Intro to Creative Writing: Fiction & Poetry
Instructor: Neha Mulay
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Office Hours: By Appointment
MW 12:30 PM - 1:45 PM

About this course:

The journey into literature, the absorption and creation of it, is first and foremost, a question of impetus. This course is an exploration of the creative drive and its myriad manifestations. We will immerse ourselves in fiction and poetry and use them as a basis for the creation of our own work. This course will examine not only the features of the creative product but also the nature of vision. In doing so, we will consider storytelling, myth-making, and exposition—the real, the surreal, and all the realms in between as a means of achieving a greater understanding of ourselves, the world around us, why we write, and what our own personal voice and vision demand of us.

Course Structure:

Thematic foundations, technique, and form are all crucial aspects of this course. We will alternate between fiction and poetry; one week of fiction will be followed by a week of poetry and so on. Class 1 per week will be dedicated to textual analysis and discussion. Class 2 per week will be a workshop based upon the theme of the particular week in question. The thematic ideas of both fiction and poetry will correspond so that biweekly, the selection of texts we discuss allows us to delve into the multiplicities underneath a specific umbrella of ideas.

Workshops will involve sharing and discussions of your creative work. This will be followed by a discussion of your work. Two classes in the semester will be dedicated to generative writing workshops in which we will engage in various writing exercises in class.

Expectations and Guidelines:

A safe and conducive environment is essential to creativity. We will not focus on judging the objective merits of texts or writings; rather, we will focus on what each individual student needs for their creative growth.

Please ensure that you have completed all the assigned readings for the week before class. Set texts and texts included in the Course Packet are mandatory reading. Please ensure you upload your creative piece for the weekly workshop to NYU classes no later than the Sunday preceding the week of class.

During workshop, it is essential to be respectful and kind. Please respect your peers and their work. While you will have the creative freedom to explore and express, stay away from racist, xenophobic, and sexist content. Writing is often a cathartic tool, and this course seeks to encourage this process, however, please be mindful when sharing work of a disturbing nature and ensure you provide trigger warnings where necessary.
Office Hours

I will be available via appointment.

Grading:

Presentation (10%): Students will be required to present on two topics or authors. Presentations should be approximately 10 minutes long, should discuss your perspective on the text, and generate class discussion.

Comments & feedback (30%): Feedback and critique are essential aspects of the writing process. You will be graded and assessed on the frequency and quality of your feedback in class. Each student will be required to make at least three comments per class on the content being discussed. You are also required to comment on the work of at least two of your peers once a week via NYU Classes.

Portfolio (60%): Your final portfolio must contain work that has been shared in class and revised on the basis of feedback. While the length and content included in the portfolio is up to you, the portfolio must demonstrate significant progress and development of substantial creative work.

Students must schedule a minimum of two meetings with me to discuss their work and progress.

Set Texts:

Thieves of Paradise by Yusef Komunyakaa

War of the Foxes by Richard Siken

Praise by Andrew McGahan

A Girl is a Half-formed Thing by Eleanor McBride

Course Packet: The finalized course packet will be emailed out to students during the first week of class.

Plagiarism

Please write your own work. Acknowledge influence and provide credit when necessary.

Mental Health

Writing can be an intensive process. If you find aspects of the work we are discussing triggering, please ensure you take care of your own needs; I am open to discussing the best strategy for you. If your work deals with material of a sensitive nature as relating to suicide, depression, anxiety, abuse, I
will schedule meetings with you to discuss the nature of your work and ensure your mental wellbeing.

Course Schedule:

Week 1: **Overview/Writing**

**February 1:** Introduction to course, discussion of technical terms (in packet), generative writing

**February 3:** Workshop

Week 2: **Poetry: Desire, Devotion, & Mysticism**

**February 8:** Selections from *Mirabai: Ecstatic Poems* (Translated by Robert Bly and Jane Hirshfield) (in packet), Selections from *Wild is the Wind* by Carl Philips (in packet), *War of the Foxes* by Richard Siken

**February 10:** Workshop

Week 3: **Fiction: Devotion & Ache**

**February 15:** President’s Day (No classes)

**February 17:** *A Girl is a Half-formed Thing* by Eleanor McBride

Week 4: **Poetry: Form & Fragmentation**

**February 22:** Selections from *Fast* by Jorie Graham, Selections from *Don’t Let me be Lonely* by Claudia Rankine,

**February 24:** Workshop

Week 5: **Fiction: Parataxis, Paranoia, and Absurdity**

**March 1:** *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett, Excerpts from *Infinite Jest* by David Foster Wallace (in packet)

**March 3:** Workshop

Week 6: **Poetry: Place, Sprawl, & Surrealism**

**March 8:** *Thieves of Paradise* by Yusef Komunyakaa, Selections from *Forest Primeval* by Vievee Francis

**March 10:** Workshop
Week 7: Fiction: Landscape & Magical Realism

March 15: “Eyes of a Blue Dog” by Gabriel Garcia Marquez (in packet)

March 17: Workshop

March 19: Spring Break

Week 8: Poetry: Ghazals, Arrogance, & Song

March 22: Selections from Selected Poems and Letters (Translations from the Asian Classics) by Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib (Translated by Frances Pritchett & Owen T.A. Cornwall) (in packet), Selections from The Tradition by Jericho Brown (in packet)

March 24: Workshop

Week 9: Fiction: Stream of Consciousness, Lyricism, & Modes of Passage


March 31: Workshop

Week 10: Poetry: Temporality & Timelessness

April 5: “Duino Elegies” by Rainer Maria Rilke (in packet), Selections from Selected Poems by Jorge Luis Borges (Translated by Alexander Coleman) (in packet)

April 7: Workshop

Week 11: Fiction: Grunge, & Coming of Age

April 12: Praise by Andrew McGahan

April 14: Workshop

Week 12: Poetry: Nationhood, Crisis & Disillusionment

April 19: Spring Break

April 21: Selections from Homie by Danez Smith (in packet), Selections from Motherland Fatherland Homosexuals by Patricia Lockwood (in packet), Selections from American Sonnets for my Past and Future Assassin by Terence Hayes (in packet)

Week 13: Fiction: Gender, Disruption & Memory

April 28: Workshop

Week 14: Poetry: Confession and Trauma


May 5: Workshop

Week 15: Writing

May 10 *Last Day of Class*: Generative writing