Fall 2020  
CRWRI-UA-815.010  
Tues/Thurs 12.30-13.45

**Introduction to Prose and Poetry**  
Instructor: Mimi Diamond  
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**Objective**  
The objective of this course is to develop as writers and readers by engaging with various literary forms and creating a safe and encouraging community in which to share our work. We will read and discuss prose, poetry and creative nonfiction with the aim of widening our understanding of the possibilities of craft. The writing read in the class will show that there are many different forms good writing can take, and will sit alongside essays on craft to complicate our understanding of what writing should look like.

**Class Structure**  
Except for school holidays, we meet every Tuesday and Thursday morning from 12.30-13.45. Tuesdays will be our craft days, where we will discuss the set readings and the accompanying writing exercises, and Thursdays will be our workshop days, where we will discuss your writing.

You will be workshopped **three times** over the course of the semester. The first workshop will be a prose workshop. The second will be a poetry workshop. The third will be a piece of your choice (poetry, fiction, narrative nonfiction).

On the first day, we will divide everyone into four groups, A-D. These groups will remain constant throughout our time.

**Writing Assignments**  
Every week’s craft class will come with an accompanying writing assignment. Generally, these will be one-page creative pieces you’ll compose in response to readings we’ve done (and may provide inspiration for upcoming workshop pieces). For prose writing assignments, I’d like you to write 500-1000 words, unless I’ve stated otherwise in class. For poetry assignments, 1-3 pages is expected. If this is ever a problem for you, or you would like to do something slightly different, please get in touch with me. Because I know you’ll be busy doing readings, working on your own writing, and responding to classmates, I’ll have you choose **six** of the **twelve** total assignments to hand in to me one week from the day they’re assigned.

**Workshop Submissions**  
You will turn in your workshop submissions to class one full week before your upcoming workshop.

Submissions should be in 12pt font, double-spaced (poems may disrupt this).

The first submission will consist of 1-3 pages of poems.  
The second submission will consist of 4-8 pages of prose.
The third submission should conform to one of the two above requirements. It is important to note that you should not feel pressure to make your pieces as long as they are allowed to be - shorter work is often just as powerful.

The pieces will be printed before class and marked up with pen.

**Final Portfolio**
On the last day of class, you will hand in a final portfolio consisting of revised versions of your workshop pieces – or, alternatively, two revised workshop pieces and a writing assignment expanded to workshop submission quality and length. What’s most important is that your portfolio show evidence of revision. Unchanged pieces will not be awarded points.

**Grading**
In-class participation (attendance, contribution to discussions): 20%
Writing: 30%
Written feedback to classmates: 30%
Final Portfolio: 20%

**Extra Credit**
Attend a literary event. They’re constantly happening in the city and often free and open to the public. Write a two-page review of the event, and your grade can be bumped up half a mark. I will highlight events to the class regularly.

**Attendance**
All students are allowed one unexcused absence. Each absence beyond that will drop your letter-grade by a third (i.e. B+ to B, B to B-). Especially on workshop days, it’s a matter of respect to your classmates to show up and give discussion of their work your best. If you are unable to come to class, please email me, and we can sort something out.

Lateness by more than 15 minutes will be marked as an unexcused absence.

**Participation**
Come to class with your classmates’ work in front of you and marked up - both with things you love and things you feel need work. Small notes of encouragement are always, always welcome, so remember to add those too.

In addition to comments in the margins, write your classmates a single-page, 12 point font letter responding to their submission. Put effort into these letters, and think about the sort of feedback you’d want on your own work when writing it. Please print out two copies of this letter. You’ll hand in one to your classmate, the other to me. We will discuss these letters more in the first class.

**Technology**
Phones should be turned off. Laptops should stay in your backpack, unless you need one to write (let me know via email if this is the case).
**Plagiarism**
There is a zero tolerance for plagiarism, and if you do, you will fail the course. If you ever feel unable to complete an assignment or piece for workshop, please contact me rather than considering plagiarism.

**Office Hours**
TBD

**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](http://www.nyu.edu/csd).

**Student Wellness Policy**
Unless there is 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 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.

A final note - I am available via email for support through this course at all times. If you are ever unsure about an assignment, a piece for workshop, or a reading, please, please reach out.

**Week One**
**THURSDAY 9/3**
Welcome – Introductions – Review Syllabus

**Week Two**
**TUESDAY 9/8**
to read for class -
- *Liz Lerman’s Critical Response Process*
- ‘The Rosary’ by Alexander Chee, from How to Write an Autobiographical Novel
- Excerpt from Annie Dillard’s The Writing Life

**THURSDAY 9/10**
Mock workshop

**Week Three**
**TUESDAY 9/15**
*Fiction craft 1: Narrative and Perspective*
to read for class -
- Narrative - James Wood
- ‘The Harvest’ Amy Hempel
- ‘Seven’ Edwidge Danticat
- ‘Leopard’ Wells Tower

**Assignment:** Write a short piece (500-1000 words) that either employs a close third person narrator who is able to weave in and out of various characters thoughts; a third person narrator who surveys from a distance; or a first person narrator whose narration is part of the story.

**THURSDAY 9/17**
Prose workshop group A

**Week Four**
- **TUESDAY 9/22**
  - Fiction Craft 2: Detail
to read for class -
  - Detail James Wood
  - ‘My First Fee’ Isaac Babel
  - Selected stories by Grace Paley
  - ‘The Pier Falls’ Mark Haddon

**Assignment:** Write a short scene (500 words max) that uses as much detail as possible. Then write it again with all but essential details removed.

**THURSDAY 9/24**
Prose Workshop Group B

**Week Five**
- **TUESDAY 9/29**
  - Fiction Craft 2: Conflict
to read for class -
  - ‘Our Lady of Peace’ ZZ Packer
  - ‘Everything that Rises Must Converge’ Flannery O’Connor

**Assignment:** write a short piece in which two competing desires emerge. We’ll discuss this more in class.

**THURSDAY 10/1**
Prose workshop group C

**Week Six**
- **TUESDAY 10/6**
  - Fiction Craft 2: Dialogue
to read for class -
  - James Wood: Dialogue
  - ‘Wants’ Grace Paley
- Selected Stories from Jenny Zhang

**Assignment:** write a short piece in which dialogue appears heavily.

THURSDAY 10/8
Prose Workshop Group D

**Week Seven**

TUESDAY 10/13  
*Fiction craft 4: Constructed Worlds*
James Wood: Truth Convention, Realism  
- Selected Stories from *Pastoralia*, George Saunders  
- Selected Stories from *Attrib*, Eley Williams  

**Assignment:** write a short piece that suspends conventional reality.

THURSDAY 10/15
Discuss where we’re at and how we felt about the first round of workshops. Optional short reading.

**Week Eight**

TUESDAY 10/20  
*Poetry Craft 1: Sound*

to read for class -  
- ‘Sound/More Devices on Sound’ Mary Oliver  
- Selected poems by Khadija Queen  
- ‘Body and Kentucky Bourbon’ Saeed Jones  
- ‘Pussy Monster’ Franny Choi  

**Assignment:** Write a poem that engages with sound (either inspired by or pays special attention to).

THURSDAY 10/22
Poetry workshop group A

**Week Nine**

TUESDAY 10/27  
*Poetry Craft 2: Form-*

to read for class -  
- selections from *Zong!* by M. NourbeSe Philip  
- Selected poems from Emily Jungmin Yoon  
- ‘The Golden Shovel’ Terrance Hayes  

**Assignment:** Write a poem that implements one of the forms discussed in class.

THURSDAY 10/29
Poetry workshop group B

**Week Ten**
TUESDAY 11/3
Poetry Craft 3: Voice
- Selected Poems from Robert Bailey-Caulfield

Assignment: tbd

THURSDAY 11/5
Poetry workshop group C

Week Eleven
TUESDAY 11/10
Poetry Craft 4: Time, Place and Politics
to read for class -
- Selected poems from Alison Rumfitt
  Assignment: Write a poem based off of things you notice on your journey to school.

THURSDAY 11/12
Poetry workshop group D

Week Twelve
TUESDAY 11/17
Poetry Craft 5: Hybrids
to read for class -
- Excerpt from 'Bluets', Maggie Nelson
- Excerpt from 'Citizen', Claudia Rankine
  Assignment: Write a prose poem.

THURSDAY 11/19
Open workshop A

Week Thirteen
TUESDAY 11/24
Open Workshop group B

THURSDAY 11/26
Thanksgiving – no class

Week Fourteen
TUESDAY 12/1
Creative Nonfiction
to read for class -
- Excerpt from ‘Priestdaddy’, Patricia Lockwood
- ‘Ugly, Bitter and True’, Suzanne Rivecca
  Assignment: Write a short piece that takes the form of a personal essay or voice-driven account of an event.
THURSDAY 12/3
Open Workshop group C

Week Fifteen
TUESDAY 12/8
Humour
to read for class -
- Excerpts from ‘Everything is Awful and You’re a Terrible Person’ Daniel Zomparelli
- More tbh
Assignment: Write something that’s funny! It can be a fiction piece, a nonfiction piece or a poem. I know this sounds horrible, but we’ll all know each other by now!

THURSDAY 12/10
Open Workshop group D.
Also - FINAL PORTFOLIOS DUE! WE HAVE A NICE TIME!