

Intro to Creative Writing

Sundays, 12:45-3:45 pm

Instructor: Cherry Lou Sy, cherrylou.sy@gmail.com or csy@brooklyn.cuny.edu

Pronouns: she/hers

Office Hours: flexible (through Zoom)

Submit essay assignments to: cherry@share.brooklyn.edu

Creative Writing OMAKASE!!!!

Class Description: This course will focus on your process as a writer and less so on finished product. Consider this class a literary tasting, or what I call a literary Omakase, a Japanese term that means “I’ll leave it up to you” usually used in some sushi establishments where a diner leaves it up to the sushi chef to whip up something delectable based on ingredients at hand. In that sense, we will examine multiple genres such as fiction, non-fiction creative writing, playwriting, and poetry among others so that you can explore, be exposed to, and experiment in form. You are expected to read material for this course including books, short stories, poems, plays, etc. as well as your classmates’ work. In addition, you are also expected to critique your classmates’ work and help each other in improving the way how you consume what you read as well as discover your process of writing.

Materials: Readings will be available on Blackboard.

Overview and Goals:

First of all, I would like to acknowledge that we are still living through a pandemic, a historical moment in time, so the first thing to remember is let’s be patient with each other. We are all going through various levels of stress, and many of us have unique situations that sometimes does not allow for us to be fully present.

We are all human. I would like to stress that we should at least **try** to be present whenever we can. Whatever we are going through, we can work this out, but we need open and honest communication.

This semester, I want us to focus on what it means to listen and what it means to be in dialogue with our historical past especially now in the American experience of COVID-19 2020 including but not limited to ideas of citizenship, identity, and belonging inclusive of race, culture, ethnic background, etc. and how we’re using this to write truths into our stories, fact and fiction.

With that being said, this will be a hybrid synchronous/asynchronous online course. You will generally read through the material and watch short clips, and we will meet once a week on Sundays from 12:45 pm-3:45 pm as a class to discuss questions you have on the reading/viewing covered the previous week and to engage in dialogue with each other as we would if we met, physically, in real life. If you have specific questions, please e-mail them to me over the weekend to discuss any questions you have about the texts you’ve read. Feel free to e-mail me and schedule a virtual session to cover specific questions as well. If you have Discord, we can chat through that. My username is @cherrypraxis.

Attendance & Punctuality: We only meet once a week; try not to miss class if you can help it. Please don’t be late. You are allowed 2 absences. Any more than that and your grade will be affected.

Participation: Participation includes completing and commenting on the assigned reading, contributing to class discussion through listening and responding to classmates or the instructor, bringing required materials to class, and engaging in peer review and group activities.

Class Structure:

Check in + Writing prompt –	15-20 min
Craft –	1 hour
Workshop –	1 hour + (2-3 works per class session)

-For Workshop sessions, there will be 2-3 students who will submit their work to everyone by e-mail on the Friday before the Sunday that they are being workshopped. For example, since the first workshop is on September 27, the two students being workshopped should e-mail everyone their work by Friday, September 25. **Each piece being workshopped should be between 5-20 pages.**

WE WILL BE MEETING THROUGH ZOOM.

I will send the Zoom link before classes start.

Grading Breakdown:

Weekly reading response on Blackboard	30%
Workshop responses	30%
Portfolio	40%

Reading Responses in the Discussion Board of Blackboard

Every week, there will be assigned reading and you are required to write about your thoughts and responses to the reading in the Discussion Board.

Workshop Responses

Being a writer means being able to handle criticism and to critique other writers' work.

Each student will submit a 1 page response to the writer being workshopped. These responses should be e-mailed both to me and the student being workshopped.

A response usually consists of the following:

1. What is happening in the story objectively?
2. What stood out to me?
3. What do I have questions about?

Portfolio

By the end of the semester, on the last day of class, you should have a collection of work, about 10-15 pages, of your own choosing. This is where the "omakase" part comes through. I'm leaving it up to you to select what you think I, the reader, should taste of your writing.

In addition, you need to write a 2-3 page reflection on what you've learned and how your writing craft has improved throughout the semester.

Plagiarism: Brooklyn College's statement on plagiarism is as follows:

The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and plagiarism. Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both. The complete text of the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy and the Brooklyn College procedure for implementing that policy can be found at this site:

<http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies>.

Non-attendance Because of Religious Beliefs: Brooklyn College's statement on non-attendance because of religious belief is located on page 66 of the Brooklyn College Undergraduate Bulletin:

http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/web/off_registrar/2017-2018_Undergraduate_Bulletin.pdf

Student Bereavement Policy: Brooklyn College's statement on non-attendance because of religious belief is located here: <http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/web/about/initiatives/policies/bereavement.php>

SCHEDULE

Module 1 Writing + Creativity

August 30

-Introductions; going over the syllabus; writing exercises

Discuss writing as power and expression

[“A Small Needful Fact”](#) by Ross Gay

[“A Cento for the Night I said, I Love You”](#) by Nicole Sealey

September 6

NO CLASS

September 13

-Elizabeth Gilbert TED Talk: [“Your Elusive Creative Genius”](#)

-Read pages 3-48 of Chuck Palahniuk’s [Essays on Craft](#)

-“The Wig” by Nathan Englander

-workshop sign-up

-Writing Exercises/Generative work

September 20

NO CLASS

September 27

-Read pages 49-107 of Chuck Palahniuk’s [Essays on Craft](#)

-Read [“This Is A Story We All Know”](#) by Kimarlee Nguyen

-Writing Exercise

-Workshop

Module 2 Intro to Poetry

October 4

- [“Poetry is not a Luxury”](#) by Audre Lorde

[“Power”](#) by Audre Lorde

[“A Poem About My Rights”](#) by June Jordan, and the [audio version](#)

-Writing Exercise

-Workshop

October 11

-[Carolyn Forché lecture on Witness Poetry](#)

-[Beast Meridian](#) by Vanessa Villareal

Danez Smith reads from [“summer, somewhere”](#)

-Writing Exercise

-Workshop

Module 3 Intro to Fiction

October 18

- Read pages 108-129 of Chuck Palahniuk's [*Essays on Craft*](#)
- Read "[Cat Person](#)" by Kristen Roupenian
- Writing Exercise
- Workshop

October 25

- Read pages 130-140 of Chuck Palahniuk's [*Essays on Craft*](#)
- Read "[Even If All Fall Away, I Will Not](#)" by Brandon Taylor
- Writing Exercise
- Workshop

November 1

- Read pages 141-160 of Chuck Palahniuk's [*Essays on Craft*](#)
- selections from [*This Bridge Called My Back: Writings from Radical Women of Color*](#)
Edited by Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua
- Writing Exercise
- Workshop

Module 4 Intro to Playwriting

November 8

- Young Jean Lee's [Playwriting Exercise](#) (3 hours)
- selections from [*This Bridge Called My Back: Writings from Radical Women of Color*](#)
Edited by Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua
- Writing Exercise
- Workshop

November 15

- read [Angels in America, Part I](#) by Tony Kushner
- Writing Exercise
- Workshop

November 22

- Watch [Lauren Gunderson workshop on playwriting structure](#)
- selections from [*This Bridge Called My Back: Writings from Radical Women of Color*](#)
Edited by Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua
- Writing Exercise
- Workshop

November 29

- NO CLASS (College Closed for Thanksgiving)

Module 5: Intro to Creative Non-Fiction

December 6

- Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi (graphic novel + film)
- Writing Exercise
- Workshop

December 13 LAST DAY OF CLASS!

- selections from *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings from Radical Women of Color*
Edited by Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua
- Writing Exercise
- Workshop

Note:

Syllabus subject to change