

Introduction to Creative Writing: Poetry/Prose

Spring 2022
CRWRI-UA.815.022

Instructor: Alan Fang
Tuesdays/Thursdays: 9:30 AM to 10:45 AM
Email: ayf217@nyu.edu
Classroom: TBD

Office Hours: By appointment at the Lillian Vernon Creative Writers House (58 W 10th St)

I step out of the ditch but step deeper into myself—
-*Arthur Sze*

It takes nothing less than the whole might of the state to erase a person, but only the error of one individual--if that is what memory is now called--to preserve her
-*Anthony Marra*

because we rhyme with *bother*
slant *brother, mother, smother, other*
can be slurred to *farther, author*
made of *hate, far, after, fear*
-*Douglas Kearney*

let me blur these boundaries betw
to all that drops—please—be no
resistance:

een life and soundlessness, I will do all the exercises, I will listen
t art but life, be life, please be—here, simple explanation for
-*Diana Kboi Nguyen*

You remain dismembered with the belief that
magnolia blooms white even on seemingly dead
branches and you wait. You remain apart from the
congregation.
-*Theresa Hak Kyung Cha*

I imagine them pressed like flowers in a
book, thinning over time under the weight of new bodies.
-*Tarfia Faizullah*

The world is drowning in weirdness and lies...and here we
are, so used to it that we're actually bored!
-*Inio Asano*

COURSE OBJECTIVE

We are going to write and try to have fun while doing it.

CLASS STRUCTURE

On Tuesdays, we will be doing craft. The goal is to get you to become more acquainted with what makes a good poem or story tick. Through readings and discussions, we will develop the lexicon to talk about creative writing and sound like we know what we're talking about. Please print out (or pull up on your device) all the assigned readings and be ready to participate.

On Thursdays, we will be doing workshop. Depending on the class size, everyone will receive 10-15 minutes of workshop time. Starting Thursday January 27th, Group 1 will turn in their pieces (on Brightspace, by midnight) for workshop happening next week, then Group 2 will turn in their pieces next week (yes, on Brightspace, by midnight) for workshop happening the week after, and so on and so forth. This should give you all ample time to read everyone's work and think of meaningful comments to make. I'll clarify the workshop schedule once we all make it to the classroom.

The first half of class will generally be fiction and after the mid-term we will focus on poetry. But there will definitely be some mixing and matching where some weeks when it is relevant. We will likely do some work outside the limitations of these two genres (film, fine art, manga??). Be prepared.

GRADING & ASSIGNMENTS & STUFF

Attendance, Participation & Office Hours (30%)

If you need to need to be absent for any reason, please email me (at ayf217@nyu.edu) before class and let me know. I'm willing to be super flexible since I know shit happens. The most important thing is that you communicate with me. You have two unexcused absences and after that I'll have to drop your attendance grade by half a letter for each class you miss. It's the same thing if you're consistently and excessively late. Five minutes is no big deal. Thirty minutes is less so.

Besides showing up, you will get the most out of this class if you are engaging with the materials/your classmates' work. Make an observation about the poem we read for class this week. Say something you noticed about how someone uses character in their short story. As long as you aren't disruptive, insulting your classmates/groups of people, wasting time, actively committing crime, etc. then I want to hear what you have to say. You aren't going to develop a vocabulary for talking about poetry/fiction without actually talking.

In a similar vein, I would like for you all to schedule at least one meeting with me during office hours this semester. We can chat about anything: the readings, one of your workshop pieces, your writing goals, your existential dread, the exigent demands of our doomed world.

Workshop poems & stories (25%)

The only thing I can reasonably expect with your creative work is that it gets done on time and shows some level of effort/thought. I'm not going to grade on quality (unless you obviously spent no time on it, or you blatantly copied someone else) and you can write about anything you want (within reason). Poems can be any length and fiction should be at least four pages (you can turn in longer work but please have mercy... a five-page poem or a twelve-page story is kind of pushing it for an intro class). Everything should be in 12 point font, Times New Roman or Garamond (if you really like sans serif fonts then we can talk), single spaced for poetry and double spaced for fiction. Please include your name in the header and page numbers in the footer.

Reading/Workshop Responses & Presentations (25%)

Firstly, you will need to turn in a short (100 word minimum) response to a reading we did during the week by Sunday midnight.

Then, for workshop, you will have to bring in written feedback (200 word minimum) for each piece being workshopped that week.

Finally, I will have you sign up for time slots when you will stand up in front of class and read a poem (not your own) of your choosing (if you really want to read a passage from a piece of fiction then I'll make an exception, but it better be good).

Midterm Essay/Final Portfolio (20%)

I'm somewhat contractually obligated to give you a midterm and final, but these shouldn't be difficult at all.

For the midterm, I'm asking for 3 to 5 pages (on what???) more details will come on Week 3 of class).

For the final, you will collect all the creative work you did over the semester, make revisions (I encourage you to schedule office hours with me if you need any help with this), and organize it all into a neat PDF. I will also ask you for a single page reflection paper. Just a little bit about your experience in workshop, the experience of writing and revising your work, and anything else you feel worthy of reflecting on.

EXTRA CREDIT

If you're worried about your grade at all, you can attend one of many reading events held all around the city. Readers might be big name visitors from different parts of the country, New York City locals, members of the NYU community, even your talented friends. I'd recommend swinging by the salon of the Writers' House on certain Thursday and Friday nights to see who taking part in the Reading Series (I'll send you all a schedule once it's available). Then, write up a short response paper about your experience at the reading (very open-ended) to receive that sweet, sweet extra credit. Or you can just go for fun.

PLAGIARISM

...No

<https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/academic-integrity-for-students-at-nyu.html>

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.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1

1/25 **Introductions and what are we doing here?**
 “How to Become a Writer” – Lorrie Moore
 “Why I Am Not a Painter” – Frank O’Hara

1/27 **To be extremely brief**
 “The School” – Donald Barthelme
 “Girl” – Jamaica Kincaid
 “The Huntress” – Sofia Samatar
 Selected Flash Fiction by Lydia Davis

Group 1 due by midnight

Week 2

2/1 **Hours & Days**
 “What you Pawn I Will Redeem” – Sherman Alexie
 “The Semplica-Girl Diaries” – George Saunders

2/3 Workshop Group 1

Group 2 due by midnight

Week 3

2/8 **Going Somewhere**
 “Hitting Budapest” – Noviolet Bulawayo
 “The Grozny Tourist Bureau” – Anthony Marra

2/10 Workshop Group 2

Group 1 due by midnight

Week 4

2/15 **Fathers & Grandmothers**
 “Last Evenings on Earth” – Roberto Bolano
 “Why Were They Throwing Bricks” – Jenny Zhang

2/17 Workshop Group 1

Group 2 due by midnight

Week 5

2/22 **What the hell is going on?**
 “The Debutante” – Leonora Carrington
 “Car Crash While Hitchhiking” – Denis Johnson

2/25 Workshop Group 2

Group 1 due by midnight

Week 6

3/1 **Women & Men**
 “The Husband Stitch” – Carmen Maria Machado
 “Barn Burning” – Haruki Murakami

3/3 Workshop Group 1

Group 2 due by midnight

Week 7

3/8 **The Body, The Politic**
 “Sonny’s Blues” – James Baldwin + some of his poetry
 Selections from Etel Adnan’s *In the Heart of the Heart of Another Country*

3/10 Workshop Group 2

Group 1 due by 3/16 midnight

Week 8

SPRING BREAK (No Class)

Week 9

3/22 **Anaphora, Litany, Lyric**
 “Why I Write Poetry” – Major Jackson
 “Late Twentieth Century in the Form of Litany” – Gabrielle Calvocoressi
 “Here” – Arthur Sze
 “Orchids Are Sprouting From the Floorboards” – Kaveh Akbar
 “Feeling Fucked Up” – Etheridge Knight
 “America” – Allen Ginsberg

3/24 Workshop Group 1

Group 2 due by midnight

Week 10

3/29

Time & Place (especially New York)

“Chinatown Diptych” – Jenny Xie

Selections from *Crazy Melon and Chinese Apple* – Frances Chung

“New York Poem” – Terrance Hayes

“Uptown, Minneapolis, Minnesota” – Hieu Minh Nguyen

“Two Bikers Embrace on Broad Street” – Ross Gay

“Night in the Gardens of Port of Spain” – Derek Walcott

3/31

Workshop Group 2

Group 1 due by midnight

Week 11

4/5

Trauma, History, Commentary

"Aubade with Burning City" - Ocean Vuong

"We Lived Happily During the War" - Ilya Kaminsky

"Elliptical" - Henryette Mullen

Selections from *Seam* - Tarfia Faizullah

Selections from *DMZ Colony* by Don Mee Choi

“The Colonel” – Carolyn Forché

4/7

Workshop Group 1

Group 2 due by midnight

Week 12

4/12

Form, kinda

“Golden Shovel” and selections from “American Sonnets for my Past and Future Assassin” – Terrance Hayes

“What I Didn’t Know Before” - Ada Limón

Selections from *Frank* – Diane Seuss

“Red Ghazal” – Aimee Nezhukumatathil

“One Art” – Elizabeth Bishop

4/14

Workshop Group 2

Group 1 due by midnight

Week 13

4/19

Shape and (survey) Forms

Selections from *Patter* – Douglas Kearney

Selections from *Ghost of* – Diana Khoi Nguyen

Selections from *Whereas* – Layli Long Soldier

Selections from *Borderland Apocrypha* – Anthony Cody

“Invasive Species Self-Questionnaire” – Marwa Helal

“Declaration Form, U.S. Border” – Shangyang Fang

4/21

Workshop Group 1

Group 2 due by midnight

Week 14

4/26

Loveliness or not

“Scheherazade” – Richard Siken

“Carolina Prayer” – Justin Phillip Reed

“Bell Theory” – Emily Jungmin Yoon

“I Make Promises Before I Dream” – Tongo Eisen-Martin

“Fuck Your Lecture on Craft, My People Are Dying” – Noor Hindi

“As from a Quiver of Arrows” – Carl Phillips

4/28

Workshop Group 2

Week 15

5/3

Revision Workshop or we just watch a movie or read something weird

5/5

Final Celebration & Class Reading

Final Portfolios due May 17th at Midnight

EVERYTHING IN THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE