

**Creative Writing: Introduction to Fiction and Poetry**  
CRWRI-UA.815.001  
MW: 9:30 AM – 10:45 AM

Instructor: Karisma Price  
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Office Hours: By Appointment

*“I’m a firm believer that language and how we use language determines how we act, and how we act then determines our lives and other people’s lives.” –Ntozake Shange*

**Course Description:** This course is designed to give students an introduction to both poetry and fiction through weekly readings assignments, class discussions, and a safe space that allows students to produce their own pieces of creative writing and submit to workshop. This course will primarily focus on contemporary poetry and fiction while also exposing students to both hybrid genre texts and short excerpts from screenplays to show the wide variety of writing that is considered to be a part of both the literary and cross-genre fields.

**Required Texts:** I will provide copies of the texts required for class and upload them to the class site each week.

**Class Structure:**

- **Mondays** will be centered on craft and discussion of the texts that were assigned the class before. Students are expected to come to class prepared to share their opinions on the work and participate in the discussion surrounding that week’s topic. In addition to reading the text, it is required that students come to class with a hard copy of a **2-paragraph response** to that week’s reading. The response should include your first impressions/general thoughts on the texts, thoughts you’d like us to expand upon in class, and any questions or difficulties you may have had when reading. Chances are others in the class may have enjoyed or had trouble with similar aspects of the reading, and bringing your opinions in the room will be a great lead in to the class discussion.
- **Wednesday** classes will be devoted to workshopping student submissions. On the first day of class, students will be divided into groups (A, B, C), and will distribute hard copies of poems **a week in advance** to allow the class enough time to read and provide helpful feedback. For the sake of paper and your semester printing quota, when it is time for the fiction unit, please email us all a copy of your piece of fiction a week in advance, and we will print it out ourselves and bring it to class on Wednesday. Poems should be **1-2 pages long** and fiction pieces should be **8-12 pages long (double-spaced)**. Note: While your peers and I are here to help you with your writing and revision process, please do not bring in a poem or work of fiction that was hastily written right before class.

**Office Hours:** Students are expected to meet with me **at least one time** during the semester. You are encouraged to come as many as you'd like to discuss the reading and/or your workshop submissions, however it is not required that you come more than once.

**Grading Procedure:**

1. Attendance and Class Participation (40%)
  2. Workshop Submissions and Written Assignments (40%)
  3. Final Portfolio (20%)
- **Attendance:** It is important to be on time to class. Because our class focuses on discussing assigned readings and your peers' workshop submissions, please show us all respect and arrive on time and prepared to participate. During the semester, you are allowed one excused absence and any other absences will be considered unexcused unless you present a doctor's note. Each time you are absent, I will begin to drop your letter grade by one-third of a point (A to A-, B to B-, etc). I will count two class tardies as one unexcused absence. I am aware that many students are practicing members of various faiths and religions and absences due to religious holidays and celebrations will be excused so long as I am made aware prior to you missing class.
  - **Plagiarism:** Don't. This class revolves around self-expression and creativity. It would be in your best interest to turn in original pieces, presentations, and other class assignments. Plagiarizing work will force me to give you a failing grade and report you to the NYU administration.
  - **Late Work:** Our class cannot function properly without students turning in assignments on time. Late work will not be accepted unless talked about in advance.
  - **Workshop Etiquette:** We will all be respectful of our peers' work and provide **generous** and **thoughtful** feedback on the pieces discussed during class. This is a safe space where you should not feel judged or judge anyone's writing. If I believe that any type of bullying is taking place, I will call you out on it and we will have a one-on-one meeting.
  - **Final Portfolio:** Your final portfolio will consist of:
    - A 2-3 page (double-spaced) reflection on your experience in the class, how you feel your knowledge on creative writing has changed, and in what ways you feel you have improved as a writer during the semester.
    - Two revised poems and one revised short story written during the semester.

- Copies of the original draft of your chosen poems and fiction submitted during the semester. I will be grading your portfolio based on the amount of effort you put into your revisions.
  
- **Extra Credit:** As members of the NYU community, we are all fortunate enough to live in NYC, a city filled with an abundant amount of literary readings, workshops, and master classes happening every week. I encourage all of you to attend literary readings and expose yourself to different genres of writing. Students who attend a literary reading and write a one-page review before the semester ends will receive extra credit points towards their final grade.

**Food:** Because this is a morning class, I will allow liquids and quiet snacks. I prefer you do not bring anything too noisy, as it is disruptive. On the first day, we will inform our classmates on any allergies we may have as to not get anyone sick.

**Technology:** Cellphones and laptop use are not permitted during class.

**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 my 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.

Counseling Services:  
726 Broadway  
New York, NY 10003  
**(212) 998-4780**

Wellness Center:  
24-hour hotline at **(212) 443-9999**  
Email [wellness.exchange@nyu.edu](mailto:wellness.exchange@nyu.edu)

## CLASS SCHEDULE

- Note: Some readings are subject to change

### *Week 1: Introductions and Poetic Forms*

#### **M Jan. 28**

- Class Introductions and syllabus overview, In Class Exercise, Read: “How to Become a Writer” by Lorrie Moore

#### **W Jan. 30**

- “The Colonel” (Carolyn Forché), “American Sonnet for My Past and Future Assassin” and “Arbor for Butch” (Terrance Hayes), “Abecedarian Requiring Further Examination of Anglikan Seraphym Subjugation of a Wild Indian Reservation” (Natalie Diaz), “Myth” (Natasha Trethewey), “Kletic of Walt Whitman, the Wound Dresser” (Roger Reeves)

### *Week 2: Sound/Image/Metaphor*

#### **M Feb. 4**

- “Dark and Lovely After Take-Off (A Future)” (Yona Harvey), “Portrait of the Alcoholic as Doubt and Kingfisher” (Kaveh Akbar), “& even the black guy’s profile reads ‘sorry, no black guys’” (Danez Smith), “Below Freezing” (Tomas Tranströmer), “Self-Portrait as So Much Potential” (Chen Chen)

#### **W Feb. 6**

- Workshop Group A

### *Week 3: Elegy and Loss*

#### **M Feb. 11**

- “Another Elegy” (Jericho Brown), “Funeral for The Black Dog” (Morgan Parker), “The Committee Weighs In” (Andrea Cohen), “Elegy’s” (Bob Hicok), “Spoons” (Ross Gay), “Elegy” (Aracelis Girmay), “In a Mexican Restaurant I Recall How Much You Upset Me (Ada Limón), “Beckoned” (Forrest Gander)

#### **W Feb. 13**

- Workshop Group B

### *Week 4: Parenthood/Family*

#### **M Feb. 18**

- **NO CLASS - President’s Day**

#### **W Feb. 20**

- “My Father’s Love Letters” (Yusef Komunyakaa), “Those Winter Sundays” (Robert Hayden), “I Go Back to May 1937” (Sharon Olds), “We Named You

Mercy” (Amanda Johnston), “Good Bones” (Maggie Smith), “Morning Song” (Sylvia Plath), “The Gift” (Li-Young Lee) “I Think Everybody Has A Year They Never Really Leave” (Julian Randall)

***Week 5: Love, Intimacy, and Heartache***

**M Feb. 25**

- “To the Wife” (Nick Laird), “Object Permanence” (Nicole Sealy), “Seaside Improvisation” (Richard Siken), “Winter” (Chen Chen), “Brokeheart: Just like that” (Patrick Rosal), “Slow Dance” (Matthew Dickman)

**W Feb. 27**

- Workshop Group C

***Week 6: Writing the Political***

**M Mar. 4**

- “American Sonnet for My Past and Future Assassin” (Terrance Hayes), “Second Attempt Crossing” (Javier Zamora), “If They Come for Us” (Fatimah Asghar), “Litanies To My Heavenly Brown Body” (Mark Aguhar), “Jamaican British” (Raymond Antrobus), “the way we live now ::” (Evie Shockley), “Prayer for the Mutilated World” (sam sax)

**W Mar. 6**

- Workshop Group A

***Week 7: Persona/Historical Poetry***

**M Mar. 11**

- “Sonnet Crown for Blind Tom” (Tyehimba Jess), Selections from *The Big Smoke* (Adrian Matejka), “What Beyoncé Won’t Say on a Shrink’s Couch,” “Beyoncé Celebrates Black History Month,” “Beyoncé on the Line for Gaga” (Morgan Parker)

**W Mar. 13**

- Workshop Group B

**NO CLASS: SPRING RECESS, MARCH 18 – MARCH 24**

***Week 8: Hybrid Texts***

**M Mar. 25**

- Excerpts from *Citizen: An American Lyric* (Claudia Rankine), “The Glass Essay” (Anne Carson)

**W Mar. 27**

- Workshop Group C

***Week 9: Voices of Childhood (Start of Fiction Unit)***

**M Apr. 1**

- “Girl” (Jamaica Kincaid), Excerpt from *As I Lay Dying* (William Faulkner)

**W Apr. 3**

- Workshop Group A

***Week 10: This is a (Wo)man’s World***

**M Apr. 8**

- “The Husband Stitch” (Carmen Maria Machado), “Roselily” (Alice Walker)

**W Apr. 10**

- Workshop Group B

***Week 11: Sci-fi and Fantasy***

**M Apr. 15**

- “Bloodchild” (Octavia Butler)

**W Apr. 17**

- Workshop Group C

***Week 12: How Characters Make/Break A Story***

**M Apr. 22**

- “Emergency” (Denis Johnson), “A Good Man is Hard to Find” (Flannery O’Conner)

**W Apr. 24**

- Workshop Group A

***Week 13: Time and Place***

**M Apr. 29**

- “A Temporary Matter” (Jhumpa Lahiri), “The Embassy of Cambodia” (Zadie Smith)

**W May 1**

- Workshop Group B

***Week 14: Description and Storytelling***

**M May 6**

- “Requiem for a Glass Heart” (Roxanne Gay), Excerpts from the screenplays “O Brother, Where Art Thou?” (Joel & Ethan Cohen) and “12 Years A Slave” (John Ridley)

**W May 8**

- Workshop Group C

**Week 15: *Horror! (& Last Day Celebration)***

**M May 13**

- **Final Portfolios Due.** Short Discussion of “The Lottery” (Shirley Jackson), In-Class Celebration and Portfolio Readings.