Spring 2017 NYU Syllabus

Course: Intermediate Workshop in Fiction
Section: CRWRI-UA 816-002 (7585)

Time: Thursday, 3:30-6:15
Location: Silver Center for Arts & Sciences, 31 Washington Place, Room 402

Professor: Saïd Sayrafiezadeh
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Course Description
This intermediate fiction workshop will be a combination of writing, reading, discussion and analysis. Our primary goal will be to develop essential skills and strategies for storytelling. Foremost will be the writing of two *original* *literary fiction* pieces during the term (approximately 3000 words each) based on specific parameters that I will assign. The emphasis here is on “original,” i.e., these will be prose narratives written expressly for our class; they will not be assembled using journal entries, newspaper articles, letters, screenplays, previous stories, etc. The emphasis is also on “literary fiction,” meaning we will not be dealing with any *genre* stories, such as horror, mystery, romance, etc. Together we will examine how you and your classmates utilize elements like character, arc, dialogue, pace. We’ll also expand into the murkier realms of voice, tension, humor, sentimentality and cliché. Our class discussions will include fundamental writerly concerns regarding process, discipline and distraction, as well as how to be published, how to find an agent, how to deal with an editor. In addition to your own work we will be reading a selection of contemporary short stories by established (and unestablished) authors. We will read these as writers reading writers, examining their strengths and weaknesses, and may come to regard them as inspiring accomplishments or cautionary tales—or both. There will also be some out of class assignments (attending readings/bookstores), and in-class analysis of newspaper articles, films, songs, and anything else that might help us learn how to tell stories.

Other Information:
Course reader
Course reader includes personal essays and memoir excerpts. The course reader is not needed for the first class, but bring it for all subsequent classes. It can be purchased at Unique Copy Center, 252 Greene St. 212-420-9198

Office Hours: By appointment only.

Grades: Class participation and attendance will count for 50% of your grade, this includes speaking aloud, coming to class on time with the necessary supplies (see below) and avoiding the use of electronic devices. Timely completion of your stories, adherence to the narrative parameters that I assign, and *polished writing that appears to have been carefully considered*, will count for the other 50%.
The evaluation of your work will be based on:

1) **Class participation.** This is a seminar class. So consistent participation is required.

2) **Class attendance:** Come on time for class, come back from break on time, and stay for the duration of class. College policy is that students are expected to attend all class sessions for courses in which they are enrolled. Absences will lower your grade.

3) **Course reader:** You will be reading and discussing short works by published and unpublished authors—provided in your course reader. (Plus some additional odds and ends that I’ll occasionally distribute in class.) Bring your course reader to every class with notes written down, prepared to discuss. Having the course reader counts as part of your class participation portion of the grade.

4) **Outside assignments:** There will be several assignments that take place outside of the classroom.

5) **Creative Writing:** This is the crux of the workshop. You will be writing two original prose pieces over the course of the term based on parameters and word count that I will assign. When it’s your turn to be workshopped, you will email your submissions to your classmates (and professor) no later than Sunday, 11:59 PM. It’s imperative that you print out your classmates’ stories and bring them to class. We’ll be looking at specific words, lines, paragraphs. When it’s your turn to workshop your piece, print it out and bring it to class. Having these stories printed out counts as part of your class participation.

6) **Late work:** Late work will lower your grade. There will be plenty of time provided to complete your assignments. Do not ask for extensions.

7) **Writing format:** 12 pt. Times or Helvetica. Double spaced. Page numbers.

8) **Workshop comments:** You will be making edits, comments, suggestions directly on your classmates’ story and distributing it to him or her at the end of their workshop. You will also type up an editorial letter for your classmate of at least three hundred words of your overall thoughts, suggestions, impressions, revisions, compliments (email or printout is fine).

9) **Paper:** We’ll only be handling paper in class. Every assignment you do should be printed out and brought to class.

10) **Electronics:** No cellphones. No laptops. No tablets. Turn everything off before coming into the classroom. Use of electronics will lower your grade.

11) **Plagiarism:** NYU takes plagiarism very seriously. I’m required to report any case of suspected plagiarism.
12) **Disclaimer**: The stories we read and write for class might sometimes describe in graphic and unapologetic detail misogyny, racism, homophobia, sexual abuse, drug abuse, xenophobia, violence, etc. If you’d rather not read or discuss certain subjects, please consider whether this is the right class for you.

*This syllabus may be modified as deemed appropriate. Any changes will be announced in class.*