CRWR 411.01: Advanced Poetry Workshop
Fall 2015, T 3:10-6:00pm, LA 233

Instructor: Heather Cahoon  Office: NAS 203B
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Course Description

“An advanced writing workshop involving critical analysis of students’ work-in-progress, as well as reading and discussion of poems by established poets. Discussions will focus on structure and stylistic refinement, with emphasis on revision. Different techniques, schools and poetic voices will be encouraged. Frequent individual conferences.”

Course Objectives

For students to:
1. Demonstrate a broad understanding of poetic traditions;
2. Write and submit a substantial group of poems for peer review;
3. Revise poems from previous semesters;
4. Become familiar with various publishing venues and the procedures for submitting poems;
5. Practice elements of craft and style by writing imitation poems;
6. Exhibit a high level of sophistication in the critique of peer work;
7. Assemble a portfolio of poems, including revisions, that displays advanced skill level as assessed by the instructor.

Required Texts


Grading Information

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Course Requirements

Workshop Poems:
Students will be split into 2 workshop groups with alternating poem submission days. Poems submitted for workshop should be provisional works-in-progress and will be critiqued by the rest of the class as well as the instructor. On the days your poems are due, you are required to bring enough copies for everyone in the class. All poems must be typed. If your poem is not submitted on time, it will not be workshopped during that cycle and your grade will be reduced accordingly. Many of the workshop poems you submit will be ones of your own choosing, however, others will be in response to prompts related to the work of American Book Award winner, dg nanouk okpik.
A Note About the Workshop:
The philosophy behind the workshop is that writers will learn to be better writers by working with other writers who are engaged in a similar effort and who share similar goals. Together, this community of writers reads, critiques, praises and questions each other’s work. The shared goal is to understand what makes a poem work and why, and if it doesn’t work, to help the writer understand what might be revised so that it will.

Critiques:
Each student is expected to read each of their classmates’ poems at least twice and to write comments on them by the day they’re due for in-class workshopping. (Do not write your initial comments in class while we are workshopping the poem. However, it is appropriate to write additional comments during class.) Please make line-specific remarks in the margins and include at the bottom of the page a paragraph describing your response to the whole poem followed by your signature. IMPORTANT: You are REQUIRED to keep all copies of your critiqued poems and to include them with your final portfolio revisions of those poems. Besides showing process and providing you with insights into how to revise your poems, it will also help me further assess each student’s grade for their critiques of classmates’ poems.

Writing Assignments:
Each student will be required to periodically submit a poem in relation to our study of dg nanouk okpik’s collection of poems entitled, Corpse Whale. We will use okpik’s poems to learn more about craft and the use of poetic devices such as form, rhyme, rhythm and meter, alliteration, simile, metaphor, repetition, imagery and symbolism. We will often begin our class by responding to writing prompts related to her poetry and/or engaging in a discussion of her work. The poems you write as a result of this study will be due one week from the date they are assigned. They will be evaluated according to your adherence to the instructions given for each assignment.

Your midterm writing assignment is to draft a report to me that details the specific concerns or questions you have about your writing. Reports should be no more than 1-page double-spaced. These reports are due 1 week before the midterm individual conferences with me.

Portfolio:
A portfolio of 8-10 poems is due at the last class period, as is a 1-2 page introductory essay about the collection. Your portfolio must include the 6 poems that were workshopped during this semester and must be either finished or represent your best revisions to date. The remaining poems should represent your best work outside this class. Your portfolio will be evaluated on the ways in which your growth as a writer is evident, as well as your use of the techniques we discussed throughout the semester.

Course Policies
Attendance & participation:
Two unexcused absences are allowed. You do not need to notify me if your absence is unexcused, but you should find out what you missed from a classmate and see me if you have any questions. Your attendance and participation grade will drop 3 points for every unexcused absence thereafter. Excessive tardiness or leaving early will be considered as an absence. If you come to class but have not done the assigned work you will not receive credit for attending that day. Please use common sense and be respectful. Cell phones and other electronic devices cannot be used in class. Please note: This is called attendance AND participation. Your contribution to the class is important and you must be prepared for and actively participate in every class.
Late Assignments:
Late work is not accepted without a university or medical excuse. Please note that I accept work via email only under extenuating circumstances.

Code of Academic Integrity:
Work submitted for written assignments must be your own work. Submitting another person’s work (either borrowed language or ideas) as your own may be grounds for expulsion. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code, which is available at http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php.

Incompletes:
Incompletes will only be granted in the case of an extreme circumstance or university or medical excuse. Students must have completed at least 80% of the course to receive an incomplete and must get permission from me before finals week.

Students with Disabilities:
This course is accessible to and usable by otherwise qualified students with disabilities. To request reasonable program modifications, please consult me and bring your letter from your DSS Coordinator. Disability Services for Students will assist us in the modification process. For more information, visit the Disability Services website at http://www.umt.edu/disability.

This syllabus is subject to change.

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Course Outline

Week 1: 9/1 Review Syllabus; Introductions; Break into workshop Groups 1 and 2; Review Workshop Protocol; Group 1 submits their first poem by 5pm on Thursday, 9/3.

Poets: Please put 15 copies of your poem (paper clipped together) into the CRWR 411.01 folder in my English department mailbox. Readers: Please pick up your copy of these poems by the end of the day on Friday, 9/4 and read and critique them by our next class.

Week 2: 9/8 Group 2 submits poem #1; Workshop G1’s poems
Week 3: 9/15 Group 1 submits poem #2; Workshop G2’s poems
Week 4: 9/22 Group 2 submits poem #2; Workshop G1’s poems
Week 5: 9/29 Group 1 submits poem #3; Workshop G2’s poems
Week 6: 10/6 Group 2 submits poem #3; Workshop G1’s poems
Week 7: 10/13 Group 1 submits poem #4; Workshop G2’s poems; Midterm writing assign. DUE
Week 8: 10/20 Midterm individual conferences with the instructor
Week 9: 10/27  Group 2 submits poem #4; Workshop G1’s poems

Week 10: 11/3  Group 1 submits poem #5; Workshop G2’s poems

Week 11: 11/10 Group 2 submits poem #5; Workshop G1’s poems

Week 12: 11/17 Group 1 submits poem #6; Workshop G2’s poems

Week 13: 11/24 Group 2 submits poem #6; Workshop G1’s poems

Week 14: 12/1  Workshop G2’s poems

Week 15: 9/8  **End of semester individual conferences with the instructor**

Finals Week:  *Meet Wednesday, December 17, 2015, 3:20-5:30pm*
In-class poetry reading; **Portfolio DUE**