

Creative Writing: Introduction to Prose and Poetry

CRWRI-UA.815.060

Summer Session II: July 7, 2022 – August 17, 2022

Instructor: Faith Kressner

My Email: fk2105@nyu.edu

Meeting Times: Tuesday and Thursday, 1:30pm – 4:40pm

Office Hours: *(TBD)*

Classroom: *(TBD)*

Course Objective: This introduction to creative writing will allow us to examine, practice, and submerge ourselves in what is known as ‘the writer’s life’. Through careful reading and close observation of creative texts across genres, as well as generating and examining creative works of our own, we will come into a fuller understanding of what it means to write, and write well.

Put another way, the goal of this course is to establish the foundation of Good Practice that every creative writer needs. This means 1) learning to read as writers, and 2) developing regular, generative writing habits.

Structure: Please note that this class will devote the first half of each class to discussion of assigned texts, while the second half will be workshop, wherein we thoughtfully respond to, critique, and discuss the creative works of our classmates.

Required Texts:

The Elements of Style, William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White

Imaginative Writing: The Elements of Craft, 2nd Ed., Janet Burroway

The English Patient, Michael Ondaatje

An Elemental Thing, Eliot Weinberger

Further texts provided in excerpts, including but not limited to:

Reading Like a Writer, Francine Prose

The Triggering Town, Richard Hugo

How to Be Drawn, Terrance Hayes

Reading Expectations: The texts we will examine cover a range of genres, including short stories, essays, memoir, novels, and poems. Because this class is an introduction to creative writing, it is expected that all students will approach all genres with an open and exploratory mind as writers-in-training. Students should come to each class with the assigned text **in hand**, and be prepared to participate actively in class discussions.

Writing Expectations: Each student will prepare one piece of prose, one set of poems, and one additional piece in a genre of your choosing to share with the class on Workshop Days over the course of the semester (for a total of three workshopped pieces per student). Students must also prepare a letter responding to each of their classmate’s workshop pieces (more detail about this, and about workshop etiquette and procedures in general, can be found in the ‘How Workshop

Works' handout). Additionally, students are expected to complete short writing exercises weekly, to be recorded in a journal/notebook dedicated to our class.¹ *It is important that the journal/notebook be dedicated to our class's exercises because the journals will be collected for grading at the end of our course.*

Participation Expectations: Whether we are discussing a published text or the work of our classmates, active participation is always expected. Forms of active participation might include:

- arriving to class with questions and points for discussion already prepared
- replying to classmates' ideas with substantive feedback
- being an active listener, and providing classmates your undistracted attention
- respecting the opinions of others

Additional Expectations/Assignments: Aside from weekly reading and writing assignments and workshop requirements, students will need to complete the following two assignments over the course of the semester:

1) Attend a literary reading in the community and write a one-page response paper.

The opportunities are endless! However, the NYU Creative Writing Program website is a wonderful place to start—I am happy to provide resources and schedules of events to anyone needing assistance in finding an appropriate event to attend.

2) Memorize and recite one poem or opening paragraph. We will begin each class with one (or two) recitation(s)—sign-ups will take place during our first class.

Attendance Policy:

Your presence in our class is essential. As a small group of writers, the trust and rapport we build as a community is integral to everyone's growth and progress. As such, two unexcused absences will result in an automatic grade reduction (an A will become an A-), as will each unexcused absence thereafter. Excused absences must be accompanied by a doctor's note or other official document. Please note, **if you have an unexcused absence on a day you are scheduled to have your writing workshopped, you will receive an automatic zero for that assignment.**

If you are 15 minutes late to class, it counts as half an absence. If you are late by 30 minutes or more, it will be a full absence.

If you are absent, excused or unexcused, you are still responsible for making up any missed assignments or submission requirements.

Submission Policy:

Exactly one week prior to the day you are scheduled to have your piece workshopped, you must provide your piece to every person in the class, including me, no later than midnight. On workshop day, each student is expected to arrive with the following: 1) a physical paper copy of each piece that is being workshopped, marked up and highlighted as appropriate, to be given to the author at the end of class, 2) TWO copies of each workshop critique letter, one to give to the

¹ **Handwriting** these short writing exercise in your class journal is, in most cases, required. We will discuss further the philosophy of writing by hand as well as the benefits of art and doodling in the creative writer's practice during class. Exceptions and academic accommodations granted through the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities will, of course, be allowed.

author at the end of class, and one to give to me. [This means that if 4 students are being workshoped, you will need to come to class with paper copies of all 4 pieces, and 8 total copies of workshop critique letters (4 authors x 2 copies per letter)].

Grading:

Workshop 1 – 10%

Workshop 2 – 10%

Workshop 3 – 15%

Participation – 15%

Journal Exercises – 10%

Workshop Letters – 10%

Recitation – 5%

Literary Reading Write-up – 5%

Final Portfolio – 20%

A Note on the Final Portfolio:

The final exam for this course is the completion of a final portfolio. The contents of this portfolio will include:

- 1) The original creative work as it appeared on workshop day
- 2) A revision narrative, 2-3 pages in length.
- 3) The revised creative work.

Complete #1-3 for TWO different creative works you submitted over the course of the semester. One of the works must be prose, the other must be poetry. More detail for this assignment will be forthcoming.

Electronics Policy:

Our assigned books must be physical copies brought to class for discussion. All workshop materials brought to class must be paper copies. No laptops, tablets, phones, etc. are permitted in class (except as registered and permitted through the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities). I expect all electronics to be completely silenced and out of sight beginning at 2:00 PM sharp. If there is a repeat offense of visible and/or audible electronics, a student may be asked to leave the class and be counted as absent, at the instructor's discretion.

Plagiarism Policy:

Absolutely no plagiarism will be tolerated. All cases will be immediately reported to the university, and the work will receive no credit.

Also note, for the purposes of this introductory creative writing course, *original work* means that I expect all creative work to be generated specifically for our class. If you would like to *significantly* revise and re-work an existing piece of your own writing for workshop, you must consult with me first.

N.B.

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.

Course Schedule

All readings are due on the date listed. All workshop submissions are due to your classmates one week prior to the day of your workshop.

For Burroway chapter readings, be sure to read ALL excerpts included in each chapter. These will fuel our close reading and the application of craft lessons to creative works.

Week 0.5

7/7

- FDOC, review syllabus and 'How Workshop Works' handout
- Discuss "Invitation to the Writer" and Chapter 1 of Burroway. Conduct mock workshop of selected works in Chapter 1 to practice etiquette and procedure.

Week 2

7/12

- Recitation 1. Discuss Chapter 8 of Burroway and Chapters 1-3 of Prose.

- _____, _____, _____, _____,
workshopping piece #1.

7/14

- Recitation 2. Discuss Chapter 2-3 of Burroway and Chapters 4-5 of Prose.

- _____, _____, _____, _____,
workshopping piece #1.

Week 3

7/19

- Recitation 3 and 4. Discuss Chapter 7-9 of Prose. Discuss Part 1-2 of *The English Patient* (TEP).

- _____, _____, _____, _____,
workshopping piece #1.

7/21

- Recitation 5 and 6. Discuss Parts 3-5 of TEP and Chapter 9 of Burroway.

- _____, _____, _____, _____,
workshopping piece #2.

Week 4

7/26

- Recitation 7 and 8. Discuss the remainder of TEP (parts 6-10).

- _____, _____, _____, _____,
workshopping piece #2.

7/28

- Recitation 9 and 10. Discuss Introduction-Chapter 4 of *The Triggering Town (TTT)* and selected poems from *How to Be Drawn (HTBD)*

- _____, _____, _____, _____,
workshopping piece #2.

Week 5

8/2

- Recitation 11 and 12. Discuss Chapter 5-9 of TTT and selected poems from HTBD.

- _____, _____, _____, _____,
workshopping piece #3.

8/4

- Discuss Chapters 1-14 of *An Elemental Thing (AET)*.

- _____, _____, _____, _____,
workshopping piece #3.

Week 6

8/9

- Discuss Chapters 15-28 of AET.

- _____, _____, _____, _____,
workshopping piece #3.

8/11

- *Make-up Workshop Day as needed* – OR – Presentation Extravaganza!

You will choose one of two presentation options:

1) Group Option:

Texts in Conversation: draw together AET and TEP, and/or any of our craft texts and Burroway excerpts. Groups will each choose a guiding chapter of Prose to serve as the lens through which they examine the intertextual conversation. You will present your findings to the class in a creative format of your choosing.

2) Individual Option:

Strunk and White: drawing from Sections II and V of the Strunk and White book, choose one of the principles of composition and find a paragraph or section of a text of your choosing (either your own work, or anything we've encountered in class) that demonstrates the proper execution of this principle of composition. You will present your findings to the class in a creative format of your choosing.

****Final Portfolio due by August 15th at midnight****

Week 6.5

8/16

- LDOC Celebratory Reading!
- Optional one-on-one conference time— we can discuss your progress, goals, individualized reading recommendations, or any other writerly concerns you may have.

All dates and readings are subject to change at instructor's discretion.