INTRODUCTION

It’s an exciting time to be a reader. There are so many new voices, forms, and stories being told, in ways and styles we haven’t seen before. It’s also an exciting time to be a writer. In this course, you will be introduced to a variety of genres that creative writers may be working in today including fiction, contemporary poetry, and creative nonfiction. Each form has its own immense range of forms, lengths, styles, and traditions—though, as we will see, many writers also work across genres and break with some of the old rules. Through this course, I hope you will gain some sense of the possibilities of each form and hone your own particular interests and strengths, and find a writer or two you love.

CLASS STRUCTURE

The course has a craft component and a workshop component. The first half of each class will be devoted to craft discussions, in which we will be looking at pieces as writers in addition to being readers. This means we will be examining how the pieces work — taking them apart and looking at how they were put together, and how you might achieve similar effects. The craft components will include short take-home writing exercise assignments. These will be emailed to me and some I may choose to share in class the following week. These take-home exercises can be expanded into longer pieces for your workshop submissions, or not; it’s up to you.

The second half of each class will be the workshop component, in which we will be discussing our peers’ work and how to improve them. The workshop schedule will be determined on the first day of class, as it is dependent on how many students are enrolled. You will be writing a critique letter for each student being workshopped on each particular day. This letter must be typed. On the day of workshop, bring a copy of the letter for the writer, and a second copy for me. More workshop guidelines will be given in class.

The following schedule and readings are provisional; we can see what is working throughout the course, and if something isn’t, we will revise accordingly.

READINGS (subject to change)
FICTION
“Bullet in the Brain,” Tobias Wolff
“Rape Fantasies,” Margaret Atwood
“Paper Lanterns,” Stuart Dybek
“This Is Not A Love Song,” Brendan Matthews
“Kindness,” Yiyun Li
“Naima,” Hisham Matar
“The House Made of Sugar,” Silvina Ocampo
“Funes, The Memorious,” Jorge Luis Borges
“The Semplica Girl Diaries,” George Saunders
Excerpt from *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*, Shirley Jackson
Excerpt from *City of Glass*, Paul Auster
Excerpt from *Mr. Fox*, Helen Oyeyemi
Excerpt from *Strange Weather in Tokyo*, Hiromi Kawakami

POETRY
“Seventh Circle of Earth,” “On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous” — Ocean Vuong
“What Kind of Times Are These,” “Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law” — Adrienne Rich
“Self Portrait With & Without” — Chen Chen, “One Art” — Elizabeth Bishop
“Falling and Flying” — Jack Gilbert
Selections from *Sonnets to Orpheus*, Rainer Maria Rilke
Selections from *Averno*, Louise Glück
Selections from *Life on Mars*, Tracy K. Smith
Selections from *Oculus*, Sally Wen Mao
Selections from *R E D*, Chase Berggrun

NONFICTION/HYBRID
“A Duck with One Leg” — Aviya Kushner
“Goodbye to All That” — Joan Didion
Selections from *The Lonely City* — Olivia Laing
Selections from *Glass, Irony & God* — Anne Carson
Selections from *Bluets* — Maggie Nelson

WRITERLY GUIDANCE
“Writing In The Cold” — Ted Solotaroff
“How to Be A Writer” — Lorrie Moore

ATTENDANCE, GRADING, AND OTHER RULES OF THE GAME

Basically, you signed up for this class so you must want to be here at least a little. I’m going to do my best to make sure we have a good time and learn a lot, so pitch in and do your part, okay?
Attendance is expected at *every single session*. We are only meeting twelve times, so let’s make each class count. Do not be late. Two 15-minute tardies is equivalent to 1 unexcused absence. Your final grade will be reduced by 1/3 of a letter for any unexcused absences. If you have an urgent and valid reason you cannot make a class, email me beforehand. If you have a last-minute emergency and can’t find time to email me before class, email me after class anyway. I may have to ask for proof, depending. **Do not miss your own workshop.** If something comes up, bring it up in class *beforehand* so you can switch your workshop with someone else’s. If you miss your own workshop without telling me beforehand, expect a full letter grade to be docked.

No laptops, cell phones, or other electronic devices allowed during class. I particularly loathe seeing people text under the desk. Don’t do it.

Grading is calculated as follows:

- **20%** — writing exercises
- **30%** — workshop pieces
- **30%** — in-class participation and critiques
- **20%** — final portfolio

Extra credit may be possible—I will notify you of opportunities in class.

**PLAGIARISM**

Literary plagiarism is not as simple as directly copying and pasting someone else’s words, or changing a few words here and there of something existing, without attribution. There is a fine line between literary homage (common!) and plagiarism (not okay!).

Plagiarism of *any kind* is absolutely not tolerated. Plagiarism (as defined by Merriam-Webster) includes passing off the ideas or words of another as your own, using someone else’s work without credit, or presenting an idea as new and your own when it in fact was taken from a preexisting work. Further questions about this can be addressed in class, but you should use common sense and your best intentions and judgment. **If you are caught plagiarizing, the assignment will automatically get a 0 and may warrant additional penalization.** Any specific concerns can be discussed with me privately.

**SENSITIVE ISSUES**

It is possible that in the readings, both assigned and submitted by your peers, subjects such as racism, misogyny, homophobia, and other types of hate, oppression and violence may come up. I will do my best to warn you all ahead of time and to treat the material with sensitivity, and hope that students submitting work will do the same. However, none of us are omniscient and I hope
that we can foster an attitude of mutual respect and trust throughout the course and encourage each other to be better people together.

If specific concerns develop that you do not feel comfortable bringing up in front of the class, please know you are welcome to talk to me in private and in full confidence at any time.

**STUDENT WELLNESS**

Usually, especially when working with fiction and poetry, we assume that the speaker/narrator of a work is fictional or that there are some aspects of invention in the piece (they are creative, after all!) However, if students submit content related to murder, depression, suicide, sexual assault, or severe mental distress, such as seems to be a possible cry for help, please know that if I feel cause for concern I will reach out by email to check in with you. If you are struggling with anything, please know you can reach out to me at any time and I can help guide you to the available resources. The NYU Wellness Center and hotline are always available if you need them (and they have a texting app, now, too!)

**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 register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980, or at 726 Broadway (2nd floor) or at www.nyu.edu/csd.