CRWR 411.01: Advanced Poetry Workshop

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STORY & SOURCE

In this course, we will explore different meanings of “story” and source material in poetry, and how they may inform the expressive, and formal possibilities of poems. Our aim will be to investigate the art of writing poems by studying past masters, by reading contemporary writing, and by engaging in writing ourselves. You will write poems, open and lead discussion on assigned readings, and keep a reading and writing notebook.

Reading List
(books are all available at Shakespeare & Co.)
- *Life Studies*, Robert Lowell (1959)
- *Sonnets*, Bernadette Mayer (1989; 2014 anniversary version)

Handouts (provided in class)

Course Policies
Absences
Up to two excused absences are permitted without penalty. Because we meet only once a week, try to keep it to one absence, if you can help it. Arriving late to class creates an unwelcome distraction; excessive tardiness will lower your grade by one step, e.g., an A becomes an A-.

Late Work
*Late work will not be accepted* unless you have arranged for an extension. All assignments are due at the start of class on the assigned due date.

Grading
Grades are based on the quality of your 1) preparedness and active participation in class—this includes in-class writing exercises; 2) poems and revisions through the semester; 3) your student-led discussion session / presentation; 4) peer review—measured by your oral and written comments, including a peer-review letter; 5) critical annotations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-Class Participation &amp; Preparedness</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>Poems &amp; Revised Work</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation &amp; Peer Review</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Annotations</td>
<td>25%</td>
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Technology
This class is low-tech! All you need is pen, paper, and books. Please turn off all electronic devices (computers, cell phones, tablets) before entering the classroom. I dislike the use of computers and phones in the classroom for readings or for writing notes. I have zero tolerance for cell phones—please check your text messages and emails during break.

Assignments & Expectations
Readings
Assigned readings appear on the schedule beneath the date by which it should be read. Additional readings may be announced (or handed out) in class; if you miss a class in which new work is announced or handed out, you are still responsible for it. The readings generally include more poems than we’ll be able to cover in class. Usually, I’ll try to indicate which poems we’re likely to discuss in detail; you must read the entire assignment, however, and should refer when relevant to different poems.

Many class sessions will begin with time dedicated to group discussion of assigned reading. Your attendance, preparation, and participation are therefore essential, as are your collegiality and respect in engaging your peers.

Presentations & Critical Annotations
This course combines short lectures, workshops, and student-led discussion sessions. Each student will have his or her writing discussed by the class at least once during the semester. Many classes will entail a student-led discussion of assigned reading that is not more than 30 minutes. Four students will make up one discussion group, and these class discussion leaders should present a close reading of the assigned texts and bring substantial questions for the class to discuss. Those not leading for the day will turn in critical annotations.

Workshop
Please read each other’s work carefully in preparation for workshop, writing comments on each person’s poem before class; these annotated poems will be returned to the writer as a resource for revision.

Format
For the writer: on each poem, put your name and number of the poem in the upper right-hand corner of the page. Please keep track / a log of your work.

Schedule
Email poems to the class by noon of the Monday before Workshop Day; I’ve written the Monday dates next to the poems. Please print out all poems and annotate them before coming to Wednesday class. This gives writers roughly a week to generate a new poem.

So, for our first Workshop on 2/22, you’ll email Poem 1 by noon on 2/20. For the Workshop on 3/1, you’ll email Poem 2 by noon on 2/27, and so on.
CLASS SCHEDULE

January

W 1/25  Course Introduction
* I will give you: Figurative Language Handout; Hass Essay Handout; 2/1 Readings Handout

February

W 2/1  Figurative Language
“In a Station of the Metro,” Ezra Pound
“Mirror,” Sylvia Plath
“High Windows,” Philip Larkin
“Of Mere Being,” Wallace Stevens
Hass Essay
* I will give you: 2/8 Readings Handout

W 2/8  Form, Structure, Tone
“The Colonel,” Carolyn Forché
“In Memory of W.B. Yeats,” W.H. Auden
“IX” from Midsummer, Derek Walcott
Longenbach Essay: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/articles/detail/70173
* I will give you: 2/15 Prosody Handout

W 2/15  Prosody & Workshop Prep

W 2/22  Image as Story
Backroads to Far Towns, Basho & Workshop (Poem 1) (20th)

March

W 3/1  Workshop
(Poem 2) (2/27th)

W 3/8  Memory as Story
Life Studies, Lowell & Workshop (Poem 3) (6th)
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<td>W 3/15</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>(Poem 4) (13th)</td>
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<td>W 3/22</td>
<td>** Spring Break **</td>
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<td>W 3/29</td>
<td>Individual Conferences</td>
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<td>April</td>
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<td>W 4/5</td>
<td>Archetype as Story</td>
<td><em>The Collected Works of Billy the Kid</em>, Ondaatje &amp; Workshop (Poem 5) (3rd)</td>
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<td>W 4/12</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>(Poem 6) (10th)</td>
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<td>W 4/19</td>
<td>Form as Story</td>
<td><em>Sonnets</em>, Mayer &amp; Workshop (Poem 7) (17th)</td>
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<td>W 4/26</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>(Poem 8) (24th)</td>
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<td>May</td>
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<td>W 5/3</td>
<td>Course Conclusion</td>
<td>Closure, or Ways of Ending (Revision of 2 Poems) (1st)</td>
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