

Introduction to Creative Writing (CRWRI-UA.815.006)
Instructor: James Quigley

Tuesday / Thursday 12:30PM - 1:45PM
(room TBD)

Email: jkq203@nyu.edu

Office Hours: (TBD)

Course Overview

The intention of this course is to familiarize ourselves with the fundamental formal conventions of craft in poetry and fiction *from the creative perspective of a writer*. Please note: this is not a literature course. Although the reading and analyzing of texts will be integral to success in our class, we will do so with the aim of understanding how these formal choices can impact our own work.

We seek to broaden the possibilities of our writing through both craft discussions and weekly workshops. These workshops are where our course will diverge most significantly from a traditional theory lecture. Consider them as you would a workshop in, say, woodworking—this is a place to roll up our sleeves and get messy. Our goal is to both critique and encourage one another's writing, so that we can develop new and exciting work over the course of the semester. On the last day of class, each student will submit a final portfolio that reflects the endeavors in writing made throughout this course. More on that later.

Structure

We will spend the first half of the semester focused on poetry, and the second half on fiction.

Tuesday is our dedicated craft day (though, if time allows, we will begin our Tuesday classes with 10-15 minutes of writing exercises). Assigned readings (available on NYU Classes) must be read beforehand, printed, and brought to class. Additionally, a short written response (8-10 sentences) should be prepared beforehand, printed, and handed in at the end of class. These responses are not intended as rigorous essays conforming to the Chicago Manual of Style, nor are they intended as journal entries. I'm less interested in what you *like or dislike* about each reading than how you see the author engaging with form and language. Try to pinpoint *where* the author is making significant formal choices, identify *what* those formal choices are, and ask yourself *how* the author's formal choices benefit or diminish the work in question. In our discussions, we will encounter various elements and techniques writers utilize to deepen their ability to communicate. We will observe these elements and techniques at work in poetry and fiction that spans centuries, continents, and categories.

Thursday is our dedicated workshop day. At our first meeting of the semester, we will divide the class into two workshop groups. Each group must submit their work one week in advance of their workshop date. (This timeline should be clearer on our schedule. If you're ever unsure about when work is due, feel free to ask me.) Equally as important as submitting your writing to workshop is responding to your peers' writing. Every student (including those being workshopped) must read each submission carefully before class, and take the time to offer a thoughtful critique. Some questions to consider when responding to workshop submissions: *Where is the 'beat' in this piece? What is new, surprising, exciting about the writing? What formal choices are on display?* Try to begin your critique by focusing on the positive aspects of each piece, then delve into suggested improvements. Be sure to outline your reasoning for this constructive criticism. Type out these responses (no more than one page per work) and bring **two copies** to class—one for the writer, and the other for me.

Attendance

Great news! You have the right to attend every class.

Your presence—both physical and mental—is crucial to success in this course. Therefore, **more than one unexcused absence will result in a reduction of your grade.**

We begin promptly at 12:30PM. Arriving more than 15 minutes late will count as a half-absence. Therefore, **three instances of lateness will result in a reduction of your grade.** Luckily, this is not an 8:00AM class. I believe in us. Punctual is possible.

Plagiarism

Please consider this short video as a perfect articulation of my thoughts on this subject:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=umDr0mPuyQc>

The university's plagiarism policy is quite clear, and the consequences are severe. If you're struggling with any assignments, come talk to me during office hours.

Electronics in Class

We owe it to each other to be fully engaged in this class. I know that I much prefer sharing my writing with a group of people than with a group of laptop backs—I predict you will, too. All electronic devices must remain unseen and unheard for the duration of class, unless I receive a specific exception for a student from the Moses Center.

Final Portfolio

As this is an introduction to both poetry and fiction, your final portfolio must contain some work from each genre, though the split is up to you. If you'd like to include one short story and 8 poems, or a long story and one poem, you may do so. Your portfolio must contain work written over the course of the semester. Although the inclusion of new work is encouraged, at least two pieces in the portfolio are required to be revisions of past workshop submissions. I'm keeping the page requirement low—**10 pages**—because I want you to focus more on quality than quantity.

Grade Breakdown

Attendance: 20%

Participation: 20%

Reading Responses: 20%

Workshop Critiques: 20%

Final Portfolio: 20%

Schedule

Week One

Tuesday, 1/28—Introduction; Syllabus; Workshop Groups

In Class: Get to know one another, review our syllabus, discuss goals, answer questions. Divide class into Workshop Groups A, B, and C. If time allows, writing exercise: *Tactile Observation*.

For Thursday: Read submissions for “Practice Workshop.” Everyone prepares critiques. **Group A** prepares workshop submissions.

Thursday, 1/30—Practice Workshop

In Class: Practice Workshop. Everyone hands in critiques. **Group A** passes out workshop submissions.

For Tuesday: Read “Key Terms.” Everyone prepares reading responses.

Week Two

Tuesday, 2/4—Key Terms

In Class: Writing exercise: *Expansion and Compression*. Discuss readings. Everyone hands in reading responses.

For Thursday: Everyone prepares workshop critiques for “Group A’s First Workshop.” **Group B** prepares workshop submissions.

Thursday, 2/6—Group A’s First Workshop

In Class: Workshopping Group A. Everyone hands in critiques. **Group B** passes out workshop submissions.

For Tuesday: Read “Sonnets: A Deeper Look.” Everyone prepares reading responses.

Week Three

Tuesday, 2/11—Sonnets: A Deeper Look

In Class: Writing exercise: *Why Is This Happening?* Discuss readings. Everyone hands in reading responses.

For Thursday: Everyone prepares workshop critiques for “Group B’s First Workshop.” **Group C** prepares workshop submissions.

Thursday, 2/13—Group B’s First Workshop

In Class: Workshopping Group B. Everyone hands in critiques. **Group C** passes out workshop submissions.

For Tuesday: Read “Narrative Mode.” Everyone prepares reading responses.

Week Four

Tuesday, 2/18—Narrative Mode

In Class: Writing exercise: *Negation*. Discuss readings. Everyone hands in reading responses.

For Thursday: Everyone prepares workshop critiques for “Group C’s First Workshop.” **Group A** prepares workshop submissions.

Thursday, 2/20—Group C’s First Workshop

In Class: Workshopping Group C. Everyone hands in critiques.
Group A passes out workshop submissions.

For Tuesday: Read “Lyric Mode.” Everyone prepares reading responses.

Week Five

Tuesday, 2/25—Lyric Mode

In Class: Writing Exercise: *Erasure*. Discuss readings. Everyone hands in reading responses.

For Thursday: Everyone prepares workshop critiques for “Group A’s Second Workshop.” **Group B** prepares workshop submissions.

Thursday, 2/27—Group A’s Second Workshop

In Class: Workshopping Group A. Everyone hands in critiques.
Group B passes out workshop submissions.

For Tuesday: Read “Poems in Sections.” Everyone prepares reading responses.

Week Six

Tuesday, 3/3—Poems in Sections

In Class: Writing Exercise: *Lists*. Discuss readings. Everyone hands in reading responses.

For Thursday: Everyone prepares workshop critiques for “Group B’s Second Workshop.” **Group C** prepares workshop submissions.

Thursday, 3/5—Group B’s Second Workshop

In Class: Workshopping Group B. Everyone hands in critiques.
Group C passes out workshop submissions.

For Tuesday: Read “Prose Poems.” Everyone prepares reading responses.

Week Seven

Tuesday, 3/10—Prose Poems

In Class: Writing Exercise: *Actions and Similes*. Discuss readings. Everyone hands in reading responses.

For Thursday: Everyone prepares workshop critiques for “Group C’s Second Workshop.” **Group A** prepares workshop submissions.

Thursday, 3/12—Group C’s Second Workshop

In Class: Workshopping Group C. Everyone hands in critiques. **Group A** passes out workshop submissions.

For Tuesday: Read “Character and Point of View.” Everyone prepares reading responses.

Week Eight

Tuesday, 3/17—Spring Break: No Class

Thursday, 3/19—Spring Break: No Class

Week Nine

Tuesday, 3/24—Character and Point of View

In Class: Writing Exercise: *The Never-Ending Question*. Discuss readings. Everyone hands in reading responses.

For Thursday: Everyone prepares workshop critiques for “Group A’s Third Workshop.” **Group B** prepares workshop submissions.

Thursday, 3/26—Group A’s Third Workshop

In Class: Workshopping Group A. Everyone hands in critiques. **Group B** passes out workshop submissions.

For Tuesday: Read “Plot and Sub-Plot.” Everyone prepares reading responses.

Week Ten

Tuesday, 3/31—Plot and Sub-Plot

In Class: Writing Exercise: *The Logline*. Discuss readings. Everyone hands in reading responses.

For Thursday: Everyone prepares workshop critiques for “Group B’s Third Workshop.” **Group C** prepares workshop submissions.

Thursday, 4/2—Group B’s Third Workshop

In Class: Workshopping Group B. Everyone hands in critiques. **Group C** passes out workshop submissions.

For Tuesday: Read “Dialogue.” Everyone prepares reading responses.

Week Eleven

Tuesday, 4/7—Dialogue

In Class: Writing Exercise: *Speaking The Scene*. Discuss readings. Everyone hands in reading responses.

For Thursday: Everyone prepares workshop critiques for “Group C’s Third Workshop.” **Group A** prepares workshop submissions.

Thursday, 4/9—Group C’s Third Workshop

In Class: Workshopping Group C. Everyone hands in critiques. **Group A** passes out workshop submissions.

For Tuesday: Read “Theme.” Everyone prepares reading responses.

Week Twelve

Tuesday, 4/14—Theme

In Class: Writing Exercise: *Left Unsaid*. Discuss readings. Everyone hands in reading responses.

For Thursday: Everyone prepares workshop critiques for “Group A’s Fourth Workshop.” **Group B** prepares workshop submissions.

Thursday, 4/16—Group A’s Fourth Workshop

In Class: Workshopping Group A. Everyone hands in critiques. **Group B** passes out workshop submissions.

For Tuesday: Read “Image, Symbol, and Metaphor (1 of 2).” Everyone prepares reading responses.

Week Thirteen

Tuesday, 4/21—Image, Symbolism, and Metaphor (1 of 2)

In Class: Writing Exercise: *Second Person*. Discuss readings. Everyone hands in reading responses.

For Thursday: Everyone prepares workshop critiques for “Group B’s Fourth Workshop.” **Group C** prepares workshop submissions.

Thursday, 4/23—Group B’s Fourth Workshop

In Class: Workshopping Group B. Everyone hands in critiques. **Group C** passes out workshop submissions.

For Tuesday: Read “Image, Symbolism, and Metaphor (2 of 2).” Everyone prepares reading responses.

Week Fourteen

Tuesday, 4/28—Image, Symbolism, and Metaphor (2 of 2)

In Class: Writing Exercise: *Transplant*. Discuss readings. Everyone hands in reading responses.

For Thursday: Everyone prepares workshop critiques for “Group C’s Fourth Workshop.”

Thursday, 4/30—Group C’s Fourth Workshop

In Class: Workshopping Group C. Everyone hands in critiques.

For Tuesday: **Half the class** (TBD) prepares to revisit readings and share portfolios.

Week Fifteen

Tuesday, 5/5—Revisit Readings and Share Portfolios

In Class: **Half the class** (TBD) selects a favorite reading from the semester (poem or short fiction passage) to read aloud and discuss its influence, then reads selections from their portfolios.

For Thursday: **Other half of the class** (TBD) prepares to revisit readings and share portfolios.

**Thursday, 5/7—Revisit Readings and Share Portfolios;
Heartfelt Goodbyes**

In Class: **Other half of the class** (TBD) selects a favorite reading from the semester (poem or short fiction passage) to read aloud and discuss its influence, then reads selections from their portfolios.

Readings

Practice Workshop

1. Pablo Neruda, “Ode to My Suit”
2. Catherine Barnett, “O Esperanza!”
3. Frank O’Hara, “Poem [Lana Turner has collapsed!]”
4. Christopher Soto, “Concerning the Necropolitical Landscape”
5. Morgan Parker, “If You Are Over Staying Woke”
6. Tracy K. Smith, “Sci-Fi”

Key Terms

1. From *LitHub*, “10 Essential Terms for Poets (and Everyone Else)”
2. Princess Nukata, “Yearning for the Emperor Tenji”
3. William Shakespeare, “Sonnet 18”
4. Ocean Vuong, “Someday I’ll Love Ocean Vuong”
5. Frank Bidart, “In Memory of Joe Brainard”
6. Derek Walcott, from “The Schooner *Flight*”
7. From *Poetry*, “Glossary of Poetic Terms: Anaphora”
8. Allen Ginsberg, “America”
9. Yusef Komunyakaa, “Facing It”
10. sam sax, “LISP”
11. Carl Phillips, “To Be Worn Openly at the Wrist, or at the Chest and Hidden”
12. Elizabeth Bishop, “The Fish”
13. Cynthia Cruz, “Self Portrait”

Sonnets: A Deeper Look

1. Edward Hirsch, “The Making of a Sonnet”
2. William Shakespeare, “Sonnet 130”
3. From the transcript of Ted Berrigan’s lecture, “Sonnet Workshop”

4. Ted Berrigan, "XVII"
5. Ted Berrigan, "L"
6. César Vallejo, "Black Stone on a White Stone"
7. Ada Limón, "Instructions on Not Giving Up"
8. Terrance Hayes, "American Sonnet for My Past and Future Assassin [When James Baldwin & Audre Lorde each lend]"
9. Terrance Hayes, "American Sonnet for My Past and Future Assassin [Inside me is a black-eyed animal]"

Narrative Mode

1. Freytag's Triangle
2. Matthew Yeager, "Time's Passage in the 'Longish' Narrative Poem"
3. Elizabeth Bishop, "The Moose"
4. Sharon Olds, "Leaving the Islands"
5. Rachel Zucker, "Poem"
6. Matthew Dickman, "Grief"

Lyric Mode

1. Terrance Hayes, from "Lyric Modes"
2. James Longenbach, from "Lyric Knowledge"
3. Edward Hirsch, from "The Work of Lyric: Night and Day"
4. Tongo Eisen-Martin, "Four Walls"
5. Chen Chen, "When I Grow Up I Want To Be a List of Further Possibilities"
6. Major Jackson, "The Flâneur Tends a Well-Liked Summer Cocktail"
7. Philip Larkin, "Aubade"
8. Brigit Pegeen Kelly, "Doing Laundry on Sunday"
9. Lyn Hejinian, "constant change figures"
10. Douglas Kearney, "Afrofuturism (Blanche says, 'Meh')"

Poems in Sections

1. Wallace Stevens, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird"
2. Frank Bidart, "The Arc"
3. Tracy K. Smith, "My God, It's Full of Stars"
4. Allen Ginsberg, "Howl"

Prose Poems

1. From *Poets.Org*, "Prose Poem"
2. Edward Hirsch, from *A Poet's Glossary*
3. Charles Baudelaire, "At One O'Clock in the Morning"

4. Mary Ruefle, "Recollections of My Christmas Tree"
5. James Wright, "The Secret of Light"
6. Danez Smith, "& even the black guy's profile reads 'sorry, no black guys'"

Character and Point of View

1. Darin Strauss, from "Notes on Narrative"
2. James Joyce, "The Sisters"
3. Ernest Hemingway, "My Old Man"

Plot and Sub-Plot

1. Darin Strauss, from "Notes on Narrative"
2. Rebecca Schiff, "Sports Night"
3. George Saunders, "Tenth of December"
4. Lincoln Michel, "What the Landlord Knows"

Dialogue

1. Stephen King, from *On Writing*
2. Toni Morrison, from 'The Language Must Not Sweat' interview in *The New Republic*
3. Robert Paul Lamb, "Hemingway and the Creation of Twentieth Century Dialogue"
4. Ernest Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants"

Theme

1. Darin Strauss, from "Notes on Narrative"
2. Franz Kafka, *The Metamorphosis*

Image, Symbolism, and Metaphor (1 of 2)

1. Darin Strauss, from "Notes on Narrative"
2. Anton Chekhov, "Gooseberries"
3. John Freedman, "Narrative Technique and the Art of Story-Telling in Anton Chekhov's 'Little Trilogy'"
4. Albert Camus, *The Stranger* (Part One)

Image, Symbolism, and Metaphor (2 of 2)

1. Albert Camus, *The Stranger* (Part Two)

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.