

ADVANCED POETRY WORKSHOP: Transformation

WRIT 452-01

Wednesday 7-10 PM 004 Writers Institute

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Office Hours: MWF 1:45-2:45

This advanced course investigates the techniques and processes of transforming personal, cultural, and imaginative materials into poetry. We will focus both on the craft of individual poems and on generating longer projects. We will seek poetic processes that sustain creativity beyond the classroom. Reading work of published poets will guide our discussions and generate processes to be explored in your own writing.

This class seeks to create a community of poets who are working deeply on their own projects and who are in close conversation with peer poets, encouraging and challenging one-another along the way.

Required Books:

Lorine Niedecker: *Lake Superior*

Solmaz Sharif: *Look: Poems*

Christian Hawkey: *Ventrakl*

Lucie Brock-Broido: *The Master Letters: Poems*

Shara McCallum: *Madwoman*

Matvei Yankelevich: *Some Worlds for Dr. Vogt*

+ PDFs posted on Blackboard and Handouts

Assignments:

Manuscript Portfolio: Due at the end of the semester a revised manuscript of poetry with a *minimum* of 35 pages of poetry. This manuscript should work as a coherent, whole book, rather than as a collection of random poems written throughout the semester. Manuscripts should show polished attention to each poem as well as the ways in which the poems are in conversation via content, imagery, voice, form, etc.

Reading and Process Blog: Our class blog will be a space to respond to the published work that we read and to translate process techniques into your own project. Each week you will post the following in one continuous post:

- + A response to the reading with a paragraph about the poet's work addressing two things: 1) what does the poet transform into poetry (personal story, place, history, imagination, dream, etc) and 2) what stands out to you as a technique, material, or content that you are interested in investigating in your own work
- + You'll then write a few sentences about how you plan to transform this element into your own writing process and project. Does this require writing every day this week? Does it require keeping a dream journal? Radical revision of material into something visual?
- + Last, you will post a poem or an excerpt that has resulted in trying out the process. This poem/excerpt is a work in progress and need not be anything near "good" or "perfect" or "finished"

Blogs must be posted by 5 PM each Tuesday night. Late posts will not receive credit.

Each week you should also read and comment on two peer blogs from the previous week. The two poets you respond to should be up for workshop the week you are making your response (if there is no workshop that week, you can select whichever blog posts you want.) For example, if Karla is up for workshop on Wednesday I should respond to the post Karla made last week. *These comments are also due by 5 PM each Tuesday night.* Comments can range from things you enjoy to ideas you are interested in to techniques you think the poet should continue to work with. Remember that these ideas and drafts are all rough and in progress.

Reading Presentation: During the course of the semester you will make one presentation of the poet and poems we are reading for the week. This presentation will include a discussion of the poetry as well as an extended version of your process blog post for the week. You will end the presentation by leading us in a writing assignment.

Workshop: Your work will be up for workshop several times during the course of the semester. You will also be responsible for writing critique letters and for leading discussion of peer work. Along with large group workshop we will meet in small groups to discuss projects and receive micro-feedback.

Participation: Timely attendance is a must. You can miss one class, but upon the second class your final grade will be reduced a step (from B+ to B, for example). Along with attending, you must do your reading, participate in peer workshops, and provide feedback. **An essential point: Please bring hard copies of all materials to class. We won't be reading these texts off of our laptops. Failure to bring materials will result in an absence for that day.** Laptops should only come out during writing exercises. Leave your phones at home or completely off (no vibrating please) and far from your reach.

Events: I hope you will come to all WI events this semester, but one event in particular is required: the Natalie Diaz reading and Q and A on Tuesday, February 7th. You should also plan to attend the RiverCraft Q and A and launch on April 17th (The guest editor is poet and publisher Matvei Yankelevich). You have the dates now, so please arrange with employers, athletics, etc, to attend these events.

Workshop Distribution and Peer Feedback: You must email workshop submissions to the class by midnight on the Friday before your workshop. No exceptions. If you miss your workshop by neglecting to email your work (or show up), your final participation grade will be reduced at least 10 grade points.

Peer critique letters are due, emailed to me before the workshop. Bring a hard copy of the critique letters *and of the workshop material* to class. Critique letters will respond to specific questions and prompts generated by the poets whose work you are addressing.

Grade Break Down:

Final Portfolio: (grade includes quality of first and final drafts; growth through revision; coherence of the whole; craft of individual poems/stanzas/lines; essay; narrative of progress)	60%
Reading and Process Blog	25%
Participation: (includes attendance, homework, presentation, workshop preparation, peer feedback,	15%

small group workshops, etc)

Tentative Course Outline: *For all assignments, please bring hard copies of the materials!!*

- WEEK 1: 1/25: Syllabus, Rapid Workshop, and Writing: Presentations and first Workshops explained; by 3/3 15-20 pages;
WEEK 2: 2/1: Handout of poems: Plath, etc: Transforming the Daily: Rapid Workshop, and Writing 1/31 First Blog due (Choose one of the poets to work with)
Presentation (Choose one of the poets to work with)
WEEK 3: TUESDAY 2/7: PDF: Natalie Diaz: attend Q and A and reading; this replaces class on 2/8
2/7 Second Blog due

Begin planning for **Workshop Round 1:** Due via email Friday before your workshop: 3-5 of new poems + 1 poem you admire + a list of 5-10 things you are responding to/ translating in your work. All of this needs to be emailed to us in 1 continuous word document.

Due dates:

Friday 2/10: Work from Sam, Anthony, Amy, Courtney

Friday 2/17: Work from Nikki, Emily, Morgan, Sage

Friday 2/24: Work from Val, Alyssa, Kay

- WEEK 3: 2/15: Place: LAKE SUPERIOR
2/14 Third Blog due
Presentation and begin Workshops: Sam, Anthony, Amy, Courtney
WEEK 4: 2/22: Place: PDF Szymaszek's "Journal of Ugly Sites" and Darwish
2/21 Fourth Blog due
Presentation and Workshops: Nikki, Emily, Morgan, Sage
WEEK 5: 3/1: PDF: Dickinson/Master Letters
2/28 Fifth Blog due
Presentation and Workshops (last of round 1): Val, Alyssa, Kay
set up round 2 for after break
Friday 3/3: Email to your small group 15-20 pages of your manuscript
WEEK 6: 3/8: THE MASTER LETTERS
3/7 Sixth Blog due
Presentation
Small Group Process Workshops: 15-20 pages
WEEK 7: 3/15: SPRING BREAK
Work on your manuscript

WEEK 8: 3/22: PDF: Trakl and VENTRAKL
3/21 Seventh Blog due
Presentation and Workshops Round 2
WEEK 9: 3/29: PDF: Akhmatova's "Poem without a Hero" and Rukeyser's "Book of the Dead"
3/28 Eighth Blog due
Presentation and Workshops
WEEK 10: 4/5: LOOK
4/4 Ninth Blog due
2 Presentations
Workshops
WEEK 11: 4/12: MADWOMAN (meet at 7 for a reading by Shara McCallum)
4/11 Tenth Blog due
Workshops

WEEK 12: 4/19: SOME WORLDS FOR DR. VOGT

4/18 Eleventh Blog due

Presentation

Workshops

WEEK 13: 4/26: Workshops Only

WEEK 14: 5/3: Sharing works

Final Manuscript Portfolio due outside my office by 5 PM May 11th

Course Goals:

Writing Intensive Learning Goals:

1. Employing rhetorical and organizational strategies appropriate for the assignments and discipline. (For example, using different poetic forms (free verse, prose poem, sonnet) or various points of view (first person, second person, third person speakers).
2. Critically selecting and integrating sources and/or ideas. (For example, modeling imagery in one of your poems off of what you have learned from a published poet; revising a poem to better-convey the mood and emotion you are working towards).
3. Learn from and respond to criticism of rhetorical and organizational strategies in their own writing. (Peer workshop, one-on-one conferences, revision).

Team Intensive Learning Goals:

1. Demonstrate processes needed for a positive working relationship with team members. (Workshop)
2. Demonstrate and evaluate roles and functions of leadership and team membership. (Critique letters and revision)
3. Work together in a team to analyze and solve problems. (Workshop)

Policies:

Students with disabilities should contact me as soon as possible so that I can help to make the classroom more accessible to you.

If you are contending with a serious issue this semester (illness-yours or family's, adjustment issues, etc) please come see me to chat so that I can help you strategize so that the issue does not lower your grade or hinder your development as a writer.

** Because organization and timeliness are two practical skills you can work on during this poetry class I will not accept late assignments without advanced discussion. Faulty printers, difficulty budgeting time, or homework in other classes are not excused reasons for late work or absences. Late assignment grades will show a deduction if we have not discussed an alternative deadline. Approved late work must be handed in via hard copy. **

Essential to the life of the creative writing classroom is a culture of trust and confidentiality. Students are not to share the work of peer writers outside of class without their consent—either in paper or digital versions or in discussion of what happens in workshop.

In addition, I have a very strict no cell phone policy: you should never have your phone out or in your lap and we should never hear it vibrate, ring, chime, or chirp. Computers should only be brought to class on assigned days or in the case of special needs documented by the office of student services. Using cell phones or computers to text, photograph, email, instant message, or look unrelated materials up online during class will count as an absence and will potentially result in a failing grade in the course.

The Department of English and Creative Writing reports every violation of academic honesty (plagiarism or cheating on an exam) to the Dean of Student Life. No student who has violated academic honesty is eligible for academic honors in the Department. In addition, students in my courses who plagiarize or cheat in any way will suffer consequences, up to and including failing the class. As artwork can often be in response to other artwork this line can feel particularly blurry for poets. Bring the topic up at any time and we can talk about creative ways to cite your sources.

Communications: Please feel free to stop by office hours and/or to make an appointment to meet with me outside of class. Email is the best way to be in touch.