Introduction to Prose and Poetry: A World Tour
Section number: CRWRI-UA.815.009
Schedule: Tue / Thu: 11 AM - 12:15 PM
Instructor: Michael Barron (msb450@nyu.edu)
Office Hours: By Appointment

Now is the age of world literature, and everyone must contribute to hasten the arrival of that age. —Goethe

Course Overview
In this class, you will be taken on an international tour of literature from a creative perspective through stories, excerpts, poems, essays and other material (including music, film, and art if time allows). In the process, we will use these works to inform the development your own voice, style, and focus of writing.

Course Objectives
• To mature a knowledge of world literature from all places and ages
• To examine how experience and subject translate to style and content
• To foster a language for discussing work critically and constructively
• To strengthen an ability to make use of editorial feedback
• To build intellectual compassion and etiquette

Structure
The course is biweekly, with each day alternating between a workshop class (writing, revising) and a craft class (reading, responding).

Required Texts
Unless otherwise noted, I will email PDFs or links. An archive of all class material will be available on a Google Drive.

Workshop (Tuesdays)
Over the semester, you will have three opportunities to be workshopped:
• One submission of 3 – 5 pages of poetry (one to three poems)
• One submission of 8 – 15 pages of fiction (one to two stories)
• One submission of 8 – 15 pages of creative non-fiction (one to two essays)

All submissions must be in 12-point, double-spaced Times New Roman font.

Pieces for workshop must be emailed to everyone one week in advance (we will create a schedule for handing things in the day of class) For the day of the workshop, you must prepare written feedback in the form of an editor’s letter (100 words or more) for each writer that provides:
1) An overview of the piece’s mission (what’s it about?).
2) how the piece functions (what are the elements at work?).
3) how it’s successful in using these elements and where it could improve.
In addition to the editor’s letter, you must also make five in line comments per piece on specific things you’d like to highlight and why (grammar corrections, while welcome, do not count as editorial comments). You will learn methods to be constructive in your criticism, but above all you cannot pass judgement without reason. Back up your claims and above all be encouraging to **all of your classmates**. If you are able, I strongly suggest bringing printed copies to class for your own reference. Please email your responses to each writer on the evening **prior** to workshop by 7pm and cc me.

**Craft (Thursdays)**
In each class we will go over four writers from a certain world region. We shall discuss the themes and style of each work, as well as a brief summary of the historical-socio experiences that inform them. In order to foster productive in-class discussions, on the evening prior to each class (**at 7pm, please**), you will need to email me reader’s responses (100 words per author), in which you offer critiques highlighting themes and stylistic elements and how they serve each piece. You can be positive or negative in your words, but again, you cannot pass judgment without reason.

**Final Portfolio**
At the end of semester, in addition to the work you’ve handed in over the course of the semester, you will be submitting revisions to your workshopped pieces. You will also be required to submit a 200-word introduction to each piece that examines how this revision based on the insights gained in class discussions and submitted feedback.

**Policies**

**Grading**
Attendance and participation 40%
Weekly responses 30%
Final portfolio 30%

**Attendance and lateness**
This is a class founded on discussion. We examine work as a group and to be a part of that group requires your presence, attention, and input. To be part of that group requires being on time. More than two instances of lateness will count as an unexcused absence and more than two unexcused absences will result in a reduction in your grade.

**Plagiarism**
The school has strict policies against plagiarism. If you are caught plagiarizing, the consequences are drastic and could result, in the school’s words “in failure on a particular assignment, failure in a course, suspension or expulsion from the University, or other penalties. Writers block happens, but there are ways to solve it without stealing someone else’s work and calling it your own.
Electronics in class
Before COVID, having electronic devices in classes was strongly discouraged. That said, using devices remains a privilege and not a right. If I perceive that use of an electronic device is interfering with your ability to fully engage with class discussions, you may lose this right and be required to use pen and paper for the rest of the semester.

NYU’s 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

NYU’s 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.

PART TWO – THE COURSE

Week One – Introduction and Tips
(Thu, Sept 2)
Start Lydia Davis’s “Thirty Recommendations for Good Writing Habits.”

Homework
Make 5 written observations where you would otherwise photograph them.

Week Two – South America
(Tue, Sept 7)
Workshop Group A
(Thu, Sept 9)

**Homework**
- Write a narrative self-portrait using characteristics, beliefs, and experiences.

**Week Three – North America**
(Tue, Sept 14)
Workshop Group B
(Thu, Sept 16)

**Homework**
- Create a tangential narrative that gets distracted as it progresses.

**Week Four – The Caribbean**
(Tue, Sept 21)
Workshop Homework – Group C
(Thu, Sept 23)

**Homework**
- Using a personal experience, write a myth in which you are a character

**Week Five – Irish and British Literature**
(Tue, Sept 28)
Workshop Homework – Group A
(Thu, Sept 30)
- Louis-Bennett, “Pond”; Rooney, “Color and Light”; Batchelor, “A Form of Words”; Oswald “Dunt”

**Homework**
- Find a couple on the street that asks who are they, where they are going, in what state is their relationship.

**Week Six – Western European Literature**
(Tue, Oct 5)
Workshop Group B
(Thu, Oct 7)
- Sebald, “Dr Henry Selwyn”; Ernaux, “The Years”; Rosseli, “Hospital Poems”; Pessoa “Book of Disquiet”

**Homework**
- NO HOMEWORK

**Week Seven – Scandinavian Literature**
(Tue, Oct 12)
- NO CLASS
Week Eight – Russian and Soviet Literature

(Tue, Oct 19)
Workshop Homework – Group A

(Thu, Oct 21)

Homework
Write about a moment or experience that was politically awakening for you, but do so in a way where you are a character among many.

Week Nine – Eastern European and Turkish Literature

(Tue, Oct 26)
Workshop Homework – Group B

(Thu, Oct 28)

Homework
Narrate a memory in fragments or in run-on sentences

Week Ten – North Africa, Palestine, Israel

(Tue, Nov 2)
Workshop Homework – Group C

(Thu, Nov 4)
Bouanani, “The Illiterate Man”; Daoud, “Musa”; Shibli, “Minor Detail” Shabtai “Hope”

Homework
Build a pandemic panorama of your neighborhood. What was it before, what has changed.

Week Eleven - Central and Southern Africa

(Tue, Nov 9)
Workshop Homework – Group A

(Thu, Nov 11)

Homework
Take a minor character from something we’ve read and try to write from their perspective.

Week Twelve – Arabian Peninsula and Central Asia
Week Thirteen – Indian Subcontinent and Southeast Asia
(Tue, Nov 23)
Workshop Homework – Group C
(Thu, Nov 25)
Homework
Create your own controversial holiday. What does it celebrate / recognize, and what are its characteristics. Who opposes it and why?

Week Fourteen – Australia and Oceania
(Tue, Nov 30)
Workshop Homework – Group A + Discuss Final Project / Portfolio
(Thu, Dec 2)
Homework
Imagine a people, they culture and customs, who they are, how they live, and how they survive.

Week Fifteen – East Asia
(Tue, Dec 7)
Workshop Homework – Group B and C
(Thu, Dec 9)
Liu Xiaobo “June Fourth Elegies”, Bandi “City of Specters”, Yi-deum “Seoul Performance”; Tsushima “Kid Sister”
Homework
Keep working on portfolios

Week Sixteen
(Tue, Dec 14)
Hand in portfolios and join for pizza party. You must hand in portfolio to join!