

Creative Writing: Intro to Fiction & Poetry

Instructor: Chloe M. Blog

CW: M/W 12:30-1:45 pm

Office Hours: By Appointment

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“Whatever art offered men and women in previous eras, what it offers our own, it seems to me, is a space—certain breathing room for the spirit” –John Updike

“This is why I love poems: they invite me to sit down and listen to a voice speaking thoughtfully and passionately about what it feels like to be alive.” – Tracy K. Smith

Course Description & Objectives: In this course, we will understand writing as an art form that renders feeling and emotion outside the body. We will read, analyze, and discuss (mostly) modern works of fiction and poetry to enhance your understanding of craft, as well as generate original works in both genres. This is an introductory course, and will be comprised of two components. The first component will focus on the art of craft. Through discussions of assigned readings, we will investigate distinct techniques of various authors, what the author accomplishes with their literary work, as well as *how* the author has accomplished their literary work.

The second component of class will be comprised of workshop, where the class will read and discuss student’s original writings. You will be required to submit at least one short story and two poems for workshop over the course of the semester. The main objective of this course is to help you to grow as a writer. Through both workshop and craft, you will learn how to both write and analyze creative work to help you achieve this goal.

REQUIRED TEXTS

-Citizen by Claudia Rankine

-Autobiography of Red by Anne Carson

GRADING & ASSIGNMENTS

Workshop- (40%)

Workshop Submissions (20%)- You will be expected to submit up to one short story (5-10 pages double spaced) and two poems over the course of the semester. Bring printed copies of your work to be distributed to the class a week before you are to be workshopped. The purpose of workshop is to help you enhance your writing, and gain a sense of yourself as a writer.

Workshop Critique (20%)- For workshop, you are required to read, and comment on the creative work of your peers. You should comment directly on the page, going line by line. Additionally, you are required to type a short response (200-500 words) on your peer’s work. You should print out two copies of your response, one for your classmate and one for me.

Craft- (30%)

Writing Responses (10%)- You are required to write an analytic response to the reading assigned each week. In your response, you should highlight at least 1-2 aspects of craft. Responses are to be turned in every Monday and should be at least one full page double spaced.

Final Portfolio (10%)- On the last day of class, you will be required to bring a final portfolio of your work. This should include revised editions of the pieces you have work shopped in class (one short story and two poems), and if you would like you may include one or two additional original pieces that were not work shopped. You must also include an artist statement (2-3 pages double spaced) on your creative work. The artists statement must include how you have developed as a writer over the course of the semester, as well as various themes, and techniques utilized in your writing.

“Fake Book” Assignment- (5%)

Throughout this course, I will require you to keep a notebook or journal to record details, images, or overheard dialogue. Additionally, I would also like you to update your fake book each week with various writings/art/objects that inspire you. This can include writings of famous or non-famous people, quotes, photographs, non-original or original artwork, images, song lyrics, movie tickets, magazine or newspaper clippings, gum wrappers, pressed flowers, whatever moves you. Your “fake book” should be a collection of language and objects that help to stimulate your senses. Keeping a “Fake Book” will help you to engage creatively and put your work in conversation with your inspirations or muses. I will not read your “fake book,” however you should bring it to class each week for in-class writing assignments.

“Why I Write” Assignment- (5%)

You must write a 2-3-page essay (double spaced) exploring your experiences with writing, as well as your strengths and weaknesses as a writer. You should also include goals you have for your writing while taking this course. This will help me to get to know you as a individual and how I can best help you to grow as a writer over the course of the semester.

Participation & Attendance- (30%)

Your participation and attendance in this class is essential. You are required to arrive on time to class, prepared. On Mondays, being prepared means you must have completed the assigned reading and are ready to engage in thoughtful analytic discussions regarding the text. On workshop days, this means you are prepared to comment and respond to your peer’s work. You are allowed one unexcused absence, and are required to meet with me at least once for office hours over the course of the semester (however I encourage you to meet with me as many times as you would like). This will allow me to get you to know you better as a writer and we can discuss your writing in greater depth.

POLICIES

Late Work: Late work will not be accepted unless you have spoken to me in advance. If you think your work may be late, you should email or talk to me before or after class.

Plagiarism: I will know if you plagiarize. Do not do it. If you plagiarize I will immediately report you to NYU.

Tardiness: If you are fifteen minutes late to class three times this will count as an unexcused absence. I expect you to arrive on time to class, prepared.

Technology: No laptops, iPhones, iPads, tablets or other electronics will be permitted in class unless otherwise instructed. Please bring all assigned readings to class.

CLASS SCHEDULE

WEEK ONE

M 1/28/19: First Class

Class Introduction and Overview

Writing Exercise

Homework- Why I Write Assignment

Excerpt from “Writing Down the Bones” by Natalie Goldberg

W 1/30/19:

Discuss Goldberg

In-class writing exercise

Due- Why I Write Assignment

Homework: “In a Tub” by Amy Hempel

“Girl” By Jamaica Kincaid

WEEK TWO:

M 2/4/19:

Discuss Hempel & Kincaid

Brief discussion on elements of workshop

Due- Writing Response #1

Homework- “Man on the Stairs” by Miranda July

“What We Talk About When We Talk About Love” by Raymond Carver

W 2/6/19:

Discuss July & Carver

Fiction Workshop Group A distributes

Homework- “The Husband Stitch” by Carmen Maria Machado

Excerpt from “Especially Heinous” by Machado

“The Green Ribbon” by Alvin Schwartz

-Bring in one of your favorite fables or stories from childhood (it should be something short as we will use this for an in-class writing assignment next week).

WEEK THREE

M 2/11/19: Discuss Machado & Schwartz
Fiction Writing Exercise
Due- Reading Response # 2

W 2/13/19: Fiction Workshop Group A
Fiction Workshop Group B distributes
Homework- Excerpt from “Bastard out of Carolina” by Dorothy Allison
“Where are You Going Where Have you Been” by Joyce Carol Oates

WEEK FOUR

M 2/18/19: Discuss Allison & Oates
Fiction Writing Exercise
Due- Reading Response # 3

W 2/20/19: Fiction Workshop Group B
Fiction workshop Group C distributes
Homework- “Sticks” by George Saunders
“Butter” by Akil Sharma

WEEK FIVE

M 2/25/19: Discuss Saunders & Sharma
Fiction Writing Exercise
Due- Reading Response # 4

W 2/27/19: Fiction Workshop Group C
Fiction Workshop Group D distributes
Homework- “A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings” Gabriel Garcia
Marquez
“Story of an Hour” by Kate Chopin

WEEK SIX

M 3/4/19: Discuss Marquez & Chopin
Due- Reading Response #5

W 3/6/19: Fiction Workshop Group D
Fiction Workshop Group E distributes
Homework- Excerpt from “Bluets” by Maggie Nelson
Prose Poem Packet

WEEK SEVEN

M 3/11/19: Discuss Nelson & Prose Poem Packet
Hybrid Writing Exercise
Due- Reading Response # 6

W 3/13/19: Fiction Workshop Group E

WEEK EIGHT: NO CLASS-SPRING RECESS
Homework: Poem Packet # 1

WEEK NINE

M 3/25/19: Discuss Poem Packet #1-Cruz, Howe, Olds, O'hara
Due- Reading Response # 7
Homework: Poem Packet # 2

W 3/27/19: Discuss Poem Packet # 2- Bang, Neruda, Lorde,
Poetry Workshop Group A distributes
Due- Reading Response # 8
Homework: Poem Packet # 3

WEEK TEN

M 3/25/19 Discuss Poem Packet # 3- Parker, Limon, Myles, Chong
In class Poetry exercise
Due- Reading Response # 9

W 3/27/19 Poetry Workshop Group A
Poetry Workshop Group B distributes
Homework: Poem Packet # 4

WEEK ELEVEN

M 4/1/19: Discuss Poem Packet # 4- Smith, Vuong, Siken, Flynn
In class Poetry exercise
Due: Reading Response # 10

W 4/3/19 Poetry Workshop Group B

In class Poetry exercise
Poetry Workshop Group C distributes
Homework: Read Citizen by Claudia Rankine

WEEK TWELVE

M 4/8/19 Discuss Citizen by Claudia Rankine
In class Poetry exercise
Due: Reading Response # 11

W 4/10/19 Poetry Workshop Group C
Poetry Workshop Group A distributes
Homework: Poem Packet # 5

WEEK THIRTEEN

M 4/15/19: Discuss Poem Packet # 5: Hayes, Stallings, Pico, Gluck
In class Poetry exercise
Due: Reading Response # 12

W 4/17/19 Poetry Workshop Group A
Poetry Workshop Group B distributes
Homework: Poem Packet # 6

WEEK FOURTEEN

M 4/22/19 Discuss Poem Packet # 6: Plath, Gay, Sealey, Rich
In class Poetry exercise
Due: Reading Response # 13

W 4/24/19 Poetry Workshop Group B
Poetry Workshop Group C distributes
Homework: Poem Packet # 7

WEEK FIFTEEN

M 4/29/19 Discuss Poem Packet # 7: Celan, Lorca, Akmahtova, Amichai
In class Poetry exercise
Due: Reading Response # 14

W 5/1/19 Poetry Workshop Group C
Homework: “Autobiography of Red” by Anne Carson

