Course Objective

In this class, we will examine a wide array of elements involved in crafting both prose and poetry. Our aim is to better understand how these writing tools work within a text to achieve particular effects or communicate desired ideas. Students will then have the opportunity to apply the craft lessons—touching on style, craft, structure, and form, among others—to their own writing which they will submit for workshops. I hope that the course will be an exciting and supportive environment for students to begin experimenting with writing prose and poetry.

Required Texts:

(These books are very short, around 100 pgs.)

*Fair Play* by Tove Jansson

*The Private Lives of Trees* by Alejandro Zambra

Additional readings will be sent out as PDFs, or are available online.

Class Structure:

We will alternate between classes on craft, for which we will read and carefully discuss texts and relevant essays, and our workshops. The class will be split into four groups (A, B, C, D) that rotate through three cycles of workshop (as marked on the syllabus).

Submissions

All submissions should be 12-point font, double spaced.

The first submission will be a fiction submission of no more than 15 pages (though I am somewhat flexible so reach out about this and we can discuss). The second submission will be poetry between 4-5 pages or up to 5 poems (whichever you prefer, though again I’m flexible about length of submissions and we can discuss this as a class). The third submission can be either poetry or fiction.
I’m also open to other forms of writing for the final workshop (song, non-fiction, translation, etc.). I want this to be a rewarding space where students can receive notes on work they care about regardless of strict genre.

Please be mindful of your fellow classmates and adhere to submission deadlines. If your workshop falls on a Wednesday, **submit your work by Sunday at midnight**.

If your workshop happens to fall on a Monday, **submit your work by Friday at midnight**.

**Final Portfolio**
The final portfolio consists of revised versions of the workshop submissions. You can choose to eliminate one of your submissions from the final portfolio, if you’d like, and only revise two of them. This is by no means required, but could allow for greater focus on the pieces you choose to revise.

**Office Hours**
I’m available for office hours by appointment. Please feel free to email me and set up a time to talk over Zoom.

**Grading**
- Attendance 30%
- Participation 25%
- Writing 30%
- Final Portfolio 15%

**Attendance**
Two unexcused absences will be allowed. After two unexcused absences, your grade will drop by a half letter for each subsequent absence. Please do your best to be on time. If you are fifteen minutes late more than once, I will count the second lateness (and all 15 min+ lateness going forward) as an absence. Do not miss your own workshop.

**Participation**
It is an essential part of any writing workshop that all of its participants give meaningful feedback, both in written response letters and marked up pieces, as well as during in-class discussions. I understand that we each have our specific tastes and preferences. However, students should keep an open mind and always strive to meet their classmates halfway. Rather than read a piece and think to yourself “How would I have written this?” try instead to think “What is the best version of this piece as my classmate has written it?”
There should be handwritten notes (or comments/track changes) in the margin on every page. Letters should be around 300-500 words.

The feedback students give one another should always be thought, thorough, and respectful.

Technology
No laptops or tablets in class. This is a discussion-based course and computers can be extremely distracting and disruptive. If you need to bring any reading material to class, you will have to print it out beforehand. This includes your classmates’ pieces.

Plagiarism
Plagiarism will result in an automatic failure of the course.

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 MosesCenter 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.
Part 1: Fiction

The Real, the Unreal, and the In Between

Week 1

M 2/1: Introductions

W 2/3: Practice Workshop: In this class, we’ll be reading recently-published texts (within the last year or two) and treating them like workshop submissions. This way, we can get a feel for how to mark up texts and give thoughtful criticism. We will also take this time to establish a general workshop ethic and culture that works for all of us.

Week 2

M 2/8: James Wood, Andre Breton, Kelly Link, Anton Chekov

W 2/10: Shirley Jackson, Henry Dumas, Carmen Maria Macahdo, Sigmund Freud

Week 3

M 2/15: NO CLASS (Presidents’ Day)

**Workshop A Fiction due 2/16**

W 2/17: Lucia Berlin, Gustave Flaubert, Nafissa Thompson-Spires, Eric Auerbach

Th 2/18: Workshop A (Fiction) **Thursday class- Legislative Day make-up**

Week 4

M 2/22: Susan Sontag, Clarice Lispector, Henry James, Jamaica Kincaid
W 2/24: Workshop B (Fiction)

Week 5

M 3/1: Tove Jansson, Joan Didion

W 3/3: Workshop C (fiction)

Week 6

M 3/8: Alejandro Zambra

W 3/10: Workshop D (fiction)

Part Two: Poetry

Freedom and Limitation

Week 7

M 3/15: Mary Oliver (essay on form), Cathy Park Hong, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Terrence Hayes, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Dorothea Lasky, Edward Lear, Ruth Muskrat Bronson, Angel Nafis, Evie Shockley.

\textit{In class writing exercise: pick a form we’ve discussed (or another) and attempt a poem that follows it}

W 3/17: Workshop A (poetry)

Week 8


W 3/24: Workshop B (poetry)
In class writing exercise: free write and/or first person poem

Week 9

M 3/29: Wallace Stevens, Saretta Morgan, George Marian McClellan, Robinson Jeffers, Ralph Waldo Emerson, W.S. Merwin, Hilda Raz, Daniella Legos Georges, Mary Oliver (essay on Imagery)
In class writing exercise: on nature/climate/environment

W 3/31: Workshop C (poetry)

Week 10

M 4/5: Joshua Bennet, Nikki Giovanni, Monica Youn, Robin Coste Lewis, W.H. Auden, John Keates, Homer, Pablo Neruda, H.D. [Depending on restrictions, we spend this class at an art museum].
In class writing exercise: an ekphrastic or ode.

W 4/7: Workshop D (poetry)

Week 11

M 4/12: Robert Fittman, Elizabeth Alexander, Ravi Shankur, Tracy K. Smith, Charles Jensen, Elizabeth Bradfield, Giannina Braschi, Jeffrey Grunthaner, Roger Lewinter, Douglas Kearney
In class writing exercise: bring in a work of prose and make an erasure/found poem, or experiment with the visual nature of the poem on the page.

W 4/14: Workshop A (free)

Week 12

M 4/19: **NO CLASS**

W 4/21: Workshop B (free)

Week 13
M 4/26: Songwriting: Brittany Howard, Lorde, James Agee and Samuel Barber, Kendrick Lamar, Joni Mitchell, charli xcx

W 4/28: Workshop C (free)

Week 14

M 5/3: On Revision/Writers on Writing (selected podcasts & interviews about writing and revising process)

W 5/5: Workshop D (free)

Week 15

M 5/10: **LAST CLASS** Reading/sharing revised pieces
Final Portfolio due in class