Lee; “A Very Valentine” –Stein; “Atomic Bride” Ellis; “Somnambule Ballad” – Lorca
- From Supplement (NYU Classes): “Skinhead” – Smith; “Magdalene-The Seven Devils” – Howe

Thursday, 19th: Workshop of Poem #1 by writers 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10

(Writers 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 distribute)

Week Four

Tuesday, 24th: Reading & Writing Responses are due.

- Read Chapters 6 and 7 in *Discovery*. Focus: “Sunday Morning” – Stevens; “The Elder Sister” – Olds; “Starlight” –Levine; “Meditation at Lagunitas” - Hass
- From Supplement (NYU Classes): “We are Not Responsible” – Mullen; “What the End is For” Graham; “The Feeling” –Banias; “Mastering” -Límon

Thursday, 26th: Workshop of Poem #1 by writers 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15

(Writers 1,2,3,4 and 5 distribute)

October

Week Five

Tuesday, 1st: Reading & Writing Responses are due.

- Read chapters 8 and 9 in *Discovery*. Focus: “Effort at Speech Between Two People” – Rukeyser; “Tulips” – Plath; “Poppies” – Oliver; “The End of Autumn” – Ponge; “Hunters in the Snow” –Langland.
- From Supplement (NYU Classes): “A Picture of Christ” – Ruefle; “A Little Closer to the Edge” –Vuong; “I Go Back to May, 1937” –Olds

Thursday, 3rd: Workshop of Poem #2 by writers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5

(Writers 6,7, 8, 9 and 10 distribute)

Week Six

Tuesday, 8th: Reading & Writing Responses are due.

- Read chapters 10 in *Discovery*. Focus: “In the Waiting Room” – Bishop; Sonnet CXXX – Shakespeare; “Explication of an Imaginary Text” –Galvin
- From Supplement (NYU Classes): “The Energy of Revision”; from *Citizen* – Rankine; “The Glass Essay” – Carson; “Mother Church No. 3” –Coste Lewis; “Dusting” – Dove; “Nest” – Berssenbrugge

Thursday, 10th: Workshop of Poem #2 by writers 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10

(Writers 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 distribute)

Week Seven

Tuesday, 15th: Reading & Writing Responses are due.

- From *The Story and Its Writer*, read:
“A Conversation With My Father” - Paley
“Persepolis: The Veil” - Satrapi
“An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” -Beirce
- From Supplement (NYU Classes): “Virgins” - Evans

Thursday, 17th: Workshop of Poem #2 by writers 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15

(Writers 1,2,3,4 and 5 distribute)

Week Eight

Tuesday, 22nd: Reading & Writing Responses are due.

- **Workshop of Story#1 for writer 1**
- From *The Story and Its Writer*, read:
“The Lesson” - Bambara
“The Conversion of the Jews” -Roth
“Brownies” -Packer
“The School” -Barthelme

Thursday, 24th: Workshop of Story #1 for writers 2, 3, 4, and 5

(Writers 6,7, 8, 9 and 10 distribute)

Week Nine

Tuesday, 29th: Reading & Writing Responses are due.

- **Workshop of Story#1 for writer 6**
- From *The Story and Its Writer*, read:
 - “My Jockey” - Berlin
 - “Ralph The Duck” –Busch
 - “Battle Royal” - Ellison
- From Supplement (NYU Classes): “Georges and Susan” - Williams

Thursday, 31st Workshop of Story #1 for writers 7, 8, 9 and 10
(Writers 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 distribute)

November

Week Ten

Tuesday, 5th: Reading & Writing Responses are due.

- **Workshop of Story#1 for writer 11**
- From *The Story and Its Writer*, read:
 - “The Colonel” –Forché
 - “Araby” - Joyce
 - “Refugeeland” - Sacco
 - “Brief Encounter With the Enemy” -Sayrafiezadeh

Thursday, 7th

Workshop of Story #1 for writers 12, 13, 14 and 15
(Writers 1,2,3,4 and 5 distribute)

Week Eleven

Tuesday, 12th: Reading & Writing Responses are due.

- **Workshop of Story#2 for writer 1**
- From *The Story and Its Writer*, read:
 - “Crazy They Call Me” -Smith
 - “The Deep” –Doerr
 - “The Red Convertible” -Erdich
 - “Prisoner on the Hell Planet: A Case History” - Spiegelman

Thursday, 14th: Workshop of Story #2 for writers 2, 3, 4, and 5
(Writers 6,7, 8, 9 and 10 distribute)

Week Twelve

Tuesday, 19th: Reading & Writing Responses are due.

- **Workshop of Story#2 for writer 6**
- From *The Story and Its Writer*, read:
 - * “The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven” – Alexie

- * “How to Date a Browngirl, Blackgirl, Whitegirl, or Halfie” –Diaz
- “Kew Gardens” -Woolf

Thursday, 21st: Workshop of Story #2 for writers 7, 8, 9 and 10
(Writers 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 distribute)

Week Thirteen

Tuesday, 26th: Reading & Writing Responses are due.

- **Workshop of Story#2 for writer 11**
- From *The Story and Its Writer*, read:
 - “Happy Endings” Atwood
 - “The Smallest Woman in the World” -Lispector
 - “Dimensions” - Munro
 - “Everything That Rises Must Converge” -Flannery

Thursday, 28th THANKSGIVING BREAK—NO CLASS

December

Week Fourteen

Tuesday, 4th: Reading & Writing Responses are due.

- From *The Story and Its Writer*, read:
 - “How To Be A Writer” -Moore
 - “Yellow Woman” -Silko?
 - “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas” - Le Guin
 - “The Company of Wolves” -Carter

Thursday, 6th: Workshop of Story #2 for writers 12, 13, 14 and 15

Week Fifteen

Tuesday, 11th Publication Q&A

In-class student readings

Revised portfolios due.