

## **CRWRI-UA.815.020: Introduction to Creative Writing**

Instructor: Prof. Bailey Cohen-Vera

Location: TBD

Class Times: Tues & Thurs | 8:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.

Office Hours: Tues & Thurs | 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.

All other office hours will take place over Zoom and can be scheduled via email.

### **Course Overview**

“No detail is too small to be magnified into the evidence that everything in the world is wrong.”

—Anne Boyer

“In journalism just one fact that is false prejudices the entire work. In contrast, in fiction one single fact that is true gives legitimacy to the entire work.”

—Gabriel García-Márquez

“Poetry makes language visible by making language strange.”

—Michael Davidson

“Every sound we make is a bit of autobiography.”

—Anne Carson

This is an introductory course to writing Literature. The most important part of writing is reading; think, perhaps, of food and children. An American child may grow quickly enamored with chicken fingers and french fries, then refuse to eat anything else for ten years. They may (I am not talking about myself) think that they despise spinach, only for that same food to become a staple of his diet in adulthood. What I am metaphorizing is taste—the most important thing, for any young, emerging writer, is to try as many things as possible, to experiment widely, then develop and refine a palette. We may turn our noses at escargot (those haughty French surrealists), but upon trying it for the first time, discover that the taste is utterly unique. Or perhaps we do not like it all too much, but we still think that we may be able to learn something about the technique involved in its preparation. Or, and this, too, is perfectly acceptable and encouraged, we may question why this strange dish of gastropod is hailed as classical and elegant, while similar foods of other cultures are deemed unsightly and distasteful.

What I am trying to say is that, in the same way that learning how to eat is essential to learning how to cook, reading as a writer is a skill that differs in a significant capacity from reading as a consumer. In this class, it is my hope that each of you will encounter at least one text or writer that irreversibly captivates you and, more importantly, you will be able to articulate why. We will learn not just about what we like in writing, but what we like about ourselves, and how to translate that into work that entralls us. We will read a wide range of texts. We will discuss craft. And, of course, we will perform a fair amount of writing of our own.

However, this comes with two disclaimers. As alluded to in the above paragraph, reading and writing are extremely intimate, fragile, and personal experiences—to do these two sacred acts in a classroom environment with an inescapably colonial structure, under the purview of one of the largest private universities in the world, and among strangers whom we did not choose to be alongside—each of these circumstances presents their own unique challenges which we will have to, eventually, confront and overcome. To do this, we will lead with kindness, curiosity, and intellectual rigor. We will be humble and hungry, oriented ceaselessly towards bewilderment and generosity. We will read, respectfully.

The other disclaimer is one more personal. I mentioned that reading and writing has to do with taste and preference—this is, ultimately, not an “Introduction to Creative Writing,” but a college course; more specifically, this is a syllabus that I designed. It is impossible to provide a holistic list of foundational texts, and it is impossible to read the “entirety” of a “canon.” I believe that every professor does this to an extent, and it is something that I would like to be upfront about—I am assigning the below texts because they are texts that I like or am interested by. I am structuring the class in the following way because it is my belief that this structure will be most nurturing and productive. This syllabus, like all syllabi, is incomplete and flawed. We have only a season to be introduced to an entire medium of art.

That being said, if you could not tell by this lengthy overview, reading and writing literature is something I am extremely passionate about. There are few things in this world I love more, and it is my personal philosophy that the things we love should be shared with genuineness and respect. Because I respect literature, I will do my best to teach it the way I believe it deserves to be taught. I will teach only the works that I love, not out of selfishness (although this has undoubtedly played a factor), but with the knowledge that I will be so excited to revisit these texts that I will be able to dedicate myself fully to their instruction. Unfortunately, this means that this class is as untrustworthy as my preferences.

So, what will we be doing? We will be reading poetry and prose, challenging the forces that urge us to separate the two. We will be creating work of our own and responding to the work of others. We will begin to develop our own philosophies of literature as we discover and cultivate our obsessions. We will be scholars of the soul, aspiring to be in community with one another as we learn and grow.

#### A Note on Access:

Highlighted texts can be accessed through their hyperlinks in the class schedule below. For all other texts, PDFs will be provided. However, this often makes for a suboptimal reading experience. Additionally, I would appreciate if electronic usage in the classroom were kept to a minimum. Of course, printing is often wasteful; because of this and other valid circumstances, I understand the temptations and necessities to use eReaders. Proper classroom electronic etiquette might look something like keeping a tablet / laptop facedown / closed, except for when actively and relevantly using the device, such as by citing directly from a text or taking notes, though notes should be taken by hand if possible. To incentivize a non-electronic reading experience, in addition to supporting New York’s literary scene, *Extra Credit will be given to students who can*

*provide proof of purchase for all required texts from an independent bookstore not located in Manhattan, or proof of obtainment for all required texts from a public library.*

### **Required Texts**

To Float in the Space Between | Terrance Hayes  
The Beauty of the Husband | Anne Carson  
Memory for Forgetfulness | Mahmoud Darwish trans. Ibrahim Muhawi  
Ghost Of | Diana Khoi Nguyen  
The Undying | Anne Boyer  
Swing Time | Zadie Smith

The above texts are not only assigned for their formal and / or literary merit, but also as a way to model or provide inspiration for your final project, which is described in more detail below.

Additionally, here are some texts that I wish I could teach, but, unfortunately, we lack the time. Reading these texts specifically may increase your appreciation for other texts that we read in class, and vice versa:

Garments Against Women | Anne Boyer  
Plainwater | Anne Carson  
One Hundred Years of Solitude | Gabriel García-Márquez  
Don't Let Me Be Lonely | Claudia Rankine  
Jane | Maggie Nelson  
feeld | Jos Charles  
Currently & Emotion | Sophie Collins  
DMZ Colony | Don Mee Choi  
Changing My Mind | Zadie Smith  
Midwinter's Day | Bernadette Mayer  
Investigations of a Dog | Franz Kafka  
Jazz | Toni Morrison  
Voyager | Srikanth Reddy  
Junk | Tommy Pico

### **Grading Breakdown**

65% Final Project  
25% Attendance and Participation  
10% "Pop Quizzes"

#### **Final Project:**

By the end of this class, you must have produced a "thing." It can be a portfolio or collection of poetry, prose, photography, criticism, collage, or any combination of these.

Final projects written exclusively in prose should range from 12-20 pages single spaced, while final projects that make use of white / blank space, or feature artwork and/or photography should range from 15-25 pages single spaced. Although this may seem like a high work requirement, please keep in mind that it is the only written assignment for the entirety of the semester. There is no written homework requirement, nor is there a written midterm.

If you have absolutely no idea of what you want to write, I would recommend beginning to keep a diary in which you write in a particularly literary (you may define this however you wish) voice, as I have found that this highly generative and can oftentimes end up being interesting as a project of its own. Some classes in the Literatures in English department require something like a 1-2 paragraph response to each of the assigned readings; although I do not plan on requiring any such assignments, a collection of these would make for a successful final project, should you choose to circumvent a more “creative” project, by which I mean writing original poetry and/or prose. A particularly interesting project would be a combination of these, one in which a student interrogates the ways in which the readings done in class are affecting their day-to-day lives, or their outlooks on day-to-day lives.

Moreover, there will be four “progress checks” throughout the semester, during which we (I will also be participating in this and writing my own final project alongside you) will workshop each other, providing feedback for what has been begun and offering suggestions as to how to continue forward. These progress checks are designed to help us hold each other accountable as we write, while simultaneously offering an opportunity for experience in a workshopping environment.

Grading of the final project will be sub-divided as follows:

25% Evidence of effort

- Pretty self-explanatory! Try hard! Create something you can feel excited by as you are working on it and something you can feel proud of when you have “finished” it.

25% Evidence of contribution and response to progress checks

- Essentially, are you actively contributing to workshop discussions in a respectful manner? Are you able to discern between feedback that you found productive and feedback that you think missed the mark of interpreting your own work? Are you able to disagree productively and respectfully? As much as a workshop is a space for hearing and responding to the first impressions of others, it is also a space *to develop confidence in your own style and voice, as well as learning how to grow against and (not or) alongside others.*

10% Evidence of engagement with texts assigned throughout the duration of the class

- This does not mean that you must discuss all or any of the texts we read in class in your final project, but rather that your work reflects an understanding of the craft and techniques demonstrated in the texts we read in class. Of course, should you decide to write criticism / responses directly to what we read in class, this is more than acceptable.

5% “Creativity”

- Be an artist! Have fun!

**IMPORTANT:** All students must meet with me for office hours at least once during the semester to discuss their final project, preferably before the third progress check. Please email me to schedule a time, especially if my listed office hours do not match your availability. All office hour meetings will take place over Zoom or immediately before class, meaning as early as 7:00 a.m.

Final Projects are due via email by May 17<sup>th</sup>, 11:59 p.m.

### Attendance and Participation:

Everyone is allowed one excused absence without advanced notice. After this, students must email me *at least twelve hours in advance* if they know that they will miss class. After two absences, students will be expected to reach out and schedule office hours with me to discuss the texts that were discussed by the class in their absence. Failure to comply with these standards will result in a deduction of five points from this grading category for every missed class, beginning with the third absence. Arrival to class more than 20 minutes late will be considered an absence. With regards to participation, a successful student will offer a significant contribution to class discussion at least once a week.

### “Pop Quizzes”:

Please don't worry—these are more of reading checks than anything else. Simply put, at ten times throughout the semester, I will ask you, at the beginning of class, one question on the assigned reading due that day. It will be something like “What was your favorite line of a poem you read last night?” or “To you, what was the most memorable part of the assigned essay or short story?” If you can respond all ten of these times proficiently, you will earn all ten points for this category.

### Some Notes on Progress Checks / Workshops:

I do not intend to run a traditional (see: the “Iowa model”) workshop in this class. I have rarely found such workshops helpful, specifically due to the fact that these workshops tend to encourage a hyper-fixation on one “piece” of writing, thereby narrowing the workshop's vision, as opposed to a more expansive outlook—one that considers the writer's journey in working their way through their obsessions, stylistic journeys, and thematic impulses. It is my belief that orienting the “workshop” towards a “progress check” made alongside a community of writers is more conducive to the ongoing-ness at the crux of the practice of writing, rather than critique, which I find to be choppy, more focused on the cycle of creation and destruction. This belief, formed by my own experiences in workshop, has largely shaped the way I wish to structure this class. We will spend the first half of class (up until Spring Break) getting to know one another, as we learn about each other's tastes, interests, and attitudes, reading and writing alongside one another. Occasionally, during this first half, students will write in class and have the opportunity to share their writing (done in or outside class) with the rest of their peers—however, no

workshopping will take place during this time. Instead, after we have gotten to know each other a little bit better, students will spend Spring Break thinking about who they would like to have in their workshop groups, which will be comprised of 3-4 people, depending on class size. Over Spring Break, I ask that students email me with a list of five names *in no particular order* of their peers with whom they would like to work. Using these preferences, I will create workshop groups. The purpose of keeping workshop groups small is so that students will get to know each other's work and final project ideas on an intimate level; they will be able to see the growth and evolution of each other's writing and thinking over the course of the semester. Students are, of course, encouraged to meet with peers not in their workshop groups and discuss their writing and final projects after / outside of class. If I notice, for example, that two students are working towards similar project ideas or otherwise might benefit from conversation with one another, but are in different workshop groups, I will facilitate a meeting and/or conversation between these two writers. While in class, students should keep the following in mind while participating in progress checks / workshop:

- 1) Never assume the "I" of the work is the writer themselves.
- 2) Nothing brought into a progress check is a finished piece. Nothing is ever a "finished piece." Because of this, students should orient their comments for one another towards:
  - a. how the writer might experiment further (or in a wildly different direction) with their work.
  - b. questions as to how the writer sees their own work, or how they plan to move forward exploring their subject(s) / obsession(s)
  - c. recommendations of viewing or interacting with media or art (movies, books, exhibits, etc.) reminiscent in some way of the writer's shared work
- 3) Writing, by its nature, is often a deeply personal act. Some students may choose to bring in work they feel a seemingly inexplicable attachment towards. With this in mind, when workshopping, we will always lead with curiosity, generosity, and kindness.
- 4) Students should generally be asking questions to the writer about their work, or proposing ways of how they might *continue* their draft, not necessarily go back and change something. Students should avoid value-based statements (I liked... / I didn't like... / I didn't get...) and *only speak to their personal experience engaging with the text when paired with a specific critique on craft* (I had a visceral reaction to this story's ending due to the intense and vivid imagery at the story's close / I was surprised by this tonal switch that occurs midway through this poem because it seems logically inconsistent with how the speaker had been set up so far). This way, the writer will be able to decide for themselves whether or not that reaction or response to their work was a desirable one, in accordance with their intentions while writing.

A Note on Labor:

I hold steadfast to the belief that writing is work. It demands effort, care, precision, and complex analysis. It invites frustration, and, perhaps more than other areas of study, scrutinizes and makes

you aware of your own inaction. Writer's block / frustration can be infuriating, especially if you have been conditioned into having exceptionally high standards for yourself with regard to output. However, this is precisely why the creative writing classroom must be a place of empathy and care. I believe it is the role of the professor to find a balance between demanding rigor, labor, and attention from their students while also providing them with a space to air their grievances, express their frustrations, and, most importantly, prioritize their own mental health. In the below syllabus, I have made an effort to respect your time by including approximate time estimates for each of the assigned readings. The readings assigned due Thursdays should generally take between 1-2 hours, while the readings assigned due Tuesdays (you will have, presumably, more time to complete these) should take between 1.5-3 hours. A good habit to get into would be reading for approx. half an hour every morning / night in bed, possibly instead of or before watching Netflix, or reading on the subway / your commute—doing this should allow for you to complete reading of the assigned texts on time and with ease.

### **Disability Disclosure Statement:**

Academic accommodations are available to any student with chronic, psychological, visual, mobility, learning disability, or who is deaf or hard of hearing. Students should please register with the Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980.

NYU's Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities  
726 Broadway, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10003-6677  
Telephone: 212-998-4980  
Website: [www.nyu.edu/csd](http://www.nyu.edu/csd)

### **Student Wellness Policy:**

Unless we see explicit evidence 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.

## **Tentative Class Schedule**

*\*Note: ERT = Estimated Reading Time*

### **Unit One: Literature as Conversation and Ancestry**

Tuesday, January 25<sup>th</sup>: ERT: 60-90 min.

Come to class having read the syllabus in its entirety. Be prepared to ask any relevant questions. I would like to avoid going over the syllabus as a class in its entirety. Please feel free to email me questions about the syllabus at any point throughout the semester. If more than one person ever has the same question, I will address the class as a whole to ensure this everyone is on the same page. Please also come having read the following and be ready to discuss.

[Searching for Gwendolyn Brooks](#) | Bernard Ferguson

ERT: 10-20 min.

[We Real Cool](#) | Gwendolyn Brooks

ERT: < 5 min.

[The Golden Shovel](#) | Terrance Hayes

ERT: 5-10 min.

*selections from* Wicked Enchantment | Wanda Coleman & Terrance Hayes

ERT: 10-20 min.

Sonnet for Wanda C | Terrance Hayes

ERT: < 5 min.

*selections from* American Sonnets for my Past and Future Assassin | Terrance Hayes

ERT: 10-15 min.

*Writing Prompt:* What are your obsessions? To what, or whom, do you owe your lineage?

Thursday, January 27<sup>th</sup>: ERT: 60-90 min.

I do not anticipate that we will finish discussing the above texts on Tuesday, and so we will finish discussing Tuesday's texts today. Please also come to class having read the following and be prepared to discuss.

To Float in the Space Between (pg. 1-61) | Terrance Hayes

ERT: 60-90 min.

*Writing Prompt:* TBA

Tuesday, February 1<sup>st</sup>: ERT: 90-120 min.

Please come to class ready to discuss the following.

To Float in the Space Between (pg. 62 – 169) | Terrance Hayes

ERT: 90-120 min.

*Writing Prompt: TBA*

Thursday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>: ERT: 60 – 90 min.

We will spend the first ~30 minutes finishing our discussion on “To Float...,” and the rest of the class will be spent discussing Anne Carson’s *The Glass Essay*, wrapping up our brief unit on understanding literature as conversation and ancestry. However, this concept is being introduced at the beginning of the semester because it is one essential to understanding quite literally every single work of literature. Influence is omnipresent and must be recognized and celebrated. Additionally, the texts assigned in this unit (although this is hopefully the case with all of the texts assigned in this class) should help provide an idea for how to structure a final project, specifically one that responds to one or more of the texts we discussed in class. With this in mind, please come to class having read the following and be prepared to discuss.

To Float in the Space Between (pg. 170 – 199) | Terrance Hayes

ERT: 30-45 min.

[The Glass Essay](#) | Anne Carson

ERT: 25-40 min.

*Writing Prompt: TBA*

## **Unit Two: Writing the Poem**

Tuesday, February 8<sup>th</sup>: ERT: 45-90 min.

This week will be dedicated to strategies of line breaking. How are lines being broken in contemporary poetry? Today’s assigned text is the entirety of Anne Carson’s “Beauty of the Husband,” which has on its opening pages a quote: “Use delay instead of picture or painting— / a delay in glass / as you would say a poem in prose or a spittoon in silver.” Pay attention to the use of line breaking in order to perform some sort of delay. Think also about the different kinds of delays that occur in the text, as well as with the texts assigned on Thursday. With this in mind, please come to class having read the following and be ready to discuss.

Beauty of the Husband | Anne Carson

ERT: 45-90 min.

*Writing Prompt: TBA*

Thursday, February 10<sup>th</sup>: ERT: 45-75 min.

Keeping the concept of the line break as delay and / or pacesetting in mind (as discussed on Tuesday), please read the following selected poems. Please come ready to discuss.

[Poem \[Lana Turner Has Collapsed\]](#) | Frank O'Hara  
[The Day Lady Died](#) | Frank O'Hara  
[Before I Let You In On Frank O'Hara](#) | Zein Sa'dedin  
*selections from* Mortal Trash | Kim Addonizio  
*selections from* The Unfollowing | Lyn Hejinian  
[People Are A Living Structure Like A Coral Reef](#) | Heather Christle  
[Pity the Bathtub Its Forced Embrace of the Human Form](#) | Matthea Harvey  
[Lines](#) | Anne Carson  
[ode to the flute](#) | Ross Gay  
[We Lived Happily During the War](#) | Ilya Kaminsky

*Writing Prompt:* Write a poem utterly devoid of meaning, but one that sounds pretty, one whose rhythm is ruled by its lineage.

Tuesday, February 15<sup>th</sup>:

Today's focus will be on long poems. What does it mean to insist upon space? To what extent is the long poem inherently an "experimental" form? Please keep these questions in mind as you read the following and come to class prepared to discuss. Also, keep in mind that a 20-30 page long poem would make for an INCREDIBLE final project.

[Broken Ode for the Epigraph](#) | Tiana Clark  
[Indeed Hotter For Me Are the Joys of the Lord](#) | Tiana Clark  
[Death Project \[Poem\]](#) | Rachel Zucker  
[Hey Allen Ginsberg...](#) | Rachel Zucker  
spoon | Ross Gay  
[Upon Reading That Eric Dolphy Transcribed...](#) | John Murillo  
[Detail of the Rice Chest](#) | Monica Youn  
[Study of Two Figures \(Agave / Pentheus\)](#) | Monica Youn  
[The Palace](#) | Kaveh Akbar

*Writing Prompt:* Lean into length.

Thursday, February 17<sup>th</sup>:

You guessed it! With long poems being discussed on Tuesday, today's focus will be entirely on short poems. When is a shorter form appropriate? How do we find the courage to suddenly stop? Come to class prepared to share your reactions to the following poems.

Red | Mary Ruefle  
Little Fable | Franz Kafka  
There Is Absolutely Nothing Lonelier | Matthew Rohrer  
On the Night Stand, a Bowl of Fabric Roses | Taneum Bambrick  
First Year | Carole Bromley  
Foreclosure | Lorinne Niedecker  
Grief | Amaud Jamaul Johnson

Hummingbird on the Porch | Ray Gonzalez  
A Cottony Fate | Jane Hirschfield  
When I Was Still a Poet | Tishani Doshi  
The 4<sup>th</sup> Day After Quitting Cigarettes | Noelle Kocot  
How to Not Be a Perfectionist | Molly Brodak  
Keeping Things Whole | Mark Strand  
Highway 90 | Linda Gregg

*Writing Prompt:* Write a poem given the constraints of Twitter: 280 characters or less.

Tuesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>:

This is our last day studying poetry, specifically. To celebrate this, I have compiled a lengthy document of some of my most favorite poems. It is my hope that, by now, each of you will be fluent in a sort of “vocabulary,” with regards to how to articulate what it is exactly about a poem that you find appealing. For class today, please go through the distributed packet of poems and select at least 3-5 poems that stand out to you as especially impactful or strong. Take notes on them, and be prepared to discuss them for approximately 5 minutes. In class, everyone will share a poem they enjoyed as well as why they enjoyed it. No one is allowed to repeat a poem.

Bailey Plays The Hits!: A Packet of Bailey’s Favorite Poems | Various Authors

*Writing Prompt:* Write a poem.

### **Unit Three: Writing as Documentation / Writing Through a Moment**

Thursday, February 24<sup>th</sup>:

Please come to class having read the following and be ready to discuss. Consider especially the lyric quality with which Darwish details his days, how he complicates and validates emotions such as rage, sorrow, longing, and other responses to a newly realized mundanity.

Memory for Forgetfulness | Mahmoud Darwish trans. Ibrahim Muhawi

*Writing Prompt:* Consider how Darwish writes about coffee. Write lyrically about one of your obsessions, which you may have located earlier in the semester, as part of a different writing prompt, or not at all.

Tuesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>:

Memory for Forgetfulness | Mahmoud Darwish trans. Ibrahim Muhawi

*Writing Prompt:* TBA

Thursday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>:

What does Anne Boyer mean when she talks about "breast cancer's formal questions"? How does the tone switch from the Prologue to Chapter One? What purpose does this divide serve?

The Undying (pg. 1-44) | Anne Boyer

*Writing Prompt:* Read the first paragraph on page 25. Develop a theory of toxic love, of satisfiable and reckless longing, of inability to say goodbye. Consider, if you'd like, such a theory's formal questions.

Tuesday, March 8<sup>th</sup>:

The Undying (pg. 45-202) | Anne Boyer

*Writing Prompt:* TBA

Thursday, March 10<sup>th</sup>:

The Undying (pg. 203-291) | Anne Boyer

*Writing Prompt:* TBA

Tuesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>:

Please spend Spring break relaxing and reading. Ghost Of is the shortest book we will be reading this semester, and it can certainly be finished in under an hour. However, it is an extremely rich and delicately crafted text; please come to class after Spring break ready to discuss its formal innovations, its techniques in language, and its documentarian nature. Additionally, please also email me before class with your top five picks for people that you'd like to have in your workshop groups, that way I can create the groups in time for Thursday's class.

Ghost Of | Diana Khoi Nguyen

*Writing Prompt:* Incorporate non-written media into your writing.

Thursday, March 24<sup>th</sup>:

This is our first Progress Check, taking place almost immediately after Spring Break. By this time, a successful, timely, and responsible student will have collected anywhere

between 5-15 pages of “sketches” that they have written throughout the semester; in other words, such a student will be beginning to narrow down precisely what it is they are working towards. Their obsessions will have gained some nuance and clarity (and if they have not, then this Progress Check is an excellent time to do so), and they will be excited to begin working towards a “completed” project.

Progress Check and Workshop

#### **Unit Four: Writing the Story**

Tuesday, March 29<sup>th</sup>:

Swing Time (pg. 1 – 160) | Zadie Smith

*Writing Prompt:* TBA

Thursday, March 31<sup>st</sup>:

Swing Time (pg. 161 – 282) | Zadie Smith

*Writing Prompt:* TBA

Tuesday, April 5<sup>th</sup>:

Swing Time (pg. 283 – 453) | Zadie Smith

*Writing Prompt:* TBA

Thursday, April 7<sup>th</sup>:

This is our second progress check. By this point in time, a timely and responsible student will have begun writing a “final draft” of their final project. A theme or idea should be ironed-out and subject to minimal change moving forward. Having an outline of the final project, as well as a couple “sketches” that provide examples of what the outline details, is a great place to be.

Progress Check and Workshop

Tuesday, April 12<sup>th</sup>:

[Notes from Underground](#) | Hannah Seidlitz  
No More Than A Bubble | Jamel Brinkley

*Writing Prompt: TBA*

Thursday, April 14<sup>th</sup>:

[The Incredible and Sad Tale of Innocent Eréndira](#) | Gabriel García-Márquez

ERT: 45-70 min.

Selected Flash Fictions | K-Ming Chang

ERT: 25-40 min.

*Writing Prompt: TBA*

Tuesday, April 19<sup>th</sup>:

This is our third progress check. By this point in time, a timely and responsible student will have a detailed outline of what their final project will entail, begun writing it, and met with me at least once during office hours to discuss their artistic / creative ambitions. That student will have also listened intently to the feedback they received during the second progress check and come to class with a refined vision of their completed project, having completed anywhere between 20-40% of their final draft.

Progress Check and Workshop

Thursday, April 21<sup>st</sup>:

[Inventory](#) | Carmen Maria Machado

[Flood](#) | Keenan Walsh

*Writing Prompt: TBA*

## **Unit Five: Writing the Essay**

Tuesday, April 26<sup>th</sup>:

Today is our first day studying essays / nonfiction. Please come to class having read the following. Please pay particular attention to how the below writers construct their arguments, such as the subdivision of their arguments and their general tone.

The Gender of Sound | Anne Carson

[What is a White Man?](#) | Charles Chesnutt

*Writing Prompt: TBA*

Thursday, April 28<sup>th</sup>:

[The Uses of Memory](#) | Roger Reeves

[The Master's Tools](#) | Audre Lorde

*Writing Prompt:* TBA

Tuesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>:

[Tactile Art](#) | John Lee Clark

[The Near Transitive Properties...](#) | Solmaz Sharif

[Poem for Harm](#) | Matthew Zapruder

*Writing Prompt:* TBA

Thursday, May 5<sup>th</sup>:

This is our final Progress Check. By now, a timely and responsible student will have just finished approximately 50-75% of their final project; enough to be able to calmly turn it in by the due date of May 17<sup>th</sup>, while also focusing on their other finals. This progress check will place the least emphasis on “critique,” and will instead be more oriented towards the writer, their questions, their insecurities, their adjustments throughout the writing process, and their successes.

Progress Check and Workshop

Tuesday, May 10<sup>th</sup>:

This is a reading day, meaning that, technically, we do not have class. Because of this, this class is optional, and will have a much more relaxed atmosphere about it. It will be potentially held outdoors, weather permitting. Think: party, presentation, celebration, etc. Students will come to class with the majority of their final project completed and share a ~5 minute excerpt from that project, should they choose. Breakfast pastries, coffee, and tea will be provided.

Final Project Presentations