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Spring 2-1-2019

CRWR 411.01: Advanced Poetry Workshop

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Recommended Citation

Klink, Joanna, "CRWR 411.01: Advanced Poetry Workshop" (2019). *University of Montana Course Syllabi*. 10172.

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Advanced Undergraduate Poetry Workshop

CRWR 411

The University of Montana

Joanna Klink

Tuesdays 3:30-6:20 pm

Location TBA

...it is a function of poetry to locate those zones inside us that would be free and declare them so.

--C.D. Wright

Here, as elsewhere in life, attentiveness only deepens what it regards.

--Jane Hirschfield

This

is an advanced undergraduate poetry workshop involving critical analysis and revision of poems. On a weekly basis we will examine student poems and the practical issues in poetics (descriptive language, syntax, diction, etc.) they bring to light. Be prepared to do imitations; some memorization may be required.

Required Texts

Ellen Bryant Voigt, *Headwaters*

Killarney Clary, *Who Whispered Near Me*

Jennifer Foerster, *Bright Raft in the Afterweather*

Terrance Hayes, *How To Be Drawn*

Anna Maria Hong, *H&G*

Denis Johnson, *The Throne of the Third Heaven of the Nations Millennium General Assembly:*

Poems Collected & New

D.A. Powell, *Cocktails*

Derek Walcott, *White Egrets*

C.D. Wright, *Steal Away: New & Selected Poems*

C.D. Wright, *40 Watts*

+ Weekly worksheets

Office Hours

Tuesdays 1:30-3 pm, & some Friday afternoons

& always moreso by appointment

LA 231

joanna.klink@mso.umt.edu

Poems

One poem is due each week on Friday by 2 pm, in my English Department mailbox (LA 129). Most of the time this poem will be based on a specific prompt. You can always hand in more poems than are

assigned. If you miss the deadline, hold on to your work until the following week. Please don't xerox poems and bring them to class, or email poems to the class. Put your name next to each poem title. All pages should be single-sided, without staples, for ease of xeroxing.

Worksheets

Each week in class I'll hand you a new packet ("worksheet") of student poems, with a list at the top of who's up for workshop. Read through all of the poems on the worksheet and prepare the ones marked for discussion. Read and prepare any other assignments.

Discussion

Put away laptops and cell phones.

Be, in class, present.

The quality of our classes depends on your care in reading as well as your willingness to write down comments in advance, to take each other seriously, to approach radically different styles with an open mind, to contribute thoughtfully to discussions, and to sustain a generous manner with one another throughout. I promise to bring the same kind of attention to the class.

Outcomes

My hope is that, by the end of the semester, you will be able to read and edit your own work as if it had been written by somebody else.

Grading

Your grade will reflect your weekly participation: participation in class is essential. Participation 50%, weekly assignments and final portfolio 50%. For every two classes you miss, your grade will be lowered by one letter grade. Your final portfolio should include all weekly assignments, revised. You are responsible for all work whether or not you are in class. Collaboration on assignments is not allowed. See the section on plagiarism in the Student Handbook.

Conferences

In early March I'll start scheduling conferences for March and April. These conferences are meant to be comprehensive: we'll sit down together and go over all of the poems you've written for the class thus far. _____

Perhaps poems will continue to illuminate their solitudes, but best of all would be if poems occasioned a greater endeavor, that of sitting around and trying to figure something out together. It is the scholar who, "coughing in ink," annoys us by pointing out that "study" derives from the Latin studia, or eagerness. This eagerness demands nothing other than a table, a book, and a lamp to gather around. Life itself can be counted on to furnish the solitude and longing in excess. What I wish for my students, as yet strangers to their own deepest eagerness, is what I wish more and more for myself, the lamp, the table, the curious company, and most of all, the conversation that opens our own ignorant ear.

--DeSales Harrison, Boston Review

Schedule of Classes

Tuesday, January 15: Workshop

Tuesday, January 22: Workshop

Tuesday, January 29: Workshop

Tuesday, February 5: Workshop

Tuesday, February 12: Workshop

Tuesday, February 19: Workshop

Tuesday, February 26: Workshop

Tuesday, March 5: Workshop

Tuesday, March 12: Workshop

Tuesday, March 19: Workshop

Tuesday, March 26: NO CLASS Spring Break

Tuesday, April 2: Workshop

Tuesday, April 9: Workshop

Tuesday, April 16: Workshop

Tuesday, April 23: Last class; Students read from their work

I believe in a hardheaded art, an unremitting, unrepentant practice of one's own faith in the word in one's own obstinate terms. I believe the word was made good from the start; it remains so to this second. I believe words are golden as goodness is golden. Even the humble word brush gives off a scratch of light. There is not much poetry from which I feel barred, whether it is arcane or open in the extreme. I attempt to run the gamut because I am pulled by the extremes. I believe the word used wrongly distorts the world. I hold hard to distinctions of right and wrong. Also I think that antithetical poetries can and should coexist without crippling each other...While I am not always equal to it, I appreciate the fray...I am not always sure of where it is I am going.

--C.D. Wright, "Op-Ed"