INTRODUCTION TO PROSE & POETRY
— CRWRI-UA.815.006 —

Marissa Perino
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CLASS — Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:30PM to 1:45PM
OFFICE HOURS — likely on Tuesdays, by appointment

*I've written six novels and four pieces of nonfiction,
so I don't really have a genre these days.*

Anne Lamott

*We should all do what, in the long run, gives us joy,
even if it is only picking grapes or sorting the laundry.*

E.B. White

*this syllabus is subject to change*

This class is an introduction to the three major genres of creative writing, but with an emphasis on genre-bending. We’ll get to look at authors who have written in two — sometimes all three — of these categories, and hopefully you’ll find one that you love. Together we’ll explore the makings of poems and prose. We’ll also try to focus on one complete published work per quote-unquote genre in order to better understand the process behind the construction of manuscripts/chapbooks. With these readings (which I’ll provide in a packet each week) — and our subsequent discussions — as guides, you’ll submit writing through either weekly prompts or workshop sessions, which will allow you to slowly build a portfolio which you’ll revise at the end of the term. You’ll each have a finished collection which we’ll share at the end.

This course has been shifted to remote learning for a number of reasons, but I’m excited to move forward with an online platform. As someone currently attending school remotely myself, I’m excited to make this work. Among the many benefits of creative writing workshops, small class size is one of them, and on Zoom we’ll be able to see everyone’s faces clearly. I aim to make this a comfortable, warm, and conversation-fueled space to meet twice a week in our midday time slot — to enjoy easy, regular discussion of writing whether it’s published authors or your own.

GRADING BREAKDOWN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submissions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Portfolio</td>
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<td>Class Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Responses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
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REQURED TEXTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We the Animals</td>
<td>Justin Torres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Full Velvet</td>
<td>Jenny Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluets</td>
<td>Maggie Nelson</td>
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*info will be provided by/on the first day of class regarding purchasing any of these texts
*all other readings will be uploaded for you (scanned excerpts, links, or online PDFs)
COURSEWORK OVERVIEW

The first week aside, a typical Tuesday/Thursday weekly schedule should go as followed…

Thursday by the end of class before you embark for the weekend, you’ll be able to see a photocopied packet uploaded online. Three times throughout the semester, we will be reading a full (albeit short) book instead, but otherwise you’ll be reading a curated packet of prose and poems. You’ll have the long weekend to read and respond to the text, and you’ll come to class Tuesday morning prepared to discuss. Most weeks we’ll discuss as a large group, but sometimes we’ll break into small groups for a change of pace. We’ll likely do an in-class writing exercise related to the readings so long as time allows.

On non-workshop weeks, you’ll have a short prompt assignment (oftentimes an extension of an in-class exercise) to complete before class on Thursday. On these days, you’ll need to email me the assignment by midnight the night before. For workshop weeks, we’ll discuss your classmates’ work instead. (They’ll send around their work the week before, so you’ll have plenty of time to read their pieces.) On these days, by midnight, you’ll need to send your classmate a page of typed feedback and line-edits/margin notes, cc’ing me on the email every time. *deadlines times subject to change*

CLASS PARTICIPATION — everyday, both discussion days and workshop days
Class participation will be a mixture of full class discussion, small group discussion, and in-class writing exercises. Your presence and attentiveness will be noted.

READING RESPONSES — due every Tuesday, send by midnight the night before
Ideally, reading responses should be about a page. This page can vary and can range from a brief analysis to a more creative approach. If you’re compelled to write a poem in response, go for it. Regardless of how you choose to respond, be sure to markup your packet with margin notes, highlights of favorite lines, etc. (For the books, feel free to use sticky notes.)

WRITING PROMPTS — due on some Thursdays, send by midnight the night before
Prompts are always suggestions based on the reading we have done and might stem from an in-class writing assignment on Tuesday (if there was time). They can later serve as a jumping off point for workshop when it’s your turn submit. Prompts are short, usually just a few paragraphs, but it gets us in the habit of writing every week. These will only be assigned on non-workshop weeks.

WORKSHOP FEEDBACK — due on some Thursdays, send by midnight the night before
Feedback for your classmates should consist of 1 page of typed notes. This can include your impressions, suggestions, and overall notes. More details to come before our first workshop session. Also be sure to write some margin-notes, highlight favorite lines, etc. for your peer. (This will also make writing your page of feedback much easier for you.)

SUBMISSIONS — due once a month, submit by email Thursday at midnight the week before
More details TK. When it’s your group’s turn to submit, you’ll email your submission to our class.

FINAL PORTFOLIO — due at the end of term
More details TK towards the end of the term. Requirements for a cover page, table of contents, etc.

WEEKLY OBSERVATIONS — Details will be provided about this on the first day of class.
KEEPING A WRITERLY NOTEBOOK — Optional. We’ll talk more about this on the first day.
ATTEND VIRTUAL READING(S) — Highly encouraged.
POLICIES

ON ATTENDANCE — Don’t be late.
Especially on workshop days, this interrupts our limited time and is disrespectful to your classmates who might be in the middle of reading aloud. I know it’s an early class — I, too, was once a freshman and my Intro to Fiction Writing class was at 8AM. Come awake and ready to discuss one another’s work. Please reach out to me if you need to miss class for any reason as soon as possible.

ON INTEGRITY — Don’t cheat.
All work should be your own. There is a zero-tolerance policy in this class and at NYU broadly.

ON ELECTRONICS — Don’t use any.
Obviously computer use is required to attend remotely, but it should go without saying that you should be only have classwork open on your screen. We’ll get through our ~1-hour time slot without checking other notifications. (And we’ll also take a break about halfway through class to give our eyes a rest.)

DISABILITY DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
Academic accommodations are available to any student with a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility, or 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 | Fax: 212-995-4114 | Web site: http://www.nyu.edu/csd

STUDENT WELLNESS POLICY
In this class, students will be writing and sharing pieces of nonfiction, some of which may include personal information and/or personal history. Content relating to murder, depression, suicide, sexual assault, or severe mental distress, such as seems to be a possible cry for help, will prompt my attention. For any work that may be interpreted as such, please send an email putting it in context before submitting, especially for workshop. If you 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.

WEEKLY OUTLINE

The following is a rough outline of what the semester will hold. This is subject to change at any time, and I might add small assignments throughout. This, however, will serve as our guide for the term.

WEEK 1  INTRO WEEK

THURSDAY  January 28
introductions / syllabus overview
read excerpts from The Weight of the World together
decide workshop groups
distribute packet to read for upcoming Tuesday
ADDITIONAL HOMEWORK: send me an email over the weekend including a few observations + order required texts as soon as possible
WEEK 2  
INTRO WEEK CONTINUED

TUESDAY  
February 2  
discuss packet + turn in first reading response  
in-class exercise if time allows + writing prompt due Thursday

THURSDAY  
February 4  
DUE BY 12AM: PROMPT ASSIGNMENT  
discuss writing prompt + turn in writing prompt to me  
distribute packet to read for upcoming Tuesday  
everyone emails observations to me by midnight  
*Group A emails the class their submissions by midnight

WEEK 3  
STYLE

TUESDAY  
February 9  
discuss packet + turn in reading response  
in-class exercise + come prepared w/ feedback for Thursday

THURSDAY  
February 11  
GROUP A WORKSHOP  
submit critiques to me and to classmate  
distribute packet to read for upcoming Tuesday  
everyone emails observations to me by midnight  
*Group B emails the class their submissions by midnight

WEEK 4  
THEME TK

TUESDAY  
February 16  
discuss packet + turn in reading response  
in-class exercise + come prepared w/ feedback for Thursday

THURSDAY  
February 18  
CLASS CANCELLED/GROUP B WORKSHOP  
submit critiques to me and to classmate  
reminder to read full book for upcoming Tuesday  
everyone emails observations to me by midnight  
*Group C emails the class their submissions by midnight

WEEK 5  
WE THE ANIMALS

TUESDAY  
February 23  
discuss full book + turn in reading response  
in-class exercise + come prepared w/ feedback for Thursday

THURSDAY  
February 25  
GROUP C WORKSHOP  
submit critiques to me and to classmate  
distribute packet to read for upcoming Tuesday  
everyone emails observations to me by midnight
### WEEK 6  
**USING TENSES**

**TUESDAY** March 2  
Discuss packet + turn in reading response  
In-class exercise if time allows + writing prompt due Thursday

**THURSDAY** March 4  
**DUE BY 12AM: PROMPT ASSIGNMENT**  
Discuss writing prompt + turn in writing prompt to me  
Distribute packet to read for upcoming Tuesday  
Everyone emails observations to me by midnight  
*Group A emails the class their submissions by midnight*

### WEEK 7  
**THEME TK**

**TUESDAY** March 9  
Discuss packet + turn in reading response  
In-class exercise + come prepared w/ feedback for Thursday

**THURSDAY** March 11  
**GROUP A WORKSHOP**  
Submit critiques to me and to classmate  
Distribute packet to read for upcoming Tuesday  
Everyone emails observations to me by midnight  
*Group B emails the class their submissions by midnight*

### WEEK 8  
**SONNETS & OTHER FORMS**

**TUESDAY** March 16  
Discuss packet + turn in reading response  
In-class exercise + come prepared w/ feedback for Thursday

**THURSDAY** March 18  
**GROUP B WORKSHOP**  
Submit critiques to me and to classmate  
Distribute packet to read for upcoming Tuesday  
Everyone emails observations to me by midnight  
*Group C emails the class their submissions by midnight*

### WEEK 9  
**IN FULL VELVET**

**TUESDAY** March 23  
Discuss full book + turn in reading response  
In-class exercise + come prepared w/ feedback for Thursday

**THURSDAY** March 25  
**GROUP C WORKSHOP**  
Submit critiques to me and to classmate  
Distribute packet to read for upcoming Tuesday  
Everyone emails observations to me by midnight
WEEK 10  \hspace{1cm} \textbf{WRITING ABOUT PLACE}

\textbf{TUESDAY}  \hspace{1cm} March 30
\hspace{1cm} discuss packet + turn in reading response
\hspace{1cm} in-class exercise if time allows + writing prompt due Thursday

\textbf{THURSDAY}  \hspace{1cm} April 1
\hspace{1cm} \textbf{DUE BY 12AM: PROMPT ASSIGNMENT}
\hspace{1cm} discuss writing prompt + turn in writing prompt to me
\hspace{1cm} distribute packet to read for upcoming Tuesday
\hspace{1cm} everyone emails observations to me by midnight
\hspace{1cm} *Group A emails the class their submissions by midnight

WEEK 11  \hspace{1cm} \textbf{THEME TK}

\textbf{TUESDAY}  \hspace{1cm} March 9
\hspace{1cm} discuss packet + turn in reading response
\hspace{1cm} in-class exercise + come prepared w/ feedback for Thursday

\textbf{THURSDAY}  \hspace{1cm} April 8
\hspace{1cm} \textbf{GROUP A WORKSHOP}
\hspace{1cm} submit critiques to me and to classmate
\hspace{1cm} distribute packet to read for upcoming Tuesday
\hspace{1cm} everyone emails observations to me by midnight
\hspace{1cm} *Group B emails the class their submissions by midnight

WEEK 12  \hspace{1cm} \textbf{THEME TK}

\textbf{TUESDAY}  \hspace{1cm} April 13
\hspace{1cm} discuss full book + turn in reading response
\hspace{1cm} in-class exercise + come prepared w/ feedback for Thursday

\textbf{THURSDAY}  \hspace{1cm} April 15
\hspace{1cm} \textbf{GROUP B WORKSHOP}
\hspace{1cm} submit critiques to me and to classmate
\hspace{1cm} distribute packet to read for upcoming Tuesday
\hspace{1cm} everyone emails observations to me by midnight
\hspace{1cm} *Group B emails the class their submissions by midnight

WEEK 13  \hspace{1cm} \textbf{BLUETS}

\textbf{TUESDAY}  \hspace{1cm} April 20
\hspace{1cm} discuss full book + turn in reading response
\hspace{1cm} in-class exercise + come prepared w/ feedback for Thursday

\textbf{THURSDAY}  \hspace{1cm} April 22
\hspace{1cm} \textbf{GROUP C WORKSHOP}
\hspace{1cm} discuss full book + turn in reading response
\hspace{1cm} distribute packet to read for upcoming Tuesday
\hspace{1cm} everyone emails observations to me by midnight
[END OF APRIL / BEGINNING OF MAY]

**WEEK 14**
**REVOLUTIONS**

**TUESDAY** April 27  
*talk about the revision process + some helpful writing prompts*  
*no homework except for start thinking about your revisions, but come to class with questions on Thursday*

**THURSDAY** April 29  
*discuss publishing, internships, anything else that’s helpful*

**WEEK 15**
**WRAP-UP/READING**

**TUESDAY** May 4  
*continue conversation from Thursday based on what questions came up + more revision, etc.*

**THURSDAY** May 6  
*plan to do reading this day, so it’s not conflicting with finals*

**WEEK 16**
**FINALS WEEK**

**TUESDAY** May 11  
*final portfolio due to me, backup reading day*

**THURSDAY** May 12  
*no class, backup reading day*

*send out Google survey before class begins  
*have students send me an email to establish communication after the first day of class  
*ideally have quick conferences with students during the first or second week*

**ADDITIONAL GUIDES** forthcoming  
— Workshop Guidelines (both in-class respect and critique criteria)  
— Revision / Final Portfolio Instructions  
— Observations

**TENTATIVE TEXTS** — excerpts for weekly reading packets

**INTRO WEEK**  
selection from *Bird by Bird*  
*Anne Lamott*  
selection from *Madness, Rack & Honey*  
*Mary Ruefle*  
selection(s) from additional writing books  
*Ray Bradbury/Stephen King*  
possibly include 1-page sample of each genre  
1 poem, flash fiction + nonfiction
**LATER WEEKS** — This is currently a running list of the types of works we may look at. Many, though most certainly not all, of these readings will be assigned during our time together. Most will be short, and excerpts will be bundled together for you to access online (download PDF, link to literary magazine, etc.)…

- “What We Talk About When We Talk About Love” (Raymond Carver)
- “The Fourth State of Matter” (Jo Ann Beard)
- “Total Eclipse” (Annie Dillard)
- “Girl” (Jamaica Kincaid)
- “Goodbye to All That” + “The White Album” (Joan Didion)
- “Islands” (Hilton Als)
- “Late Victorians” (Richard Rodriguez)
- “What Takes Cancer Away” / selection from “The Undying” (Anne Boyer)
- “When my brother was an Aztec” + “It Was the Animals” (Natalie Diaz)
- “The Weight of James Arthur Baldwin” (Rachel Kaadzi Ghansa)
- “The Empathy Exams” (Leslie Jamison)
- “It Was the Animals” (Natalie Diaz)
- “In the Cemetery where Al Jolson is Buried” (Amy Hempel)
- “The School” (Donald Barthelme)
- “Powder” (Tobias Wolff)
- “The Little Match-Seller” (possibly include fairytale) (Hans Christian Andersen)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection</th>
<th>Author</th>
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<tr>
<td>selection from <em>On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous</em></td>
<td>Ocean Vuong</td>
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<tr>
<td>selection from <em>Blind Spot</em></td>
<td>Teju Cole</td>
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<tr>
<td>selection from <em>Tell Me How It Ends: An Essay in 40 Questions</em></td>
<td>Valeria Luiselli</td>
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<tr>
<td>selection from <em>An Elemental Thing</em></td>
<td>Elliot Weinberger</td>
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<tr>
<td>selection from <em>Short Talks</em></td>
<td>Anne Carson</td>
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<tr>
<td>selection from <em>Negroland</em></td>
<td>Margo Jefferson</td>
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<tr>
<td>selection from <em>On Immunity</em></td>
<td>Eula Biss</td>
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<tr>
<td>selection from <em>On the Hatred of Poetry</em></td>
<td>Ben Lerner</td>
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<tr>
<td>selection from “My Life”</td>
<td>Lyn Heijnian</td>
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<tr>
<td>selection(s) from <em>Citizen</em></td>
<td>Claudia Rankine</td>
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<tr>
<td>selection(s) from <em>Running in the Family + Billy the Kid</em></td>
<td>Michael Ondaatje</td>
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<tr>
<td>selection(s) from <em>Crush</em></td>
<td>Richard Siken</td>
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<tr>
<td>selection(s) from <em>The Wild Iris</em></td>
<td>Louise Glück</td>
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<td>Campbell McGrath</td>
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<td>Lauren Russell</td>
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<td>Gwendolyn Brooks</td>
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<td>Zadie Smith</td>
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<td>George Saunders</td>
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<td>Sharon Olds</td>
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<td>Justin Torres</td>
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<td>Maggie Nelson</td>
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