

Andrea Boerem Syllabus
Section 005 CRWRI-UA.815.005
MW 2PM-3:13PM

Course Overview

This is a writing workshop, so the focus of our class will be on generating fiction and poetry. But wait, you say, you have no idea how to write either fiction or poetry? I was hoping you'd say that. We'll also be studying stories and poems, pulling them apart to find out what makes them tick. You'll have the opportunity to explore different literary voices and styles since, after all, college is all about experimentation. But wait, you say, what if I'm bad? Don't worry! Of course you're bad! We're all bad to begin with. The objective is to become more comfortable, over the course of the semester, with producing and sharing our work, and articulating our thoughts on the assigned readings and work of our classmates.

Structure

Craft:

At the beginning of each class we'll discuss the assigned readings. For each piece we read, come to class with three sentences you either loved or hated. We'll use your selections to discuss what in the readings is or isn't working. The focus should be not whether or not you liked a particular piece, (although we should be honest about our tastes) but what the piece has to teach us about the craft of writing. Since this is a writing workshop and not a literature class, our aim will always be to fill our trick bag with as many writerly tools as possible.

Writing Prompts:

Every Monday we'll begin class with a short writing exercise; you'll keep these in a notebook which you will turn in at the end of the semester. These will be a great tool to help you generate new stories and poems. Quality won't be graded, so don't be shy. Simply completing this assignment will count for 5% of your total grade.

Workshop:

Workshopping one another's writing will take up the bulk of our class-time. **Be prepared to submit 2 short stories and 2 poems for the semester.**

In workshop we'll discuss, compliment and critique the work of our fellow writers. In addition to your spoken feedback, **you are required to write a short response containing constructive feedback on the work of each of your peers, to be given to them after their workshop. You will bring two copies of this response to class, one for your classmate and one for me.**

In-class discussions should always be civil and helpful. The best writing tends to come from honest and personal experiences, so we should all show respect and discretion when discussing one another's work. An ideal workshop is one that's supportive, open and relaxed. Tearing someone down will never help your own writing, and definitely won't help your grade, so let's keep it kind.

NOTE:

- We will set a workshop submission schedule during our first class. **If you are being workshopped on a Monday, please email your work to me by 3pm on the Friday before your workshop. For those workshopped on Wednesday, please email it by 3pm the Sunday before.**

Conference:

You will be required to meet with me during office hours after you workshop a story or poem at least once during the semester. You are welcome to schedule a time for a conference after each workshop to discuss your work should you wish to.

Grading:

Here is the breakdown of your grade:

- 40%- Writing assignments- Your writing is the most important part of your grade.
- 20%- Final portfolio- You will be expected to turn in a portfolio on the final day of classes. That portfolio will contain all your writing for the semester, and a revision of at least 1 short story and 1 poem.
- 20% -Participation- You are expected to participate in both the workshop and craft portion of class.
- 15% - Attendance- Come to class, be on time, and submit your work on time, and this will be the easiest 15% you earn.
- 5% Prompt journals- An easy 5. Just do the work, take it seriously, and turn it in.

Electronics

No electronics will be permitted in class. Failure to comply may affect your grade.

Attendance

You will be allowed one unexcused absence during the semester. This is a participation based class, so your attendance matters. Each unexcused absence following the first will result in the deduction of half a letter grade.

Schedule (Likely to change, but here's a first crack at it)

1/22 (M) - Introductions; go over syllabus; set workshop schedule; discuss workshop etiquette; short writing prompt

FICTION PART ONE

1/24 (W) - Zadie Smith "*Miss Adele Amidst the Corsets*"

1/29 (M) - Hemingway "*Hills Like White Elephants*", "*The Snows of Kilimanjaro*"

1/31 (W) - Cynthia Ozick "*The Shawl*"

2/5 (M) - Denis Johnson "*Car Crash While Hitchhiking*", Sam Lipsyte "*Probe to the Negative*"

2/7 (W) - Jhumpa Lahiri "*A Temporary Matter*"

2/12 (M)- Lorrie Moore "*People Like That Are the Only People Here*", "*How to Become a Writer*"

2/14 (W) - Nathan Englander "*What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank*"

POETRY PART ONE

2/19 (M) NO CLASS PRESIDENTS' DAY

2/21 (W) Ginsberg "*A Supermarket in California*"

2/26 (M) John Donne "*Batter My Heart Three Person God*", Terrance Hayes "*Sonnet For My Past*", Bernadette Mayer "*You Jerk You Didn't Call Me Up*", Edna St. Vincent Millay "*Love is Not All*"

2/28 (W) Robert Browning "*My Last Duchess*", Kevin Young "*Reward*"

3/5 (M) Sharon Olds "*Ode to a Tampon*" Elizabeth Bishop "*The Fish*", Sylvia Plath "*Cut*", Charles Simic "*Stone*"

3/7 (W) Ada Limon "*State Bird*", Gwendolyn Brooks "*We Real Cool*", Gerard Manley Hopkins "*Carrion Comfort*"

3/12 (M) NO CLASS SPRING BREAK

3/14 (W) NO CLASS SPRING BREAK

FICTION PART TWO

3/19 (M) George Saunders "*Sea Oak*", Wells Tower "*Everything Ravaged, Everything Burned*"

3/21 (W) ZZ Packer "*Brownies*"

3/26 (M) Joyce Carol Oates "*Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?*", Eudora Welty "*Where is the Voice Coming From*"

3/18 (W) Donald Barthelme "*The School*", George Saunders "*Rise Baby Rise*"

4/2 (M) Kelly Link "*The Specialist's Hat*", Charlotte Perkins Gilman "*The Yellow Wallpaper*"

4/4 (W) John Cheever "*The Country Husband*"

4/9 (M) Bernard Malamud "*The Magic Barrel*", V.F. Pritchett "*The Saint*"

POETRY PART TWO

4/11 (W) Gabriel Gudding *"In Defense of Poetry"*, Dottie Lasky *"Ars Poetica"*

4/16 (M) Josh Bell *"Poem to Line My Casket"*, Anne Sexton *"For Eleanor Boylan"*, *"Her Kind"*, Ocean Vuong *"Tell Me Something Good"*

4/18 (W) Patricia Smith *"Hip Hop Ghazal"*, Jennifer Knox *"Hot Ass Poem"*, Dylan Thomas *"Do Not Go Gentle"*, Robert Frost *"Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening"*

4/23 (M) Claudia Rankine *"Sometimes 'I' is supposed to hold what is not there"*, Major Jackson *"Letter to Brooks"*, Emily Dickinson *"Dear March"* Ezra Pound *"The River Merchant's Wife"*

4/25 (W) Ocean Vuong *"Someday I'll Love Ocean Vuong"*, Soto *"Oranges"*, Plath *"Daddy"*, Lawrence *"Discord in Childhood"*

4/30 (M) Komunyakaa *"Thanks"*, Simpson *"The Suburbs"*, Simic *"Used Bookstore"*

5/2 (W) Bukowski *"I Met a Genius"*, William Carlos Williams *"This is Just to Say"*, *"The Red Wheelbarrow"*, Pound, *"A Station in the Metro"*

5/7 (M) David Foster Wallace *"A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again"*, Jamaica Kincaid *"The Tourist"*

5/9 (W) Zadie Smith *"That Crafty Feeling"*

Turn in Portfolios; Fond Farewells