In this course, we will delve into the works of writers across the globe and centuries, as well as writers in our midst, to understand what makes a piece of prose or poetry tick. What makes it trick, provoke, astound, illuminate, console, or gut-punch? We will explore what a poem or a story can be. And what it can do in the world. We will study how writers interact with the world and reflect it in their work—how they distort it, turn it upside-down, or imagine a new one altogether. Whether you consider yourself a writer or not, you will be writing. By the end of the semester, you will have read a range of influential writers; produced your own portfolio of original work; and developed a craft and practice you can take with you as you keep writing.

**COURSE STRUCTURE**

Monday workshop will be a space to try out new ideas in your work and receive feedback from other writers. Workshop will be student-driven, so the attention and care you offer to the work of your peers is absolutely essential. You must provide significant manuscript annotations and a one-page feedback letter for each student workshopped, delivered at the end of class. You must also deliver a copy of your feedback letters (via email or hardcopy) to me.

During our Wednesday craft seminars, we will dissect the work of writers living and dead to understand how their work works. The assigned course reading is light by design, so that you have time to engage deeply and thoughtfully with each text. The fruitfulness of our discussions absolutely depends on it. In class, we will read together from various additional texts, which you are not required to read beforehand. We will practice applying the concepts we discuss through in-class writing exercises and take-home writing assignments.

**READING MATERIALS**

For this course, you are required to obtain a copy of one book, *A Simple Passion* by Annie Ernaux (Seven Stories Press, 2003). It is available at most bookstores and libraries. Please let me know if you are unable to acquire a copy due to financial constraints. All other readings will be available as PDFs on BrightSpace.

**OFFICE HOURS**

Every student is required to meet with me for office hours at least once over the course of the semester. I strongly encourage you to do so after a workshop session so we can discuss revision.
WRITING ASSIGNMENTS
You will submit your work for workshop three times over the semester.
  Submission 1: Prose (3,000 words max)
  Submission 2: Poetry (1-3 poems, 6 pages max)
  Submission 3: Hybrid Form (3,000 words max).
You must turn in hard copies of your submission—printed and stapled—for the whole class the Monday before your workshop. If this is not feasible for you due to accessibility issues, please let me know in advance. Printers are available in Bobst Library.

You will complete five brief writing assignments during the semester.
  Writing Assignment 1: Journal Entries
  Writing Assignment 2: Prose—Following Color
  Writing Assignment 3: Short Story—Duet
  Writing Assignment 4: Poem—Constraint and Release
  Writing Assignment 5: Poem—Developing Image

You will submit a Final Portfolio at the end of the semester, which will include the following:
  3 workshop submissions
  1 revised workshop submission of your choice, with statement of process (500 words)
  2 writing assignments from the semester of your choice

All submissions and writing assignments must be double-spaced, in size 12-point Times New Roman or Garamond font, and paginated (excepting poems experimenting with typography).

TECHNOLOGY POLICY
Your mental presence in class is equally essential. To this end, cellphones are strictly forbidden(!) from class. They must be silenced and stowed at all times. In addition, laptops, tablets, and other digital devices are strictly forbidden(!) from workshop. You are permitted to use these devices during Wednesday craft seminars to take notes and access readings. Any other use (messaging, email, social media, general browsing)—strictly forbidden(!) Infractions on this policy will affect your participation grade. If you require accommodations, please let me know.

ATTENDANCE
Your presence in class is essential and required. If you will be absent from class or late to arrive, please let me know by email. More than one absence or tardy arrival will affect your grade, so do come talk to me about any extenuating circumstances.
ASSESSMENT
Attendance: 10%
In-Class Participation & Engagement: 40%
Workshop Submissions and Feedback Letters: 30%
Final Portfolio: 20%

A strong submission will reflect the writer’s effort, care, and intentionality; experimentation with ideas discussed in class; risk-taking and follow-through; as well as clarity and attention to grammar, spelling, punctuation, and formatting.

PLAGIARISM
This course exists for you to grow through your own work as a writer. Any incidence of plagiarism will be reported to the department, without exception. If you are unable to meet a deadline or are have any questions about this policy, do reach out to me.

STUDENT WELLNESS POLICY
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. The work we will explore may touch on sensitive issues. I will provide content warnings where appropriate in our assigned readings and ask that you do the same where appropriate in your own submissions. If you have questions or would like me to be made aware of accommodations you require, please let me know. If you are in need of accommodations or additional support during the semester due to health and/or mental health issues, please do reach out. I can point you to resources at the NYU Wellness Center and will do my best to accommodate your needs.

DISABILITY DISCLOSURE POLICY
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
Website: http://www.nyu.edu/csd
SYLLABUS
UNIT I: PROSE

CLASS 1—Wednesday, September 6
Introductions
  • Introductions, syllabus review, and workshop scheduling

In class, we will read together from the following writers’ and poets’ diaries:
Susan Sontag, Roland Barthes, Albert Camus, Peter Handke, Audre Lorde, Lady Murasaki,
Sylvia Plath, Gonçalo M. Tavares

Writing Assignment 1—Journal Entries
Begin your own journal. In one-sentence-long entries, record the sights, sounds, tastes, textures,
and smells you observe around you—a conversation overheard at the grocery store, a weird gunk
left behind the sink. Do at least one per day and date them. (Due Wednesday, September 13.)

CLASS 2—Monday, September 11
Mock Workshop
  • Come to class having read Raymond Carver’s “The Cathedral”

In class, we will read together from the following:
  • Jorge Luis Borges, “Borges and I”

CLASS 3—Wednesday, September 13
What Can a Story Be?
  • Anuk Arudpragasam, The Story of a Brief Marriage, Extract
  • Jamaica Kincaid, “Girl”
  • Maggie Nelson, Bluets, Extract

In class, we will read together from the following:
Cliff Chase, The Tooth Fairy: Parents, Lovers, and other Wayward Deities; Chen Chen,
“Summer”; Lydia Davis, Various Selections

Writing Assignment 2—Following Color
Follow a color through your week and record the experience in your journal. Where do you find
it? Where does it find you? Expand your journal entries into a one-page meditation on that color
and the experience of following it. (Due Wednesday, September 20.)

CLASS 4—Monday, September 18
WORKSHOP GROUP A, Submission 1
CLASS 5—Wednesday, September 20

Sounding a Voice
- Samanta Schweblin, *Fever Dream*, Extract
- Akwaeke Emezi, *Freshwater*, Extract

In class, we will read together from the following:

Writing Assignment 3—Duet
Write a one-page short story in two voices, according to the following prompt: One person drops their keys on the subway and another person picks them up and hands them back. Write the interaction twice—first from Person A’s POV and then from Person B’s POV. (Due Wednesday, September 27)

NO CLASS MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

CLASS 6—Wednesday, September 27

Building a World
- Arundhati Roy, *God of Small Things*, Extract
- Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, Extracts

In class, we will read together from the following novel openings:

CLASS 7—Monday, October 2
WORKSHOP GROUP B, Submission 1

CLASS 8—Wednesday, October 4
Growing a Character
- Clarice Lispector, “Love”
- Claire Keegan, “Foster”

In class, we will read together from James Wood, “Character” from *How Fiction Works*

CLASS 9—Tuesday, October 10
WORKSHOP GROUP C, Submission 1
CLASS 10—Wednesday, October 11

*Upturning a World*

- Julio Cortazar, “Night Face Up”
- Virginia Woolf, “Slater’s Pins Have No Points”

CLASS 11—Monday, October 16

WORKSHOP GROUP D, Submission 1

CLASS 12—Wednesday, October 18

*What Can Fiction Do?*

- Annie Ernaux, *A Simple Passion*

UNIT II: POETRY

CLASS 13—Monday, October 23

WORKSHOP GROUP A, Submission 2

CLASS 14—Wednesday, October 25

*What Can a Poem Be?*

- Mary Oliver, “Singapore”
- Hera Lindsay Bird, “Pyramid Scheme”
- Sharon Olds, “DOUCHE-BAG ODE”
- Jamila Wood, “Daddy Dozens”
- Juliet Gelfman-Randazzo, “[this poem has been edited]”

In class, we will read the following poems:

Writing Assignment 4—Constraint and Release
Pick a poetry prompt or constraint in the style of Oulipo/Fluxus and compose a poem. Pick a second prompt and apply it to your journal entries for this week. (Due Wednesday, November 1.)

CLASS 15—Monday, October 30

WORKSHOP GROUP B, Submission 2
CLASS 16—Wednesday, November 1  
Sound & Rhythm I  
- Gwendolyn Brooks, “we real cool”  
- Langston Hughes, “The Weary Blues”  
- Mary Oliver, “Sound,” from A Poetry Handbook  

In class, we will read the following poems:  

CLASS 17—Monday, November 6  
WORKSHOP GROUP C, Submission 2

CLASS 18—Wednesday, November 8  
Sound & Rhythm II  
- Dylan Thomas, “Do not go gentle into that good night”  
- Emily Dickinson, “My Life Closed Twice”  
- Edgar Allan Poe, “Annabelle Lee”  
- William Shakespeare, “Sonnet 29”  

In class we will listen to recordings, including  

CLASS 29—Monday, November 13  
WORKSHOP GROUP D, Submission 2

CLASS 20—Wednesday, November 15  
Image  
- Louise Glück, “Image”  
- William Carlos Williams, “The Red Wheelbarrow”  
- Yusef Komunyakaa, “Facing It”  
- June Jordan, “It’s Hard to Keep a Clean Shirt Clean”  
- Mark Doty, “A Display of Mackerel”  

In class we will read  
T. S. Eliot, ‘The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”

Writing Assignment 5—Developing Image  
Write a poem of any style based on a single photo on your camera roll. Be prepared to share the photo and poem with the class. (Due Wednesday, November 22.)
CLASS 21—Monday, November 20
WORKSHOP GROUP B, Submission 3

CLASS 22—Wednesday, November 22
The City and the Poet

- Walt Whitman, “Manahatta”
- Federico García Lorca, “City That Never Sleeps”
- Frank O’Hara, “Song”
- Ezra Pound, “In the Station of the Metro”
- Maya Angelou, “Waking in New York”

CLASS 23—Monday, November 27
WORKSHOP GROUP C, Submission 3

CLASS 24—Wednesday, November 29
Translations

- Rainer Maria Rilke, “Der Panther”

In class, we will read the following translations of Du Fu:
Arthur Cooper, tr. “Night Thoughts Afloat”; Witter Bynner, tr. “A Night Abroad”; David Young,
tr. “Night Thoughts Traveling”

CLASS 25—Monday, December 4
WORKSHOP GROUP D, Submission 3

CLASS 26—Wednesday, December 6
What Can Poems Do?

- Claudia Rankine, Citizen, Excerpts
- Dunya Mikhail, “Iraqi Nights”
- Audre Lorde, “Poetry is Not a Luxury”

REMINDER: FINAL PORTFOLIO DUE Monday, December 11

CLASS 27—Monday, December 11
Class Portfolio Reading & Soirée

- Each student will give a three-minute reading from their portfolio. Come prepared to
  briefly introduce your portfolio and discuss your revision process (two minutes).
- Send your five favorite journal entries from over the whole semester. Be prepared to
  share them with the class. (Due Tuesday, December 12 at NOON)
CLASS 28—Wednesday, December 13

Conclusions & Beyond

- Come prepared to discuss ideas, techniques, and approaches from our craft techniques that have stuck with you.
- We will hold a dramatic reading of our collective class journal.
- We will also briefly discuss the process of submitting and publishing work.