

Sarah Vap
511: Graduate Poetry Workshop
3:30-6:20 pm; LA 210
Office hours Weds 11-2 in LA 231
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A Self seized by history

Terrance Hayes wrote of Shane McCrae's poetry: "His disconcerting language tracks the estrangement and strangeness, the severance and severity of a Self seized by history."

In this workshop we are going to read several collections of poetry that consider the Self seized by history—both a history that happened long ago, and the history that is being made during their lifetimes. Both a very personal history, and communal histories. In this course we are going to ask what poetry's role, function, capacity, possibilities, powers, limitations, and responsibilities are—if any—to the well-being of the people (including oneself), places, creatures, and ideas of the world.

From sound, to word, to line, to poem, to book—from details as small as a single comma to largest-scale concepts like cover art and lineage—from form to concept—we will consider all the elements that make the collections we are reading and writing.

Regarding the readings: Though the workshop will make up the bulk of the class meeting, we will read about a collection per week. The course texts represent many contemporary aesthetics, schools, ways, lineages, traditions, and beliefs about how poetry can work—and they offer wildly different models for engaging with language and with book-making. Whether or not the readings are discussed in the style of a literature seminar (and we will do some of that)—the course texts will cumulatively form the basis of our references and discussions not just for the week they are due, but across the semester. You may also be asked to lead, probably with a partner, the discussion on one of our readings.

I look forward to your poems, and to the conversations we are about to have.

Assigned Books:

(pre-ordered for our class at Shakespeare & Co. 103 S 3rd St W, Missoula, MT)

An Essay in Mourning Time, Kristin Prevallet
Patter, Douglas Kearney
Rose, Li-Young Lee
Look, Solmaz Sharif
Coal Mountain Elementary, Mark Nowak
Book of Frank, C.A. Conrad
ANTÍGONA GONZÁLEZ, Sara Uribe (trans. John Pluecker)
Whereas, Layli Long Soldier
Think of Lampedusa, Josue Guebo (trans. Todd Fredson)
100 Notes on Violence, Julie Carr
If Not, Winter, Sappho (trans. Anne Carson)

Poetics/Poetry:

The Poetics of Space, Gaston Bachelard
Zong!, M. NourbeSe Philip
Commons, Myung Mi Kim

Optional:

Book of Job (when we read Book of Frank) (available online)
Sophocles' *Antigone* (when we read ANTÍGONA GONZÁLEZ)
Homer's *Odyssey* (when we read *Think of Lampedusa* or *Zong!*)

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week One, September 5:

Introductions

Week Two, September 12:

Read: *An Essay in Mourning Time*, Kristin Prevallet

Read: Start reading *The Poetics of Space*, Gaston Bachelard—can read at the pace you wish across semester.

Workshop:

Week Three, September 19:

Read: *Patter*, Douglas Kearney

Workshop:

Week Four, September 26:

Read: *Rose*, Li-Young Lee

Workshop:

Week Five, October 3:

Read: *Look*, Solmaz Sharif

Workshop:

Week Six, October 10:

Read: *Coal Mountain Elementary*, Mark Nowak

Workshop:

Week Seven, October 17:

Read: *Book of Frank*, C.A. Conrad; Optional: *Book of Job* (OT, King James Bible version or other if you prefer)

Workshop:

Week Eight, October 24:

Read: *ANTÍGONA GONZÁLEZ*, Sara Uribe (trans. John Pluecker); Optional: Sophocles' *Antigone*

Workshop:

Week Nine, October 31:

Read: *Think of Lampedusa*, Josue Guebo (trans. Todd Fredson). Optional: Homer's *Odyssey* (any translation you have or prefer—Lattimore or Fagles translations are good standards.)

Workshop:

Week Ten, November 7:

Read: *Zong!*, M. NourbeSe Philip (consider reading Author's Note first)

Workshop:

Week Eleven, November 14:

Read: *100 Notes on Violence*, Julie Carr

Workshop:

Week Twelve, November 21:

Read: *Commons*, Myung Mi Kim

Workshop:

Week Thirteen, November 28:

Read: *If Not, Winter*, Sappho (trans. Anne Carson)

Workshop:

Week Fourteen, December 5:

Group reading and celebration with Prageeta Sharma's 511 class, location tbd.

Portfolios due

Grading policy:

35% class participation (*no more than one absence)
20% weekly poetry/midterm assignment/responses/ exercises
20% presentations, leading class discussion
25% final portfolio of poetry

Students with Disabilities:

Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course. Please speak with me after class or in my office hours. Please be prepared to provide a letter from your DSS Coordinator, so I can do my best to support you.

***Policy on absences and lateness:**

The standard policy is that no more than two absences in a fourteen week term may result in a grade of “no-credit.” Please arrive on time for class and stay until dismissal. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. If there is an emergency please speak to me about it as soon as you can.

Scholastic Dishonesty: Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty—in as much as they keep the individual student as well as the collective community from learning—will result in an automatic F and may entail a variety of other sanctions up to and including expulsion from the University. FOR A DEFINITION OF PLAGIARISM SEE <http://www.lib.umt.edu/services/plagiarism/index.htm>. IF YOU ARE UNSURE ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES, PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO CONSULT THE STUDENT CONDUCT CODE ON THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA'S WEB SITE.