

Creative Writing: Introduction to Fiction and Poetry  
Spring '22  
Section CRWRI-UA.815.024  
Monday and Wednesday: 8:00AM- 9:15AM

Instructor: Amir Denzel Hall (they/them)  
Email: adh9990@nyu.edu  
Office Hours: By appointment

**Overview:**

This course introduces students to the craft of writing poetry and fiction. What does literature do? And how does literature do that which it does? In this course we will explore the techniques writers in both genres employ to make us feel and heal.

**Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of the semester students should be able to:

1. Identify and describe elements of craft in both poetry and fiction.
2. Employ different literary devices and techniques in their own writing.
3. Critically engage with the writing of their peers.
4. Edit and revise their own creative writing as well as the writing of their peers.

**Grading:**

*Attendance: 30%*

Your presence matters.

*Readings and participation: 15%*

The class is discussion-based. You must read and be able to discuss the readings.

*Writing Assignments and workshop submissions: 15%*

You will be required to write short one-page double-spaced responses to each week's readings

*Final Portfolio: 40%*

The final portfolio will include:

1. All writing assignments and workshop submissions and;
2. One revised workshop submission.

Upon completion of the course, you will evaluate yourselves using the above metrics. The evaluation will be taken into consideration when determining your grade.

**Electronics in the Classroom:**

Please refrain from using electronic devices during class. You may use a laptop or tablet to take notes.

**Academic Integrity**

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the department without exception.

**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>

**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.

Counseling Services: 726 Broadway New York, NY 10003 (212) 998-4780

Wellness Center:

24-Hour Hotline: (212) 443-9999

Email: [wellness.exchange@nyu.edu](mailto:wellness.exchange@nyu.edu)

## CLASS SCHEDULE

### WEEK 1

#### **M 01/24**

Introductions

Syllabus Review

Divide into workshop groups

Bring a poem to class day!

#### **W 01/26 – Poetic Mechanics & Mock Workshop**

### WEEK 2

#### **M 01/31 – *The “I” in Poetry***

Discussion of form

Yusef Komunyakaa, [“Anodyne”](#)

Ocean Vuong, [“Not Even This”](#)

Thomas James, [“Letters to a Stranger”](#)

Sharon Olds, [“Take the I Out”](#)

Lucille Clifton, [“won’t you celebrate with me”](#)

Song, [“All shades of blue”](#) by Gregory Alan Isakov

#### **W 02/02 – Poetry Workshop Group A**

### WEEK 3

#### **M 02/07 – *Poetry of the Body and Spirit***

Joy Harjo, [“Grace”](#)

Excerpts from Alexis Pauline Gumbs, *M Archive and Dub*

Joy Harjo, [“A Map to the Next World”](#)

CAConrad, [“Glitter in My Wounds”](#)

Anne Carson, [“Book of Isaiah”](#)

Li-Young Lee, [“Have You Prayed”](#)

Song, [“Tell him”](#) by Lauryn Hill (song lyrics)

Corinthians 13

**W 02/09 – Poetry Workshop Group B**

**WEEK 4**

**M 02/14** – *Poetry, Politics and Performance*

Eileen Myles, “[An American Poem](#)”

Alex Dimitrov, “[1969](#)”

Excerpts from *Magical Negro* by Morgan Parker

Adrienne Rich, “[Someone is Writing a Poem](#)” (essay)

**W 02/16 – Poetry Workshop C**

**WEEK 5**

**M 02/21** – President’s Day No classes

**W 02/23** – Poetry Workshop D

**WEEK 6**

**M 02/28** – *The “I” in Fiction*

Discussion of characterization and plot

Colson Whitehead, *Underground Railroad* (first half)

Tobias Wolff, *Bullet in the Brain*

**W 03/02** – Fiction Workshop A

**WEEK 7** – NO CLASS SPRING BREAK 03/14 – 03/20

**WEEK 8**

**M 03/21** – *The “I” in Fiction Cont’d*

Discussion of plot and place

Colson Whitehead, *Underground Railroad* (second half)

Alice Munro, *The Bear Came Over the Mountain*

**W 03/23 – Fiction Workshop B**

**WEEK 9**

**M 03/28** – *Fictions of Body and Spirit*

Discussion of setting, time and pacing  
Marilynne Robinson, *Gilead* (first half)  
Anton Chekhov, *Rothchild's fiddle*

**03/30 – Fiction Workshop C**

**WEEK 10**

**M 04/04** – *Fictions of Body and Spirit Cont'd*

Discussion of voice and the Spiritual  
Marilynne Robinson, *Gilead* (second half)  
Elizabeth Gilbert, [Your Elusive Creative Genius](#) (TED Talk)

**W 04/06 – Fiction Workshop D**

**WEEK 11**

**M 04/11** – *The “I” in Hybrid; Essay and Creative Non-Fiction*

Ocean Vuong, [“Letter to My Mother that she will never read”](#)  
Binyavanga Wainaina, [“I am a homosexual, mum.”](#)

**W 04/13 – Hybrid Workshop A**

**WEEK 12**

**M 04/18** – *The “I” in Hybrid: Hybrid Language*

JinJin Xu, [“In America, You Are Asked, Why Are Leaves Green”](#)  
JinJin Xu, [“To Red Dust”](#)  
Selections from Dionne Brand's, *Land to Light On*

**W 04/20 – Hybrid Workshop B**

**WEEK 13**

**M 04/25** – *The Hybrid Body/Spirit*

Anne Carson, [“The Glass Essay”](#)

Chris Abani, *The Face, Cartography of the Void*

Natasha Tretheway, [“Miscegenation”](#)

**W 04/27 – Hybrid Workshop C**

**WEEK 14**

**M 05/02** – *Hybrid Performance*

Film, *Lemonade* by Beyonce

Choreo-essay, [break.dance](#) by Dr. Marisa Parham

**W 05/04 – Hybrid Workshop D**

**WEEK 15**

**Last day of classes 05/09 - Goodbye Party**

**Final Portfolio due Thursday May 12**