

# Introduction to Prose and Poetry

Fall 2022 | CRWRI-UA.815.007

**Instructor:** Cassandre Baudouin (Cass)

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**Office Hours:** MW 2-3PM Lillian Vernon Creative Writers House (or by appointment)

**Course Number:** CRWRI-UA.815.007

**Meetings:** T/TR 12:30-1:45

**Room:** 194 Mercer, Room 303

**Course Overview:** Welcome to our fall introductory course to fiction and poetry! The goal of this class is not only to learn and explore the formal craft techniques of prose and poetry, but also to uncover your own personal creative identity through craft. We will learn how to engage with a work, how to strip it back and find its meaning.

Every week will be split between fiction and poetry (one class session dedicated to fiction, the next to poetry). It is imperative that you engage with each other's work and participate in discussions. It's important to remember that in this course, there is no wrong answer - there is no right answer - and there are no silly questions. Writing provides a certain freedom, and I encourage you to take advantage of that freedom: be as creative as you want - break boxes and barriers - throw whatever you want at the wall and see what sticks. This course is for YOU.

**Readings:** I will provide the readings on a week by week basis. Please have a physical copy or a device where you can read the material clearly with you for every class meeting. Don't worry about buying anything except for your individually assigned novel.

## **Grading:**

In Class Exercises - 20

Homework assignments - 20

Participation - 20

Midterm - 10

Final - 30

**Attendance:** Please attend class on time! This class relies on lively discussions and participation, so it's important that you're here! Emergencies happen all the time, and sometimes you just need a break. Make sure you email me the night before or at the very least, the morning of your absence. Five unexcused absences will result in -10% of your final grade. The best way to avoid this is to let me know about your absence prior to class starting, or you know... Come to class. However, if you are sick, in any capacity... If you have as much as a sniffle or itchy throat, you go ahead and stay at the crib. Similarly, if you are going to be late, please let me know (I check my email and texts regularly). There's a grace period, so you don't have to put the jets on or anything, that's wild. To be late in this class is to be **15 minutes late**. You have time. With that being said, three unexcused tardies will count as an absence.

**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 a 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.

**Plagiarism:** Academic dishonesty is for the birds. You have your own great ideas! There are very severe consequences for plagiarism, so I urge you to look over NYU's policy here:  
<https://cas.nyu.edu/content/nyu-as/cas/academic-integrity.html>.

**Classroom Etiquette:**

- Let's be respectful of each other's work and time! Encourage one another to be creative!
- That phone? You don't know her while you're in class.
- Follow NYU's Covid protocol and guidelines.

**Assignments:****In Class Exercises:**

In class exercises can be spontaneous, unless stated otherwise at an earlier date. These exercises will always be short form, and connected to the lesson. These are opportunities to explore and experiment with ideas and craft. Sharing is heavily encouraged! These exercises are to be submitted before midnight (11:59PM).

**Homework Exercises:**

These exercises and prompts will often ask more of you than the in class prompts. These should help you gain a more independent understanding of the craft and give you the space (and TIME!!!) to uncover your own style, in regards to the lesson. Homework will sometimes be discussed at the beginning of the next class. Homework is to be submitted no later than 1 hour before we meet for the following class (11:30AM).

### **Midterm Assignment:**

In an effort to make sure you are reading your assigned book for the semester (and to prevent some ‘finals week’ stress), the midterm should help prepare you for your final project. With the book each of you are assigned, create a visual/audible/tangible representation of the book you are reading and what type of emotions they invoke. You could paint a painting, do a drawing, write a song, concoct a playlist, etc. Your options are endless. Art works best with other art. The purpose of this assignment is to jog the creative juices in your mind and get in touch with your most creative self. The projects will be graded on effort and attention, so don’t worry if you’re not an artist. Just give it your all and be true to the work and how it affects you.

- Submit your idea to me at least a month before the midterm is due (TBD) so that I can approve it.

### **Final Assignment: Portfolio!!!**

1. You can either submit the revised version of your workshopped short story (between 6-10 pages) using the tools and techniques that we’ve explored throughout the semester, **OR**, you can compile a collection of *no less than fifteen NEW/UNSUBMITTED* poems in the styles learned in the class.
2. In addition to either of the choices above, you will write a 5 page (minimum) reflection essay to your assigned book. Some questions to keep in mind while you write:
  - What questions was the novel aiming to answer?
  - What major themes were explored, and how?
  - What techniques did you recognize in the formation of characters, plot, and theme? How were they effective?
  - Criticism: Where do you think any areas of intentionality fell flat or were not effective?

There is much more to be considered in a text, but here is a start. Think of it as if you were writing an Introduction or a Forward to the novel. I encourage you to use outside sources as well.

3. Get crafty! Both of these assignments, **PLUS** all of your in class exercises and homework exercises, will consist of your final portfolio. It’ll be good to have a tangible representation of your accomplishments. You should be able to see how you’ve improved from the start of the semester to the end. Your portfolio should consist of:
  - A title page with the title of your portfolio and your name. Get creative here. Create a book cover (I recommend Canva, but whatever works for you/is available to you is fine).
  - A table of contents (preferable separating poems, short stories, and responses) Your final pieces should be at the back, with all other assignments in chronological order.
  - Create a back cover with:
    - i. A summary of your portfolio (ideas/works explored/short author bio)
    - ii. An author photo
    - iii. Mock quotes and praise from journals, magazines, or even quotes from your classmates

**Semester Schedule:**

WEEK	TUESDAY	THURSDAY
Week 1 Sept. 1	NO CLASS	Introductions, Syllabi, Expectations, Questions :: Novel Assignments :: Workshop Assignments :: "how to be a great writer" by Charles Bukowski :: "100 Things About Writing a Novel" by Alexander Chee
Week 2 Sept. 5	<b>List Poems:</b> "Longing for Areas of Kansas" by Rory Dufficy :: "Little Crazy Love Song" & "I'm Not the Rover" by Mary Oliver <b>Exercise</b>	<b>The Autobiographical Novel/Story:</b> "How to Write an Autobiographical Novel" by Alexander Chee :: "Dream House as Choose Your Own Adventure" by Carmen Maria Machado :: "The Unexpected" by Joyce Carol Oates <b>Exercise</b>
Week 3 Sept. 12	<b>Epistolary Poems:</b> "Learning the Epistolary Poem" by Hannah Brooks-Motl :: "Bob Ross Paints Your Portrait" by Terrance Hayes <b>Exercise</b>	<b>Plot/Setting/Tone:</b> "Pigeonitis" by Hiromi Kawakami :: "Cheap, Fast, Filling" by Roxane Gay <b>Exercise</b>
Week 4 Sept. 19	<b>Sonnets &amp; Odes &amp; Elegies:</b> "one for old snaggle-tooth" by Charles Bukowski :: "Unspeakable" by Sharon Olds :: <b>Exercise</b>	<b>The Sublime/Theme:</b> "The Case Against the Trauma Plot" :: "Baboons" by Sheila Kohler :: " Riccardo" by Dan Bevacqua <b>Exercise</b>
Week 5 Sept. 26	<b>Prose / Ballads:</b> "Conversations About Home (at the Deportation Center)" by Warsan Shire :: "The View from Halfway Down" by Alison Tafel <b>Exercise</b>	<b>Character:</b> "Off" by Aimee Bender :: "Paper Losses" by Lorrie Moore <b>Exercise, voice</b>
Week 6 Oct. 3	<b>Free Verse:</b> "Torso of Air" by Ocean Vuong :: "Cargo" and "Maybe I'll be Another kind of Mother" by Ada Limon <b>Exercise</b>	<b>Appropriation &amp; Satire:</b> "Escape From New York" by Zadie Smith :: "Lion King in the Hood" by Danez Smith <b>Exercise</b>
Week 7 Oct. 10	NO CLASS (monday schedule)	<b>Aphorisms/Short Shorts:</b> "Step" by Lucia Berlin <b>Exercise</b>
Week 8 Oct. 17	<b>Structure &amp; Time:</b> "A Bullet in the Brain" by Tobias Wolfe :: "Incarnation of Burned Children" by David Foster Wallace <b>Exercise</b>	<b>Writing YOUR Story: Revision, drafting, vision, and execution.</b> <b>WRITE IN</b>
Week 9 Oct. 24	(short class) <b>Writing YOUR Story: Revision, drafting, vision, and execution &amp; Workshop expectations</b>	<b>Workshop</b> A: B:
Week 10 Oct. 31	<b>Workshop</b> A: B:	<b>Workshop</b> A: B:
Week 11 Nov. 7	<b>Workshop</b> A: B:	<b>Workshop</b> A: B:
Week 12 Nov. 14	<b>Workshop</b> A: B:	<b>Workshop</b> A: B:
Week 13 Nov. 21	<b>Workshop</b> A: B:	NO CLASS! Happy Thanksgiving!
Week 14 Nov. 28	<b>Workshop</b> A: B:	<b>Workshop</b> A: B:
Week 15 Dec. 5	<b>Workshop</b> A: B:	<b>Workshop</b> A: B:

Week 16 Dec. 12	Last day of class! Review! Questions?	All Day Solo Office Hours
Week 17 Dec. 19	BEGINNING OF FINALS WEEK	FINAL PORTFOLIO DUE!

**List of Books for Individual Assignments:**

1. *Real Life* by Brandon Taylor
2. *The Zulus of New York* by Zakes Mda
3. *The Death of Vivek Oji* by Akwaeke Emezi
4. *Piranesi* by Susanna Clark
5. *Days of Abandonment* by Elena Ferrante
6. *White Noise* by Don DeLillo
7. *At Night All Blood Is Black* by David Diop
8. *We Need New Names* by NoViolet Bulawayo
9. *I Who Have Never Known Men* by Jacqueline Harpman
10. *Kaddish.com* by Nathan Englander
11. *Giovanni's Room* by James Baldwin
12. *Norwegian Wood* by Haruki Murakami