'And so it was I entered the broken world
To trace the visionary company of love…'  

This quote comes from Hart Crane's 'The Broken Tower', a poem about the overwhelming power of the creative force. Crane implied many kinds of tracing: copying the masters, yes, but also (self) discovering, limning, and edging the ineffable that the collective conscious of literature has sought to delineate since songs were sung. The aim of this course is to study literary history's visionary company in order to understand the reciprocity between literature and living and, through subjective understanding, guide the creative force to write work that startles the self and others into a new life.

Craft

The purpose of studying craft is for you to begin to understand why your work is good. You will be assigned poetry, fiction, and an essay on craft or writing each week. We will be performing close readings of these texts in class to not only collect the tools of this art but to learn how to put them to use. Craft is a place to let your subjective eye and ear shine and so it is expected that each piece has been read and that you can express your appreciation (or hatred) of it. I will not be assigning books, so please have each text printed for class. No computers or tablets in class. The assignments can be found on the course website.

You are required to write and submit a one-page reading response for each craft class. This is an opportunity for you to show me the ways in which you are engaging with the work and the class in general. The response can be about one or several of the reading assignments. This can and should be used as your notes for class discussion.

Workshop

The purpose of workshop is two-fold. First and foremost it is an opportunity to showcase your writing. Each student must submit at least one piece of prose during the semester. It must be a minimum of two pages long and should not exceed 10. Other than that, anything is acceptable. Get weird. This is also an opportunity to put what we’ve learned in craft into practice. Learning how to read and discuss literature with a critical eye will be integral in your development as a reader, writer, and member of our small community. You will be asked to write a one page letter to each one of your peers being workshopped.
SCHEDULE

Week One
- Introduction and review
- 'Craftsmanship' by Virginia Woolf
- Preface to The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry by Walter Pater

Week Two (Craft?):
- 'One Art' by Elizabeth Bishop
- 'The Snow Man' by Wallace Stevens
- 'Bullet in the Brain' by Tobias Wolff
- 'On Style' by Susan Sontag

Week Three (Workshop)

Week Four (Doubt)
- 'Not Knowing' by Donald Barthelme
- 'The Daughters of the Moon' by Italo Calvino
- 'The Broken Tower' by Hart Crane
- 'Autobiography of Red' Anne Carson (excerpt)

Week Five (Workshop)

Week Six (Shock and Denial)
- 'A Good Man is Hard to Find' by Flannery O'Connor
- 'A Bronzeville Mother Loiters in Mississippi. Meanwhile, a Mississippi Mother Burns Bacon' by Gwendolyn Brooks
- Selected Poems of Emily Dickinson
- The Rejection of Closure by Lyn Hejinian (excerpt)

Week Seven (Workshop)

Week Eight (The Myth of Solitude, The Writer in the World)
- 'Personism' by Frank O'Hara
- Selected Poems of Frank O'Hara
- Selected Poems of Walt Whitman
- 'The Prophet' by Alice Notley
- Rings of Saturn by W.G. Sebald (excerpts)

Week Nine (Workshop)

Week 10 (Working Through and Into)
- Illuminations by Arthur Rimbaud
- 'Satan Says' by Sharon Olds
- Bluets by Maggie Nelson
• 'Power' by Audre Lorde
• 'Poetry and the Forgotten Future' by Adrienne Rich

Week 11 (Workshop)

Week 12 (Life in the Volta)
• 'Cathedral' by Raymond Carver
• Sonnets by Keats
• Sonnets by Edna St. Vincent Millay
• Dream Songs by John Berryman
• 'Why I Write' by Joan Didion

Week 13 (Workshop)

Week 14 (Infinitude and Inevitability)
• Speaking to the Rose by Robert Walser (excerpts)
• 'Synamism' by Lorine Niedecker
• The Four Quartets by T.S. Eliot (excerpts)
• 'Some Notes on Organic Form' by Denise Levertov
• Letters to a Young Poet by Rainer Maria Rilke (excerpt)

Week 15
Portfolio Reading and Next Steps

* Syllabus subject to change. *
GRADING

Participation and Attendance: 30%
Workshop Submissions: 20%
Letters and Feedback 20%
Reading Responses 10%
Final Portfolio: 20%

GUIDELINES

Attendance

If you will not be in class please communicate with me ahead of time. If you miss class more than two times throughout the semester, your grade will drop a letter grade for each missed class afterward. If you miss class you are still expected to hand in letters or reading responses, depending on the week missed. Do not be late. Those who are consistently late will lose a letter grade.

Office Hours: You are required to meet with me at least twice during the semester. It is best to do this once before mid-semester and once after. This is an opportunity for you to discuss your writing, receive feedback, and talk to me about any questions or concerns you’re having. I am available weekly by appointment. I will circulate a sign up sheet during the first weeks of class.

Late Work

Late work will be accepted on a case-by-case basis. However, if your work is consistently late your grade will be seriously affected.

Electronics

No computers, no tablets, no phones. If a computer is needed for any reason please bring it to my attention.

Plagiarism

NYU has policies on plagiarism/academic integrity and they will be strictly enforced.

Extra Credit

You can earn extra credit by attending a literary event in the city and writing a one-page response. This can be used to make up for missed reading responses or as extra reading responses.