

**Introduction to Prose and Poetry**  
Spring 2024: Section # CRWRI-UA.815.010

Time: Tues Thurs 9:30am-10:45am  
Place: 181 Mercer St (Paulson Center), Room 444

Instructor: Heather Kim (hk2645@nyu.edu)  
Office hours: by appt. (location TBA)

“Talent is insignificant. I know a lot of talented ruins. Beyond talent lie all the usual words: discipline, love, luck, but, most of all, endurance.” - James Baldwin.

“If I have any message to any of you who write, it’s that you cannot sit calmly repeating yourself.”  
- Louise Glück.

### **Overview**

This introductory course to creative writing is structured around two components: craft seminars and peer workshops. In craft, we will discuss assigned readings with the aim of identifying the various strategies writers use, and then practice using these tools through in-class writing exercises. In workshop, students will read each other's work and provide feedback for revision in a collaborative learning environment.

### **Structure**

The first half of the semester will focus on poetry, the second half on prose. On Tuesdays, we will discuss the craft of writing through the specific lens of an element or topic each week. We will also be creating our own work through in-class exercises. On Thursdays, we will workshop. The class will be divided into three rotating groups, so you will be workshoped roughly every three weeks.

### **Materials**

No books are required: all readings will be made available as PDF packets on Brightspace. You are responsible for bringing these materials to class.

### **Weekly Assignments**

All readings will be available as packets on Brightspace. The first part of each packet, we will read in class. The second part is independent reading due by Tuesday's craft seminar. To balance the workload, I have decided not to assign written responses. Instead, you will be graded based on your thoughtful engagement in our classroom discussions, so come prepared to speak about the readings in depth.

On Tuesdays, we will also be writing in-class exercises. By the semester's end, I ask that you show me a total of three exercises, your choice. This will count towards your participation grade.

For workshops, you will submit two poetry and two prose pieces in total. If it is your turn, upload your submission to our shared Google folder by Monday, 11:59pm, before that Thursday. We will be reading and writing feedback for your work in advance, so all submissions must be in by this deadline.

By midnight before workshop (Wednesday, 11:59pm), peer responses to submissions are due to me by email. Please also send your peers your feedback. For late work, you do not need to write a response.

### **Final Project**

Your final portfolio is due on the day of our last class (Thursday, May 2, 2024). This will range from 8 to 15 pages in length. You are welcome to include writing you've produced outside of our classroom, but at least half of the portfolio should consist of workshop revisions and in-class exercises. I will go into specifics about this portfolio as we approach the semester's end.

## **Grading**

Participation: 30% (craft discussions, workshop engagement, writing exercises)

Workshop submissions: 30%

Peer responses: 15%

Final portfolio: 25%

## **Policies**

*Academic Integrity:* Plagiarism will not be tolerated, including the use of AI, such as ChatGPT. If you submit work that is not yours, you will be subject to disciplinary sanction. Refer to NYU's academic integrity policy here: <https://cas.nyu.edu/academic-integrity.html>

*Attendance:* Your presence is essential. In the case of excused absences, inform me at least 24 hours in advance. You are allowed one unexcused absence per semester, although I ask that you give me a heads-up before class. Each subsequent unexcused absence will lower your overall grade by half a letter (A to A-, B to B-, and so on). Two late arrivals of 15 minutes or more count as an absence. If there is a valid reason for your lateness, notify me by the time class starts. If you are repeatedly late or absent due to extenuating circumstances, please reach out to me. I will do my best to accommodate your situation.

*Lateness:* As stated earlier, I am not requiring written responses to the readings. This means all of your assignments, except the final portfolio, are for workshop and must be on time. Submissions will be dropped two letter grades (A to C, C to F) for every day of lateness. In addition, you will not be workshopped that week. You may arrange with a peer to swap groups for a week, but inform me of this change before the deadline of your original group's submissions. Peer responses will be docked half a letter grade (A to A-) for every day it is late.

*Participation:* So you can focus on your own creative work, I am not requiring written responses for the assigned readings. That means that participation, as well as other components of this course, will be weighed more heavily. Every student is expected to contribute, and if you have not spoken once during a given class, I reserve the right to ask for your thoughts. If in-person discussion is a barrier to you, then come talk to me. We can find other ways for you to participate.

*Technology:* Laptops are permitted for craft classes on Tuesdays. For workshops on Wednesdays, use of electronics is discouraged. If bringing physical copies poses a challenge to you, let me know.

*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.

*Wellness Policy:* I will do my best to give warnings for difficult readings and discussions. For workshop, we will assume the speaker or narrator of a student submission is fictional, unless there is sufficient evidence that proves otherwise. However, if the content of a work raises immediate concern, such as that regarding suicide, sexual assault, and murder, I will check in with you. If you are submitting work that regards such topics, especially if we are inclined to read it as personal, please email me providing context.

### Schedule

(subject to change, see last page for content warnings)

Date	Focus	In Class Reading	Home Reading	Work Due
Week 1 Tues, Jan 23	Peer intros and course review	Syllabus	None	None
Week 1 Thurs, Jan 25	Intro to workshop and poetry	Craft essays and interviews	None	Workshop group 1 poems due (see next week)
Week 2 Tues, Jan 30	Poetry craft: form (line, stanza, tradition)	Form part 1 (Anne Carson to Marianne Moore)	Form part 2 (Gwendolyn Brooks to Diane Seuss)	Workshop group 1 poems due by Mon, Jan 29
Week 2 Thurs, Feb 1	Poetry workshop	Workshop submissions	Poems by first half of students	Feedback for group 1 due by Wed, Jan 31
Week 3 Tues, Feb 6	Poetry craft: voice (style, syntax)	Voice part 1 (Louise Glück to Rainer Maria Rilke)	Voice part 2 (Paul Celan to Ocean Vuong)	Workshop group 2 poems due by Mon, Feb 5
Week 3 Thurs, Feb 8	Poetry workshop	Workshop submissions	Poems by second half of students	Feedback for group 2 due by Wed, Feb 7
Week 4 Tues, Feb 13	Poetry craft: music (sonics, rhythm)	Music part 1 (Terrance Hayes to Richard Siken)	Music part 2 (Elizabeth Bishop to Danez Smith)	Workshop group 3 poems due by Mon, Feb 12
Week 4 Thurs, Feb 15	Poetry workshop	Workshop submissions	Group 2 poems	Feedback for group 3 due by Wed, Feb 14
Week 5 Tues, Feb 20	Poetry craft: speaker (persona, point of view)	Speaker part 1 (Victoria Chang to Monica Youn)	Speaker part 2 (Frank Bidart to Claire Schwartz)	Workshop group 1 poems due by Mon, Feb 19
Week 5 Thurs, Feb 22	Workshop	Workshop submissions	Group 3 poems	Feedback for group 1 due by Wed, Feb 21
Week 6 Tues, Feb 27	Poetry craft: observation (senses, image)	Observation part 1 (Catherine Barnett to Jenny Xie)	Observation part 2 (Bashō to Arthur Sze)	Workshop group 2 poems due by Mon, Feb 26
Week 6	Poetry workshop	Workshop submissions	Group 1 poems	Feedback for group 2 due by

Thurs, Feb 29				Wed, Feb 28
Week 7 Tues, Mar 5	Poetry craft: transformation (volta, metaphor)	Transformation part 1 (Traci Brimhall to Tomas Tranströmer)	Transformation part 2 (Kaveh Akbar to Federico García Lorca)	Workshop group 3 poems due by Mon, Mar 4
Week 7 Thurs, Mar 12	Poetry workshop	Workshop submissions	Group 2 poems	Feedback for group 3 due by Wed, Mar 11
Spring Break: Mar 18-24		NO CLASS		
Week 8 Tues, Mar 26	Prose craft: form (structure, plot)	Maggie Nelson, Gabriel García Marquez	Han Kang, Rebecca Solnit, Tobias Wolff	Workshop group 1 poems due by Mon, Mar 25
Week 8 Thurs, Mar 28	Poetry workshop (last)	Workshop submissions	Group 3 poems	Feedback for group 1 due by Wed, Mar 27
Week 9 Tues, Apr 2	Prose craft: voice (sentence, syntax, style)	Italo Calvino, Virginia Woolf	Jamaica Kincaid, Cormac McCarthy	Workshop group 2 prose due by Mon, Apr 1
Week 9 Thurs, Apr 4	Prose workshop	Workshop submissions	Group 1 prose	Feedback for group 2 due by Wed, Apr 3
Week 10 Tues, Apr 9	Prose craft: character (interior, dialogue)	Milan Kundera, Toni Morrison	Elena Ferrantes, James Joyce, Franz Kafka	Workshop group 3 prose due by Mon, Apr 8
Week 10 Thurs, Apr 11	Prose workshop	Workshop submissions	Group 2 prose	Feedback for group 3 due by Wed, Apr 10
Week 11 Tues, Apr 16	Prose craft: setting (worldbuilding, place, time)	Jorge Luis Borges, Joan Didion	Yōko Ogawa, Jhumpa Lahiri	Half class workshop prose due by Mon, Apr 15
Week 11 Thurs, Apr 18	Prose workshop	Workshop submissions	Group 3 prose	Feedback for first half due by Wed, Apr 17
Week 12 Tues, Apr 23	Prose craft: observation (imagery, description)	Annie Dillard, Michael Ondaatje	F. Scott Fitzgerald, Yiyun Li	Half class workshop prose due by Mon, Apr 22

Week 13 Thurs, Apr 25	Prose workshop	Workshop submissions	Group 1 prose	Feedback for second half due by Wed, Apr 24
Week 14 Tues, Apr 30	Prose craft: transformation (revelation, twist)	James Baldwin, Ursula K. Le Guin	Raymond Carver, David Foster Wallace	Work on final projects
Week 14 Thurs, May 2	Portfolio readings and celebration	None	None	Final projects due

### Content Warnings

- Tobias Wolff, "Bullet in the Brain" -> gun violence, murder
- Ursula K. Le Guin, "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" -> child abuse, imprisonment