Creative Writing: Introduction to Fiction & Poetry
Spring '19: CRWRI-UA.815.003. M/W: 8 AM - 9:15 AM.
Professor: Nadine Browne
Contact: nb2563@nyu.edu (Office Hours: Mondays, 10am – 12:30pm)

Overview
This class is an introduction to Creative Writing as a discipline. This class will develop your ability to write thoughtful, articulate poetry and fiction, and teach you the particular methods of reading as a writer.

Goals:
Our goal is to hone our skill as both writers and readers-who-write, and to learn how to thrive in a Creative Writing class at the undergraduate level. I also encourage each of you to bring your own creative and academic goals into the class, and to assist each other in developing and reaching those goals.

Structure:
The class will be divided between two sections: Craft and Workshop. On Craft days, we will (having all read the assigned texts) discuss published poems and works of fiction as writers – these classes will be an opportunity to develop your creative ear and eye so that they may better serve you when you apply them to your own writing. On Workshop days, we will read poems and fiction submitted by the class. While we will discuss these pieces with similar intellectual care, we will also adopt a kind and constructive Workshop etiquette.

This class is designed to help improve your writing – to get you excited about writing, to have you reading like a writer, and to learn to engage productively with your fellow writers. Each class meeting will have two sections: a craft discussion and a workshop.

The craft discussion is where we will be talking about the work of noteworthy fiction writers and poets – typically one or two short stories per class meeting, and several poems from one author or on a single theme. Unlike literature classes you may have taken before, the goal here is to read like a writer, with an eye towards mining these stories and poems for tricks you can apply to your own work. You’ll come to class each week having read and thought deeply about these works – there will be specific things I’ll be asking you to pay
attention to with each work, but expect to at least have a favorite line or two to share, and an explanation for why you think it works well.

The workshop is the heart of this course, and where you’ll have the opportunity to share your own work and offer feedback to your fellow writers. We will discuss the structure and the approach for the workshop more when we’re in class together, but a good workshop will provide the encouragement and support necessary to get folks excited about submitting their work, along with the feedback and critique that will help them improve upon their writing.

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.

Assignments
Workshop pieces:
Stories may be between 5 – 20 pages in length, double spaced, 12pt font. If you want to submit a chapter from a novel-in-progress, you must include a paragraph-long overview of the novel contextualizing your submission.
You may submit up to 5 pages of poetry (whether one or multiple poems is up to you). All submissions must include your name as well as page numbers. Submissions are due the Thursday before your workshop and should be emailed to the entire class. Late submissions will be penalized.

You are responsible for printing out a copy of each piece and bringing it to class. Here, you should use marginalia to identify passages you think work particularly well, areas of confusion, grammatical, syntactical, and spelling errors. You will return your hard copy to the writer after each workshop, along with your workshop letter. Write your (the reader’s) name on each submission and staple your workshop letter to the back.

**Workshop letters:**
You will write a one-page feedback letter to each writer, for each piece. On the day of the workshop, you will bring two hard copies of each letter to class, one for the writer, and one for me. These letters are meant to provide useful feedback to the writer. You’ll want to identify what works and what doesn’t work in a piece, identify any points of confusion, and give constructive feedback on how a piece can be improved.

**Writing Exercises:**
Throughout the course of the semester, I will assign various writing exercises. The purpose of the exercises is to spark your creativity, encourage you to take risks, and to help you grow as a writer.

**Reading:**
We will be reading several novels, short stories, and poems over the course of the semester. Our aim in these readings will be to teach you to read like a writer. This means we will be reading with an eye towards what an author is doing with language, plot, character, and style that makes each book, story, or poem effective (or not). I expect you to come to class with at least three craft elements in a reading you admire or would like to discuss, and to participate actively in all class conversations.

Final Portfolio: At the end of the semester, you will submit a final portfolio, which will contain:

– 1 revised story (along with my original marked up copy) OR
– 1 revised poem (ditto)
– 1 writing exercise expanded into a short story or poem

Grading Breakdown
Workshop pieces – 30% Workshop letters – 20% Class participation – 30% Final portfolio – 20%

Office Hours
I will hold weekly office hours. You’re welcome to sign up to meet with me as frequently as you’d like.

Expectations
– Come to class, be on time. You are permitted two unexcused absences. Your grade will be reduced by 1/3 of a letter for any additional unexcused absences. If you arrive more than 20 minutes late to class, that will be considered an absence.
– No laptops, cell phones, or other electronic devices will be permitted during class.
– Do not plagiarize. You will be caught and penalized.
– Be thoughtful and respectful to your classmates during workshops. We will discuss workshop etiquette in more depth and devise a workshop schedule during the first week of class.

Reading List
Poems:

“The School of Dreams” Chen Chen
“I am Not the One who Left Their Land” Anna Akhmatova
“What It Look Like” Terrance Hayes
“For Andrew Wood,” by James Fenton
“The City of Paris has You in Mind Tonight,” by Deborah Landau
“Annabel Lee,” by Edgar Allen Poe
“Daddy,” by Sylvia Plath
“Love Dogs,” by Jalaluddin Mevlama-Rumi
“Just Once,” by Anne Sexton
“For My Young Friends Who Are Afraid,” by William Stafford
“I Meet My Grandmother in Italy,” by Katrina Vandenberg

**Short Stories:**
“CommComms” George Saunders
“The 400 Pound CEO” George Saunders
“The Fat Man in History,” Peter Carey
“People Like That Are the Only People Here,” by Lorrie Moore
“Incarnations of Burnt Children” David Foster Wallace
“X & O” Jewel Mogan
“No One’s a Mystery” Elizabeth Tallent
“A Song For Robin” Heather O’Neill
“A Late Encounter with the Enemy,” by Flannery O’Connor
“Faith in a Tree,” by Grace Paley

**Novels:**
Dead Souls, Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol
Go Tell It on the Mountain, by James Baldwin
The Lover, by Marguerite Duras
Pnin, by Vladimir Nabokov

**Essays:**
On the Morning After the Sixties, by Joan Didion
That Crafty Feeling, Zadie Smith
Notes on Camp, by Susan Sontag
Show Don’t Tell, Curtis Sittenfeld

**Recommended Reading:**
Naming the World: And Other Exercises for the Creative Writer, by Bret Anthony Johnston

**Schedule**
Fiction
Week 1
Mon 1/28 – Introduction
Wed 1/30 – Craft
*For the first week only, Workshop Group 1 will be permitted to submit by SATURDAY 2/2.

Week 2
Mon 2/4 – Craft
Wed 2/6 – Workshop Group 1
Due: Submissions from Workshop Group 2

Week 3
Mon 2/11 – Craft
Wed 2/13 – Workshop Group 2
Due: Submissions from Workshop Group 3

Week 4
Mon 2/18 – Craft
Wed 2/20 – Workshop Group 3
Due: Submissions from Workshop Group 4

Week 5
Mon 2/25 – Craft
Wed 2/27 – Workshop Group 4
Due: Submissions from Workshop Group 5

Week 6
Mon 3/4 – Craft
Wed 3/6 – Workshop Group 5
Due: Submissions from Workshop Group 6

Week 7
Mon 3/11 – Craft
Wed 3/13 – Workshop Group 6
Due: Submissions from Workshop Group 1

Week 8
Mon 3/18 – Craft
Wed 3/20 – Workshop Group 1
Due: Submissions from Workshop Group 2

Week 9
Mon 3/25 – Craft
Wed 3/27 – Workshop Group 2
Due: Submissions from Workshop Group 3
Week 10
Mon 4/1 – Craft
Wed 4/3 – Workshop Group 3
Due: Submissions from Workshop Group 4
Week 11
Mon 4/8 – Craft
Wed 4/10 – Workshop Group 4
Due: Submissions from Workshop Group 5
Week 12
Mon 4/15 – Craft
Wed 4/17 (Easter??)
Week 13
Mon 4/22 – Craft
Wed 4/24 – Workshop Group 5
Due: Submissions from Workshop Group 6
Week 14
Mon 4/29 – Craft
Wed 5/1 – Workshop Group 6
Week 15
Mon 5/6 – Craft
Wed 5/8 – Class wrap-up