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CRWR 511.01: Graduate Poetry Workshop

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CRWR 511: Graduate Poetry Workshop

Prof. Sandra Lim

Spring 2017

T, 3:30-6:20 pm, LA 210

Liberal Arts 231

OH: T/W, 1:30 to 3pm

LYRIC POETRY

That word “lyric” is often used to describe the essence of poetry. What do we mean by that persistent designation? Why is it useful? To better understand some of our assumptions behind that notion, as well as the range of expressive and formal possibilities that threads our adherences to and departures from the lyric, we will read poems by a few exemplary poets who stage subjectivity and inwardness in various ways. Along the way, we will also read some essays on the theory of the lyric. But this is primarily a writing workshop: each week, the readings will serve as a springboard for your own writing.

Reading List

(all available at Shakespeare & Co.)

- *Harmonium*, Wallace Stevens (1923)
- *Life Studies*, Robert Lowell (1959)
- *Ariel*, Sylvia Plath (1965)
- *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid*, Michael Ondaatje (1996)
- *Commons*, Myung Mi Kim (2002)

Handouts

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, or as stated otherwise.

Grading

Participation & Preparedness*	40%
Presentations & Annotations	20%
Poems & Revisions	40%

* includes peer-review and in-class writing exercises

Technology

This class is low-tech! All you need is pen, paper, and books. I dislike the use of computers and phones in the classroom for readings or for writing notes. Please check your texts/emails during the break.

Assignments & Expectations

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

Classes where we have assigned readings due will entail a student-led discussion of the text(s), roughly lasting 30-45 minutes. Three 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. Presenters need not write anything down formally to turn in.

Workshop

Please read each other's work carefully in preparation for workshop, writing comments on each person's poem before class; these critiqued 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 9:00 am of the Monday before Workshop Day; I've written the Monday dates next to the poems. Please print out the poems and annotate them before coming to Tuesday class. This schedule gives writers roughly a week to generate a new poem. You can always email your poems earlier, if you please.

So, for our first Workshop on 2/14, you'll email Poem 1 by 9:00 am on 2/13. For the Workshop on 2/21, you'll email Poem 2 by 9:00 am on 2/20, and so on.

CLASS SCHEDULE

January

T 1/24 **Course Introduction**
On Beginnings; to give: Some Lyrics Handout

T 1/31 **Some Lyrics**
Annotations & Imitations
to give: Stevens Selections Handout

February

T 2/7 **Lyric & Abstraction**
selected poems from *Harmonium*, Stevens

T 2/14 **Workshop**
Poem 1 (13th)

T 2/21 **The Lyric “I”**
Life Studies, Lowell & **Workshop**
Poem 2 (20th)

T 2/28 **Workshop**
Poem 3 (27th)

March

T 3/7 **Lyric & Sexual Difference**
Ariel, Plath & **Workshop**
Poem 4 (6th)

T 3/14 **Workshop**
Poem 5 (13th)

T 3/21 ** Spring Break **

T 3/28 **Lyric & Genre**
The Collected Works of Billy the Kid, Ondaatje & **Workshop**
Poem 6 (27th)

April

T 4/4 **Workshop**

Poem 7 (3rd)

T 4/11 **Lyric Departures**
Commons, Kim & Workshop
Poem 8 (10th)

T 4/18 **Workshop**
Poem 9 (17th)

T 4/25 **Workshop**
Poem 10 (24th)

May

T 5/2 **Course Conclusion**
On Endings; Poem Revisions (TBA)

5/5 & 5/6 MFA Thesis Readings