

Creative Writing: Intro to Prose & Poetry

Course Number: CRWRI-UA.815.019

Dates/Time: T/Th 9:30-10:45 AM

Room: 60 Fifth Ave Room 165

Instructor: Christian Bodney

E-mail: csb5898@nyu.edu

Location: 60 Fifth Ave Room 165

Office hours: T/Th after class or by appointment

Objective

This course is designed to introduce you to the writer's life. Together we will read fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, engage in other multimedia's like film and music, think critically about creativity, and develop new work that will reflect our individual artistic sensibilities.

Required Text: [*The Zoo of the New*](#) (Penguin, 2017), edited by Don Paterson and Nick Laird.

All other texts will be provided as PDF.

I also recommend you obtain a good dictionary and style manual. I suggest the [*New Oxford American Dictionary, Third Edition*](#) (Oxford University Press, 2010).

Structure

The study and practice of creative writing are two different things. To achieve a balance between the two, we will divide our time evenly between craft classes (Tuesdays) and workshop classes (Thursdays.)

Tuesdays

Will be devoted to the study of craft. We will discuss fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. The focus of our inquiries will be narrow but deep: how do these authors do what they do? what rules do they follow or break? how can we apply their techniques to our own writing? I want to know which pieces you like, which you don't, and together we will figure out *why*. What you dislike can be just as important to you as a writer as what you do like... In the last few minutes of class we will play around with writing generative exercises.

Thursdays

Will be devoted to workshopping student work. The first half of the term will focus on poetry; the second half will focus on prose. You will workshop two poems (14 line minimum), and two fictions (or nonfictions): one being a flash piece (<1000 words) and one being a short longer form piece (<3000 words.) It is vital to the success of these workshops that we establish a community of trust and respect. Please refer to the "Workshop Etiquette" handout for what to expect.

Open screens are permitted in this class (at specific times) but please print your materials for each class and bring a notebook and pen.

Expectations

Participation and Attendance (50%)

- Class participation is expected. I will allow one excused absence during the semester, but after that, every missed class results in a grade deduction (e.g. “B+” becomes “B.”) If you are fifteen minutes late, it counts as a half-absence. After twenty minutes you are marked absent regardless of whether you show up or not.

Workshop Submissions and Feedback (25%)

- During the course of the semester you will workshop two poems (1 to 2 pages long) and two fiction pieces (one flash fiction piece under 1000 words, and one short story that is less than 3000 words). Each workshop group will submit their pieces one week before they are to be workshopped—typically on Thursdays. This means that everyone will have one week to sit and ruminate on each other’s work. Comments and critiques on your peers’ work should be as generous and extensive as possible. We will discuss workshop etiquette more in class.

Office Hours Consultation (5%)

- Schedule a meeting with me once during the semester to discuss your writerly pursuits, or writing and reading in general, and to get to know you better. Additional appointments can always be made to discuss your work at any point during the semester.

Final Portfolio (20%)

- At the end of the semester, you will turn in a final portfolio of minimum 9 pieces of writing (the four workshopped pieces, new, revised drafts of them, and one completely new unseen piece of prose or poetry.) Please compile your selections, title the collection, and include the selected works’ drafts at the end. We’ll discuss what these portfolios should look like briefly on the first day, and at length closer to the end of the semester.

Recitation Day

Finally, I expect you to memorize a poem of your choice and recite it for the class. We will have a class dedicated to the recitations. The poem **must** be sourced from the textbook, the Poetry Foundation, or The Academy of American Poets, and be a minimum of fourteen lines.

General Guidelines

Rules of workshop

1. Title your pieces.
2. For poems, single space with 12-point Times New Roman or 11-point Arial. Don’t use a clever font. For prose, double space with 12-point Times New Roman **only**.
3. Put your name, class, my name, and the assignment number in the upper-right corner of the page.

General rules of composition (Remember, we learn the rules to break the rules!)

1. Stay away from abstraction until you can handle detail.

2. Stay away from passive voice and sentence fragments until you can handle writing complete sentences.
3. Stay away from dialogue until you can handle exposition.
4. Learn the rules of punctuation. Learn verb tenses. Learn how to use a participle.
5. Learn the difference between “like” and “as.”
6. No rhyming, unless the prompt demands it.

Plagiarism

There is a zero-tolerance policy for plagiarism.

Use of AI to write your poem, may it be ChatGPT or some new thing I am too old and out-of-touch to have heard of, is considered cheating.

Student Wellness

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.

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
Website: <http://www.nyu.edu/csd>

Schedule

Week 1

Tuesday, 22 January

Introduction, syllabus, and workshop Groups;

In class reading: Joan Didion “On Self-Respect”

Please bring 13 copies of a poem (minimum 14 lines, maximum 28), written by an established poet, and published before the year of your birth, to the second class.

- Thursday, 24 January Poetry as an Introduction, Workshop Etiquette Overview
Readings due: *Moy Sand and Gravel* by Paul Muldoon
Group 1 poems due Sunday by midnight.
- Week 2
 Tuesday, 30 January Essaying into *something*:
Readings due: ““Let Us Now Praise Famous Death Dwarves” by Lester Bangs, “Self-Portrait in Twenty-Three Rounds” by David Wojnarowicz, “Language and Other Weapons” by Andre Perry
- Thursday, 1 February Workshop Group 1
 Bring in critiques for Group 1
Group 2 poems due by midnight
- Week 3
 Tuesday, 6 February Otherworldly Resistance!
Readings due: Poems from Brigit Pegeen Kelly’s *Birdsong*
 In class reading and discussion of sestinas and villanelles: “One Art” by Elizabeth Bishop and “Farm Implements and Rutabagas in a Landscape” by John Ashberry
- Thursday, 8 February Workshop Group 2
 Bring in critiques for Group 2
Group 3 poems due at midnight
- Week 4
 Tuesday, 13 February *Story*: Events, Autonomy, and Structure
Readings due: by “The Balloon” by Donald Barthelme, “Orientation” by Daniel Orozco
 In class: William S. Burroughs’ *The Junky’s Christmas* presented by Francis Ford Coppola
- Thursday, 15 February Workshop Group 3
 Bring in critiques for Group 3
Group 1 poems due by midnight
- Week 5
 Tuesday, 20 February Poetry as an Essay
Readings due: Poems from Claudia Rankine’s *Citizen*
- Thursday, 22 February Workshop Group 1
 Bring in critiques for Group 1
Group 2 poems due by midnight
- Week 6

Tuesday, 27 February	Autofiction Readings due: Pages from Edouard Leve's <i>Autoportrait</i> In class: An excerpt from Chris Kraus's <i>I Love Dick</i>
Thursday, 29 February	Workshop Group 2 Bring in critiques for Group 2 <u>Group 3 poems due by midnight</u>
Week 7 Tuesday, 5 March	The Ordeal of Being Alive! Readings due: Poems from Louise Glück's <i>The Wild Iris</i>
Thursday, 7 March	Workshop Group 3 Bring in critiques for Group 3 <u>Group 1 submit flash fiction by midnight</u>
Week 8 Tuesday, 12 March	Love and Confession Reading: Pages from <i>Simple Passion</i> by Annie Ernaux and <i>A Childhood: The Biography of a Place</i> by Harry Crews
Thursday, 14 March	Workshop Group 1 Flash Fiction Bring in critiques for Group 1 flash fiction <u>Group 2 flash fiction pieces due by midnight</u>
Week 9 Tuesday, 19 March	SPRING BREAK
Thursday, 21 March	SPRING BREAK
Week 10 Tuesday, 26 March	Oh wow, a play or a poem? Readings due: <i>4.48 Psychosis</i> by Sarah Kane
Thursday, 28 March	Workshop Group 2 Flash Fiction Bring in critiques for Group 2 flash fiction <u>Group 3 flash fiction pieces due by midnight</u>
Week 11 Tuesday, 2 April	XXX Readings due: "Rape Fantasies" by Margaret Atwood, "Secretary" by Mary Gaitskill In class: The craft essay "Mind Fuck: Writing Better Sex" by Melissa Febos
Thursday, 4 April	Workshop Group 3 Flash Fiction

Bring in critiques for Group 3 flash fiction
Group 1 short stories due by midnight

Week 12
Tuesday, 9 April

Odysseys Through Myth (and Otherwise)
Readings due: Poems from *Like* by A. E. Stallings

Thursday, 11 April

Workshop Group 1 Short Stories (<3000 words)
Bring critiques for Group 1
Group 2 short stories due by midnight

Week 13
Tuesday, 16 April

Action, Speech, Environment, Appearance
Readings due: “Death and the Compass” by Jorge Luis Borges,
“The Third Tower” by Deborah Eisenberg, “Bartley, the Scrivener”
by Herman Melville

Thursday, 18 April

Workshop Group 2 Short Stories (<3000 words)
Bring critiques for Group 2
Group 3 short stories due by midnight

Week 14
Tuesday, 23 April

Time Traveling with Grief, Loss, and Trauma
Readings due: “Recitatif” by Toni Morrison

Thursday, 25 April

Workshop Group 3 Short Stories (<3000 words)
Bring critiques for Group 3
Begin compiling materials for the final portfolio

Week 15
Tuesday, 30 April

Let’s Get Indie!
Readings due: In Class: an excerpt from *The Sarah Book* by Scott
McClanahan, “Suicidal Realism” by Brad Philips

Thursday, 2 May

Recitation Day/Q and A with class: what have we learned?
Discuss final portfolio / answer questions / wish you all well <3

Week 16
Tuesday, 7 May

Turn in portfolio

Final Portfolios due on the 7th of May by midnight via email!

(again, the syllabus is subject to change)