

INTRO TO PROSE AND POETRY
FALL 2022 (CRWRI-UA.815.015)
Tuesdays & Thursdays 16:55-18:10 EST
Instructor: Erin Townsend (et1733@nyu.edu)
Office Hours by appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW

This is an introductory course which assumes no prior experience with creative writing. We will explore fiction and poetry through a combination of craft discussions and student workshops. The goal of this course is to help students to identify and utilize literary techniques and to shed some light on the creative process as a whole. Students will gain valuable insights into their own writing processes, as well as gain experience in a collaborative workshop environment.

CLASS STRUCTURE

We will meet twice a week for 1-hour and 15-minute classes. The beginning of each class will be spent discussing the assigned readings and your reactions to them. Tuesdays will generally cover craft discussions and in-class exercises; Thursdays will be reserved for student workshops.

READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

All of the assigned readings will be made available to you as links or PDFs. For each set of assignments (not each individual piece), you will be expected to produce a list of 3-4 things from the readings that you liked, disliked, or were otherwise moved by. These can be words/phrases, techniques, characters, structural choices, plot devices, or otherwise, and each should be justified by a couple of sentences as to why you chose it. These reactions need not be, in total, more than one page (Times New Roman, double spaced).

All assignments, including the list of likes/dislikes and feedback on student workshops, should be emailed to me by midnight on the day before the corresponding class.

WORKSHOPS

Students will be workshopped three times during this course: one fiction piece, one poem or set of poems, and a third submission in any genre. Submissions should be up to 2000 words for fiction, poems totalling no more than 6 pages; they will need to be submitted on Thursdays the week before your assigned workshop date. Feedback on your classmates' submissions will be due to the author (cc to me) by midnight before the workshop date.

In general, your submissions should always be a .docx or .pdf document in standard 12pt Times New Roman font and double spaced, except in the case of poetry where other formats may be acceptable. Please title your submission, put your name at the top, and number the pages. Appropriate feedback in response to submissions includes a thoughtful and detailed mark-up of

the submitted text and/or a separate reaction “letter;” we will discuss what constitutes constructive criticism and helpful feedback in class.

PLAGIARISM

Any instance of plagiarism or academic dishonesty will be reported and may result in disciplinary measures. We will cover in class how and when an imitation of another writer’s technique may be acceptable.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at all classes is mandatory. Lateness of 15 minutes or more will count as an absence. More than one absence will drop your overall grade for the course a half-letter (A to A-, B+ to B to B-, etc.).

FINAL PROJECT/PORTFOLIO

Your final portfolio will be due to me by midnight Saturday, July 3. The portfolio will consist of revised versions of any workshop pieces you submitted throughout the semester, and it should be clear that your workshop feedback was taken into account. Any in-class exercises we do should also be included.

GRADING BREAKDOWN

1. Participation: 20% (includes attendance and engagement in class)
2. Assignments: 25% (includes 4 likes/dislikes assignment each class, as well as feedback on classmates’ workshop submissions)
3. Workshop submissions: 25%
4. Final portfolio: 30%

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 SYLLABUS (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Week One: Syllabus review and introductions

09/01

Introductions, syllabus review, workshop etiquette & sign-up

Assignments: Halloween Party, Michael Chabon; Reunion, John Cheever

Week Two: Beginnings

09/06

Discussion of readings and reactions

Craft talk: Beginnings

09/08

Mock workshop

Readings: We Real Cool, Gwendolyn Brooks; The Golden Shovel, Terrance Hayes

Week Three: Endings

09/13

Discussion of readings and reactions

Craft talk: Endings

09/15

Group A Workshop 1

Readings: Daddy, Sylvia Plath; Big Gay Ass Poem, BC Griffith

Week Four: Character and Voice

09/20

Discussion of readings and reactions

Craft talk: Character and Voice

09/22

Group B Workshop 1

Readings: Girl, Jamaica Kincaid; My Son the Murderer, Bernard Malamud

Week Five: POV

09/27

Discussion of readings and reactions

Craft talk: POV

09/29

Group C Workshop 1

Readings: The Mud Below, Annie Proulx; Ode to the Midwest, Kevin Young

Week Six: Setting and Place

10/04

Discussion of readings and reactions

Craft talk: Setting and Place

10/06

Group A Workshop 2

Readings: The Shawl, Cynthia Ozick; The Church of the Open Crayon Box, Patricia Lockwood

Week Seven: Image

10/11 NO CLASS

10/13

Craft talk (no workshop)

Readings: Sibling Rivalry, Michael Byers; Ballad of the Harp Weaver, Edna St Vincent

Week Eight: Plot

10/18

Discussion of readings and reactions

Craft talk: Plot

10/20

Group B Workshop 2

Assignments: A Temporary Matter, Jhumpa Lahiri; Grace, Joy Harjo

Week Nine: Scene

10/25

Discussion of readings and reactions

Craft talk: Scene

10/27

Group C Workshop 2

Assignments: Story of your life, Ted Chiang; The School, Donald Barthelme

Week Ten: Storytelling and Structure

11/01

Discussion of readings and reactions

Craft talk: Storytelling and Structure

11/03

Group A Workshop 3

Assignments: Errata, Kevin Young; Duplex, Jericho Brown

Week Eleven: Language

11/08

Discussion of readings and reactions

Craft talk: Language

11/10

Group B Workshop 3

Assignments: Hunters In The Snow, Tobias Wolff; Tommy Pico "Nature Poem" excerpts

Week Twelve: Style

11/15

Discussion of readings and reactions

Craft talk: Style

11/17

Group C Workshop 3

Assignments: Hills like White Elephants, Ernest Hemingway; Today Will Be a Quiet Day, Amy Hempel

Week Thirteen: Dialogue

11/22

Discussion of readings and reactions

Craft talk: Dialogue

11/24 NO CLASS

Assignments: Issue #1 of Day Tripper, Sweet Tooth

Week Fourteen: Graphic Novels and Comics

11/29

Discussion of readings and reactions

Craft talk: Graphic Novels and Comics

12/01

Workshop?

Assignments: When I Grow Up I Want to Be a Further List of Possibilities, OR Self Portrait As So Much Potential, Chen Chen; Jesus Shaves by David Sedaris

Week Fifteen: Truth and Nonfiction

12/06

Discussion of readings and reactions

Craft talk: Truth and nonfiction

12/08

Workshop?

Assignments: Jon, George Saunders; My God It's Full of Stars, Tracy K. Smith; The Lottery?

Week Sixteen: Worldbuilding

12/13

Discussion of readings and reactions

Craft talk: Worldbuilding