

ENGLISH 5332
GRADUATE CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP:
POETRY

Fall 2017
6:00 – 8:50 PM, Wednesday
Evans 258

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Office Hours: MW 11 AM – 12:30 PM
& by appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW

In this course, you will share your own work in a workshop setting. This workshop will be multi-genre. You may bring in poems, short stories, novel excerpts, and essays. We will discuss the specifics in class. You will also analyze and discuss various techniques employed in assigned readings.

That's the description of the course, and I realize that sounds pretty straightforward. However, the workshop format can be a strange beast. We'll talk more about that.

Over the course of the semester, I want you to start asking yourself some harder questions about your work. You know what some of those questions are already, and you'll discover more in this class. Why do you write what you write? Why do you read what you read? How do you cultivate your private writing life? How do you cultivate a writing community?

Be engaged. Come prepared for class. Pardon these two clichés, but: be on your toes, and be ready to think on your feet. Be ready to listen. Be ready to read. Be ready to write. This workshop requires all of that and much more. We're a small group; your utter concentration and engagement are imperative.

TEXTS/COURSE MATERIALS

The Descent of Alette, Alice Notley

Book Of My Nights, Li-Young Lee

Collected Stories, Grace Paley

Quiver of Arrows, Carl Phillips

Life On Mars, Tracy K. Smith

Madness, Rack, and Honey, Mary Ruefle

Jesus' Son, Denis Johnson

The Vintage Book of Contemporary American Poetry, edited by J.D. McClatchy

Handouts to be distributed in class

Work by: Kirstin Valdez Quade, ZZ Packer, Junot Díaz, Barbara Guest, Marlon James, Janet Fitch, Robert Hayden, John Cheever, Margaret Atwood, and more

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and Participation (15%)

Attendance. Attendance is not only required, but it's imperative for doing well in this course. Missing one class is acceptable; missing two classes puts your passing grade in jeopardy. If you have three absences or more, you will not pass this course. Since I do not distinguish between "excused" or "unexcused" absences, there is no need to show me doctor's notes. Regular attendance also means coming to class on time and not leaving early. Please note that three late arrivals or early departures equal one absence.

If an ongoing emergency or issue is affecting your attendance or work, you should explain the situation to me and submit documentation to the Dean of Students office: <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/dean-of-students/documents/AbsenceRequest.pdf>.

If you miss a class, you are responsible for finding out what you missed from a classmate.

Important: When you come to class, be sure to turn off your phone.

Participation. I cannot stress to you enough how important it is that you attend class. Please be alert and ready to engage. I will expect you to act with respect and tolerance towards your peers, and to offer disagreement and criticism constructively.

LAPTOP POLICY: Your laptops should be off your desk during all other discussions, workshops, and activities.

Submissions for Workshop (35%)

You will submit three pieces for workshop. If you are submitting poems, submit 5-10 poems per submission. If you are submitting prose, submit approximately 10-27 pages per submission. (If you are submitting flash fiction, submit several pieces at a time to meet the page count.) Your material needs to be photocopied. You will turn your work in the week before your workshop. Please plan for this well in advance. Remember that laptops, printers, and photocopiers are not always reliable. Give yourself plenty of time to prepare your printed copies for workshop.

You will revise your material and submit it to me for a final grade at the end of the semester.

Assigned Readings and Reading Responses (35%)

For your assigned readings, I'm going to ask that you write a weekly reading response. You will turn these in on Blackboard. We'll talk more about my expectations for these reading responses in class.

In small groups, you'll also review (and briefly present on) one literary journal of your choice. We'll discuss this more in class.

Workshop Critiques (15%)

You will write up your peer review for each workshopped story. **You must post your review on Blackboard after class.** These peer reviews will be evaluated based on the effort you put in. We will discuss my expectations for these in class.

Extra Credit: Public Readings

You may attend public readings for extra credit. You will write a two-page response for each reading you attend. The reading may be in poetry, fiction, or nonfiction. We'll talk more in class about all the opportunities you'll have to attend readings this semester.

ADDITIONALLY

Late Work

Any late work will be penalized one full grade for each class period it is late. **Note: Because of the demands of distribution, submissions for workshop will not be accepted late.** Failure to submit the piece in class on the date it is due will result in a zero for the piece. Extensions will be granted only in advance and only in cases of emergency.

Formatting

Everything you turn in should be typed, double-spaced, and in a 12-point font. Please choose a legible font. In the upper right-hand corner of the first page, include your name. If you're submitting prose, include the word count. Don't forget to number and staple your pages.

Religious Holidays

Students are allowed to miss class and other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Students remain responsible for all work. See Student Syllabus Guidelines (<http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus>).

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that range from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, or collaboration, consult the course instructor. See Student Syllabus Guidelines (<http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus>).

Disabilities Policy

Also note: It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students

with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. See Student Syllabus Guidelines (<http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus>)

Visitors in the Classroom

Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.

The Writing Center

Sam Houston Writing Center, located in Farrington 111, is open from 8 a.m. until 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. on Friday, and 2 - 7 p.m. on Sunday. Writing tutors will work with you one-on-one at any stage of the writing process (brainstorming, generating a draft, organizing a draft, or revising a draft) for any written assignment. The Writing Center operates on an appointment system, so please call (936) 294-3680 to schedule a session with a writing tutor. In addition to offering one-to-one writing conferences, the Center also offers a computer lab, handouts, style manuals, dictionaries, thesauruses, and handbooks for client use.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

(subject to change)

Week 1

8/23: Introductions. In-Class Writing.

Week 2 – NO CLASS

8/30

Week 3

9/6: Liz. Reading: *Book Of My Nights*.

READING TBA IN WEEKS AHEAD

Workshop Schedule:

Week 4

9/13: Jeremy, Haven, Chenelle.

Week 5

9/20: Roonama, Amanda.

Week 6

9/27: Jennifer, Desiree.

Week 7

10/4: Liz, Jeremy, Haven.

Week 8

10/11: Chenelle, Amanda, Roonama.

Week 9

10/18: Jennifer, Desiree.

Week 10

10/25: Jeremy, Haven.

Week 11

11/1: Chenelle, Liz.

Week 12

11/8: Amanda, Roonama.

Week 13

11/15: Jennifer, Desiree.

Week 14

11/22: NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Week 15

11/29: LAST CLASS

Final Class Readings TBA (to take place during finals week)

December 4: FINAL REVISIONS DUE