

SYLLABUS - CRWRI-UA.815.004

Instructor: Gabriella Mayer

Meeting Times: Monday & Wednesday 8 AM - 9:15 AM

Location: TBA

Office Hours: By appointment

Contact: gm1658@nyu.edu

“Think, dear Sir, of the world that you carry inside of you, and call this thinking whatever you want to: a remembering of your own childhood or a yearning toward a future of your own --- only be attentive to what is arising within you, and place that above everything you perceive around you.” ---

Rainer Maria Rilke

“Passion
and intellectual articulation

Truth and glory

as forms of beauty
Proteus

formlessness
Possibility of discovering

anything
anything” -- Susan Howe

Welcome to Intro to Fiction and Poetry!

I’m excited to meet you all and engage critically with your work throughout this semester. We will read fiction (in the form of excerpts or short stories), prose, and poetry.

Art is not limited to a genre, country, or aesthetic. Especially in recent years, fiction, prose, and poetry writers alike have begun taking sources from around the world and using that to inform their own work. No matter if you have never written seriously before or you have tried writing poems and short stories for years, this course is designed to build weaknesses and reinforce your own individual strengths-- above all, this is your chance to start something new.

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. In that aspect, there will be 6 workshops for each group (more on that later) where you will submit prose, poetry, and creative nonfiction as part of that week. Mondays will serve as craft days where we read texts that help us better understand the writing process while Wednesdays will be our workshopping days.

Most importantly, there are no creative limits in this class.

Required Texts

Course reader (to be given in class or NYU Classes)

Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing --- Helene Cixous

A Poetry Handbook -- Mary Oliver

Deaf Republic -- Ilya Kaminsky

Blood Dazzler -- Patricia Smith

Autobiography of Red -- Anne Carson

Please print out any assigned readings and bring them to class. For the books listed above, you are responsible for purchasing or finding your own copies. Please find copies of the books either on NYU Bookstore, Amazon, Bobst library, or in a local bookstore. If you have trouble securing any of the following materials, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Grading

Attendance & Participation -- 30%

- This is a discussion-based class and will prove only as enjoyable and helpful as your insight and input level. As such, you should be an active member of the class. This means offering thoughtful responses to the assigned readings as well as a respectful ear for the opinions of colleagues. In workshop on Wednesdays, this means constructive feedback on writing pieces and, if you are the writer being workshopped, professional treatment of the critiques given. I'll touch more on how you can participate even when you don't feel you have a lot to say on the first day.

Submissions -- 20%

- In each class when time allows, you guys will write for a few minutes based on the writing prompt I give. You can either use this toward a work later in the semester or let it inform you to go in a direction you've been wanting to explore artistically.
- A significant portion of this class will be the writing workshop. Each of you will submit prose/short story pieces and poems. These will be read and critiqued by us in class on Wednesdays. To maintain appropriate standards, full sessions, and an enriching experience for all, it is essential to submit work that reflects the best of your ability. If you are scheduled to be workshopped on a given Wednesday, please bring fifteen copies of your piece to class the preceding Monday. Poems can be of any length. Short stories should fall between a 7-10 page range. For prose or any other genre you'd want to explore, go for 500-1000 words, though if it is longer than that, please email me.

Weekly Responses -- 20%

- For every student being workshopped in a certain week, there must be a typed response given to each of them. Please print out two copies of this letter to be given to the classmate and me.

Final Portfolio (submitted at end of the semester) -- 30%

- This will be gone over later on in the semester, but I do ask for a cover page with your name and title of the portfolio, an artist's statement, and a selection of work you have done during this class.

Workshop & What to Submit

Students will be split into two workshop groups: Group A and Group B. I will decide who will go into each one on the first day of class.

Any item submitted as part of workshop should not be graded based on *subjective quality*, but *objective*. This is a class about exploring the wonders beyond the surface of the written word and that must be honored. When an edit to someone's piece is made, to create art of any kind means placing yourself in a state of vulnerability, which can be difficult. In that respect, anyone present in the class must keep and give that empathy for showing the deepest parts of yourself to anyone presenting.

Attendance

8 AM classes are difficult, I completely understand that. That being said, the majority of this class is *discussion-based*, meaning that you will be spending a lot of time discussing your fellow students' works and the texts given out in the reading materials/NYU Classes. Thus, you should try not to be late to class and potentially miss out on any insights made re: the readings or the other students in class. You can email me ahead of time if you know you are going to be late and it won't be held against you.

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-, etc.). If you do have to miss class due to an emergency or religious reasons, please email me.

Side note: While not required, I do encourage you to attend readings held by the NYU Creative Writing department or in another venue in the city. There are so many amazing writers that present their works or speak in panels throughout the year -- what better way to get another perspective on writing than that? I will mention such opportunities throughout the semester or you can sign up to get notified of them on the program's listserv. Should you choose to attend one, you can write up a one-page response and I will count that as +2% towards your final portfolio grade.

Office Hours

I require all students to come to office hours at least once during the semester, although you are welcome (and encouraged) to attend more frequently. Office hours are a chance for me to get to know you, your interests, and your goals as a writer. It's also a chance for you to get further feedback on your writing or discuss any material we didn't get to in class. If you have a scheduling

conflict, please email me or talk to me before or after class and we can work out an alternative meeting time. Additionally, if you have any concerns you are uncomfortable raising in class, please don't hesitate to let me know.

Plagiarism

You signed up for this class because you want to write, right? Don't try to use work written by other people and try to pass them off as your own. It ain't cool. There is a zero-tolerance policy in place for plagiarism. Upon discovery, I will take measures to lead your case to the department.

I know this doesn't apply to 99% of you, but it still must be said. **Just don't do it.** It's disrespectful to me, the other students in class, and the author from who you are taking text.

Student Wellness Policy

Unless we see explicit evidence in workshop that the speaker of a work is the writer themselves, we as the reader 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.

This class is a sacred, safe space and I want it to be a creative outlet and source of support for anything you need in your life.

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>

Provisional Schedule (subject to change)

WEEK 1

Wed 9/8 --- **First Day of Class**

Going over the syllabus, meeting each other, discuss “What is a poem?” through “The Hill We Climb-- Amanda Gorman

Before class: Bring in a poem or prose piece into class where you’ll explain what you like about it

WEEK 2

Mon 9/13 --- “Why Perspectives in Aesthetics Differ” from *Perspectives in Aesthetics*,
Peyton E. Richter (in reader)

“Getting Ready” and “Diction, Tone, Voice” from *A Poetry Handbook*-- Mary Oliver

Wed 9/15 --- Group A Poetry Workshop

WEEK 3

Mon 9/20 --- *Ten Nights Dreaming*-- Natsume Soseki (in reader)

Wed 9/22 --- Group B Poetry Workshop

WEEK 4

Mon 9/27 -- *Blood Dazzler* excerpts-- Patricia Smith, Paul Celan selections (reader)

Wed 9/29 -- Group A Poetry Workshop

WEEK 5

Mon 10/4 -- Selections from *No One Belongs Here More Than You*-- Miranda July, *Three Steps* pgs. 77-89 - Cixous

Wed 10/6 --- Group B Poetry Workshop

WEEK 6

Mon 10/11-- **NO CLASS (Fall holiday)**

Tue 10/12 -- **Legislative Day (Monday schedule)**

Are You My Mother?- Alison Bechdel (excerpt), *The Chosen*-- Chaim Potok (excerpt), Anna Akhmatova (in reader)

Wed 10/13 --- Group A Poetry Workshop

WEEK 7

Mon 10/18 --- Yehuda Amichai, Mahmoud Darwish, *Homeland Elegies*-- Akhtar (excerpt)

Wed 10/20 --- Group B Poetry Workshop

WEEK 8

Mon 10/25 --- *Deaf Republic* -- Ilya Kaminsky

Wed 10/27 --- Group A Fiction/Prose Workshop

WEEK 9

Mon 11/1 --- Ingrid Bachmann, Clarice Lispector (reader), *Three Steps* pgs. 32-42 - Cixous

Wed 11/3 --- Group B Fiction/Prose Workshop

WEEK 10

Mon 11/8 --- *Bluets* excerpts-- Maggie Nelson, *Citizens* excerpts--- Claudia Rankine

Wed 11/10 --- Group A Fiction/Prose Workshop

WEEK 11

Mon 11/15 --- *Autobiography of Red* -- Anne Carson

Wed 11/17 --- Group B Fiction/Prose Workshop

WEEK 12

Mon 11/22 --- Tanka and haiku from various Japanese poets (in reader)

Wed 11/25-- **NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Break)**

WEEK 13

Mon 11/29 --- Funes, His Memory -- Jorge Luis Borges; "The Heights of Macchu Picchu" and "I Begin
By Invoking Your Name, Walt Whitman"-- Pablo Neruda

Wed 12/1 --- Group A Fiction/Prose Workshop

WEEK 14

Mon 12/6 --- *If it Were by the Wishes of the Chief of Point Ukhozi and Gagasi Would be*

Merged-- Volovolo Memela, Intro to Volovolo-- Mark Sanders, Selection of poems from Ingrid

Jonker and Earl Sweatshirt

Wed 12/8 --- Group B Fiction/Prose Workshop

WEEK 15

Mon 12/13 -- **Last Day of Class!** \ (^▽^) /

Celebration & Reading

Final Portfolio Due @ 11:59 PM