

**CREATIVE WRITING: INTRODUCTION TO FICTION & POETRY  
(CRWRI-UA.815.005)**

**Instructor: William Pepicelli**  
**Email: [wp676@nyu.edu](mailto:wp676@nyu.edu)**  
**Time: M,W @ 2:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.**  
**Location: TBD**  
**Office Hours by Appointment**

Course Overview

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. 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**, 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 excite your peers about submitting their work, along with the feedback and critique that will help them improve upon their writing.**

What's Expected of You

- Writing
  - **Students will be submitting four times over the course of the semester**—twice during the fiction section (two stories or excerpts, 8-15 pages), and twice during the poetry section (one to three poems each submission).
  - Students will also submit revisions to me at the end of the semester—one of their works from each genre that they've meaningfully revised based on

feedback from the workshop. We will discuss what this looks like in greater detail in class.

- Feedback
  - Written feedback: Students will write critiques of their peers' work. **Prior to class, please print two copies of your critique—one for me, and one for the writer.** I'll discuss further as to what a critique should look like.
  - Verbal feedback: **Being part of a workshop means being an active participant in class.** I'll do my best to make sure everyone has an opportunity to get involved, but I need you to be prepared and excited to contribute to the conversation as well.
  
- Reading
  - Prior to each class you'll be reading the selection for our craft discussion as well as the work that your fellow students have submitted ahead of their workshop. **It is imperative that you read your fellow students' work.** There is no greater sin in workshop than not reading the work of your peers. I'll know, they'll know, and you'll know, and it will suck. Please don't make it suck. Do the reading.
  
- Office Hours
  - At least once per semester, you will come to office hours. These discussions work best following your workshop submission. If your schedule allows, try to meet with me in the week following one of your submissions. I'm generally flexible with regard to time and place for discussions, so email me to set up a time. You are always welcome to meet with me more frequently, and I welcome more in-depth conversations on your work.

### How You'll Be Graded

**If you do the necessary reading, are an active participant of the class, and submit your materials as required, you will get an A.** Here's a more specific breakdown:

Participation: 50%

- You write critiques for your fellow writers, as required
- You contribute (positively!) to the workshop conversation
- You have thoughts and ideas regarding the craft readings
- You show up (see below for more specifics regarding attendance policy)

Writing: 40%

- You write the stories and poems for workshop, within the parameters of submission. **Note that this includes submitting on time so as to give your fellow writers the time and headspace necessary to think critically and thoughtfully about your work.**

Revising: 10%

- You submit your two revised pieces to me at the end of the semester (one from each genre)
- You have made meaningful, thoughtful revisions to the work that show you are engaging with the workshop's feedback (to be discussed later on in the semester)

### Rules, Regulations, and Preferences

*A Brief But Important Note on Plagiarism:*

**Don't do it.** Come on. You'll get caught, I'll have to fail you and report you to the university, and it ruins the whole point of the course. Just...don't, OK?

*Laptops:*

Please leave them at home (or stowed away). **This means printing out in advance the necessary materials for class.** (If you need to use electronic materials for some reason, of course, just let me know and we will accommodate.)

*Attendance:*

**Show up.** After more than one unexcused absence, your grade will drop by a half letter (i.e. from a B to a B-) for each subsequent absence. Being late by more than 15 minutes will count towards half of an unexcused absence; being late by more than 30 minutes will be a full unexcused absence. Of course, things happen—if you need to miss class, contact me with reasonable advanced notice and we will work something out.

A few additional notes:

### 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.

### **Provisional Reading Schedule (subject to change)**

The idea here is to focus on the author(s) or idea(s) for each of our class meetings, in order to discern what moves/turns/tricks we can take from their work and apply to our own.

### **Part One: – Fiction**

#### **Class One – Wednesday, Sept. 11**

Welcome/Housekeeping – No Advanced Reading

#### **Class Two – Monday, Sept. 16**

Craft Reading: “Escape from Spiderhead,” George Saunders

#### **Class Three – Wednesday, Sept. 18**

Craft Reading: “What We Talk About When We Talk About Love,” Raymond Carver

#### **Class Four – Monday, Sept. 23**

Craft Reading: “Lady with a Toy Dog,” Anton Chekhov; “Show Don’t Tell,” Curtis Sittenfeld

#### **Class Five – Wednesday, Sept. 25**

Craft Reading: “The Pugilist at Rest,” Thom Jones

#### **Class Six – Monday, Sept. 30 (No Class? Rosh Hashana)**

Craft Reading: “Bullet in the Brain,” Tobias Wolff; “Shakespeare’s Memory,” J.L. Borges

#### **Class Seven – Wednesday, Oct. 2**

Craft Reading: “The Life You Save May Be Your Own,” Flannery O’Connor

#### **Class Eight – Monday, Oct. 7**

Craft Reading: “The School,” Donald Barthelme (alongside George Saunders’s essay “The Perfect Gerbil”); “The Lie,” T.C. Boyle

#### **Class Nine – Wednesday, Oct. 9**

Craft Reading: “Cryptology,” Leonard Michaels

#### **Class Ten – Monday, Oct. 14**

Craft Reading: “Reunion,” John Cheever; “An Encounter,” James Joyce

#### **Class Eleven – Wednesday, Oct. 16**

Craft Reading: “Sonny’s Blues,” James Baldwin

**Class Twelve – Monday, Oct. 21**

Craft Reading: “Love,” Grace Paley; “Love,” William Maxwell

**Class Thirteen – Wednesday, Oct. 23**

Craft Reading: “How to Become a Writer,” Lorrie Moore; “Girl,” Jamaica Kincaid

**Class Fourteen – Monday, Oct. 28**

Craft Reading: “Going for a Beer,” Robert Coover; “Emergency,” Denis Johnson

**Part Two: Poetry**

**Class Fifteen – Wednesday, Oct. 30**

Craft Reading: “Sonnet 130,” Shakespeare; “Death be not proud,” John Donne; “To Fool or Knave,” “On Gut,” Ben Jonson

**Class Sixteen – Monday, Nov. 4**

Craft Reading: “London,” “To the Muses,” William Blake

**Class Seventeen – Wednesday, Nov. 6**

Craft Reading: “Ozymandias,” Shelley; “When I Have Fears,” John Keats

**Class Eighteen – Monday, Nov. 11**

Craft Reading: “I felt a funeral, in my brain,” “I heard a fly buzz—when I died,” “because I could not stop for death,” Emily Dickinson

**Class Nineteen – Wednesday, Nov. 13**

Craft Reading: “The Second Coming,” “Sailing to Byzantium,” W.B. Yeats

**Class Twenty – Monday, Nov. 18**

Craft Reading: “Out, Out—,” “Provide, Provide,” Robert Frost

**Class Twenty-one – Wednesday, Nov. 20**

Craft Reading: “Sunday Morning,” “The Idea of Order at Key West,” Wallace Stevens; “This is just to say,” “Poem,” William Carlos Williams

**Class Twenty-two – Monday, Nov. 25**

Craft Reading: “A Certain Lady,” “Resume,” Dorothy Parker

**Class Twenty-three – Monday, Dec. 2**

Craft Reading: “Poetry,” Marianne Moore; “Dulce et Decorum Est,” Wilfred Owen; “The Death of the Ball-turret Gunner,” Randall Jarrell

**Class Twenty-four – Wednesday, Dec. 4**

Craft Reading: “In just—,” “Pity this busy monster, manunkind,” E.E. Cummings;  
“Theme for English B,” “Harlem,” Langston Hughes

**Class Twenty-five – Monday, Dec. 9**

Craft Reading: “The Fish,” “One Art,” Elizabeth Bishop; “Traveling through the dark,”  
William Stafford

**Class Twenty-six – Wednesday, Dec. 11**

Craft Reading: “My Old Man,” Charles Bukowski; “High Windows,” Philip Larkin;  
“Metaphors,” “Daddy,” Sylvia Plath

**Class Twenty-seven – Monday, Dec. 16**

Craft Reading: “A Supermarket in California,” Allen Ginsberg; “What Work Is,” Phillip  
Levine

**Class Twenty-eight – Wednesday, Dec. 18**

Craft Reading: “Eating Poetry,” Mark Strand; “Litany,” Billy Collins; “Ode to the  
Clitoris,” Sharon Olds