The Creative Writing Program in The School of the Arts combines intensive writing workshops with seminars that study literature from a writer’s perspective. Students develop and hone their literary technique in workshops. The seminars (which explore literary technique and history) broaden their sense of possibility by exposing them to various ways that language has been used to make art. Related courses are drawn from departments such as English, comparative literature and society, philosophy, history, and anthropology, among others.

Students consult with faculty advisers to determine the related courses that best inform their creative work. For details on the major, see the Creative Writing website: http://arts.columbia.edu/writing/undergraduate.

Professors
Saidiya Hartman
Margo L. Jefferson
Phillip Lopate
Benjamin Marcus
Alan Ziegler

Associate Professors
Susan Bernofsky
Timothy Donnelly
Heidi Julavits
Dorothea Lasky
Victor LaValle

Graduate Faculty Fellows
Melanie Broder
Melissa Connelly
Elias Diakolios
Patrick Ford-Matz
Laura Green
Kimberley Liu
Abhigna Mooraka
Galina Nemirovsky
Laina Richards
Rhoni Blankenhorn
Sophie Dess
Nicholas Gambini
Kayla Heisler
Benn Jeffries
Hannah Kaplan
Emmett Lewis
Frances Lindemann
Halley McDonough
Kellina Moore
Ashley Porras
Cory Scarola
Jacob Schultz

Assistant Professors
Anelise Chen
Shane McCrae
Ben Metcalf
Lynn Xu

Adjunct Professors
Alex Abramovich
Halle Butler
Frances Cha
Bonnie Chau
Jon Cotner
Dennard Dayle
Alex Dimitrov
Joseph Fasano
Elizabeth Greenwood
Jared Jackson
Katrine Øgaard Jensen
Crystal Hana Kim
Joss Lake
Hilary Leichter
Madalaine Lucas
Patricia Marx
Molly McGhee
Mallika Rao
Mark Rozzo
Mayukh Sen
John Vincler
Madeleine Watts
Christopher Wolfe
James Yeh
Samantha Zighelboim
Major in Creative Writing

The major in creative writing requires a minimum of 36 points: five workshops, four seminars, and three related courses.

Workshop Curriculum (15 points)

Students in the workshops produce original works of fiction, poetry, or nonfiction, and submit them to their classmates and instructor for a close critical analysis. Workshop critiques (which include detailed written reports and thorough line-edits) assess the mechanics and merits of the writing pieces. Individual instructor conferences distill the critiques into a direct plan of action to improve the work. Student writers develop by practicing the craft under the diligent critical attention of their peers and instructor, which guides them toward new levels of creative endeavor.

Creative writing majors select 15 points within the division in the following courses. One workshop must be in a genre other than the primary focus. For instance, a fiction writer might take four fiction workshops and one poetry workshop.

Beginning Workshop
Designed for students who have little or no previous experience writing literary texts in a particular genre.
WRIT UN1100 Beginning Fiction Workshop
WRIT UN1200 Beginning Nonfiction Workshop
WRIT UN1300 Beginning Poetry Workshop

Intermediate Workshop
Permission required. Admission by writing sample. Enrollment limited to 15. Course may be repeated in fulfillment of the major.
WRIT UN2100 Intermediate Fiction Workshop
WRIT UN2200 Intermediate Nonfiction Workshop
WRIT UN2300 Intermediate Poetry Workshop

Advanced Workshop
Permission required. Admission by writing sample. Enrollment limited to 15. Course may be repeated in fulfillment of the major.
WRIT UN3100 Advanced Fiction Workshop
WRIT UN3200 Advanced Nonfiction Workshop
WRIT UN3300 Advanced Poetry Workshop

Senior Creative Writing Workshop
Seniors who are creative writing majors are given priority. Enrollment limited to 12, by instructor’s permission. The senior workshop offers students the opportunity to work exclusively with classmates who are at the same high level of accomplishment in the major. This course is only offered by graduate faculty professors.
WRIT UN3101 Senior Fiction Workshop
WRIT UN3201 Senior Nonfiction Workshop
WRIT UN3301 Senior Poetry Workshop

Seminar Curriculum (12 points)
The creative writing seminars form the intellectual ballast of our program. Our seminars offer a close examination of literary techniques such as plot, point of view, tone, suspense, and narrative voice. Extensive readings are required, along with creative exercises.

Creative writing majors select 12 points within the division. Any 4 seminars will fulfill the requirement, no matter the student’s chosen genre concentration. Below is a sampling of our seminars. The list of seminars currently being offered can be found in the “Courses” section.

These seminars offer close examination of literary techniques such as plot, point of view, tone, suspense, and narrative voice. Extensive readings are required, along with creative exercises.

FICTION
WRIT UN3121 Fiction Seminar: How To Build A Person
WRIT UN3117 Fiction Seminar: The Here & Now
WRIT UN3122 First Novels: How They Work
WRIT UN3120 Fiction Seminar: The Craft Of Writing Dialogue

NONFICTION
WRIT UN3213 Nonfiction Seminar: The Literary Reporter
WRIT UN3215 WRITING THE VISUAL
WRIT UN3216 Nonfiction Seminar: Truths & Facts
WRIT UN3217 Nonfiction Seminar: Science And Sensibility

POETRY
WRIT UN2311 Poetry Seminar: Traditions in Poetry
WRIT UN3313 Poetry Seminar: The Crisis of the I
WRIT UN3314 Poetry Seminar: 21st Century American Poetry and Its Concerns
WRIT GU4310 Poetry Seminar - Witness, Record, Document: Poetry & Testimony

CROSS GENRE
WRIT GU4011 Cross Genre Seminar: Imagining Berlin
WRIT GU4012 Cross Genre Seminar: Diva Voice, Diva Style, Diva Lyrics
WRIT UN3016 Cross Genre Seminar: Walking
WRIT UN3013 Cross-Genre Seminar: Process Writing & Writing Process

Related Courses (9 points)

Drawn from various departments, these courses provide concentrated intellectual and creative stimulation, as well as exposure to ideas that enrich students’ artistic instincts. Courses may be different for each student writer. Students should consult with faculty advisers to determine the related courses that best inform their creative work.
Fiction Workshops

WRIT UN1100 Beginning Fiction Workshop. 3 points.
Prerequisites: No prerequisites. Department approval NOT required.
The beginning workshop in fiction is designed for students with little or no experience writing literary texts in fiction. Students are introduced to a range of technical and imaginative concerns through exercises and discussions, and they eventually produce their own writing for the critical analysis of the class. The focus of the course is on the rudiments of voice, character, setting, point of view, plot, and lyrical use of language. Students will begin to develop the critical skills that will allow them to read like writers and understand, on a technical level, how accomplished creative writing is produced. Outside readings of a wide range of fiction supplement and inform the exercises and longer written projects.

WRIT UN2100 Intermediate Fiction Workshop. 3 points.
Prerequisites: The department’s permission required through writing sample. Please go to 609 Kent for submission schedule and registration guidelines or see http://www.arts.columbia.edu/writing/undergraduate.
Intermediate workshops are for students with some experience with creative writing, and whose prior work merits admission to the class (as judged by the professor). Intermediate workshops present a higher creative standard than beginning workshops, and increased expectations to produce finished work. By the end of the semester, each student will have produced at least seventy pages of original fiction. Students are additionally expected to write extensive critiques of the work of their peers.

WRIT UN3100 Advanced Fiction Workshop. 3 points.
Prerequisites: The department’s permission required through writing sample. Please go to 609 Kent for submission schedule and registration guidelines or see http://www.arts.columbia.edu/writing/undergraduate.
Building on the work of the Intermediate Workshop, Advanced Workshops are reserved for the most accomplished creative writing students. A significant body of writing must be produced and revised. Particular attention will be paid to the components of fiction: voice, perspective, characterization, and form. Students will be expected to finish several short stories, executing a total artistic vision on a piece of writing. The critical focus of the class will include an examination of endings and formal wholeness, sustaining narrative arcs, compelling a reader’s interest for the duration of the text, and generating a sense of urgency and drama in the work.
WRIT 3101 Senior Fiction Workshop. 4 points.
Prerequisites: The department’s permission required through writing sample. Please go to 609 Kent for submission schedule and registration guidelines or see http://www.arts.columbia.edu/writing/undergraduate. Seniors who are majors in creative writing are given priority for this course. Enrollment is limited, and is by permission of the professor. The senior workshop offers students the opportunity to work exclusively with classmates who are at the same high level of accomplishment in the major. Students in the senior workshops will produce and revise a new and substantial body of work. In-class critiques and conferences with the professor will be tailored to needs of each student.

Seniors who are majors in creative writing are given priority for this course. Enrollment is limited, and is by permission of the professor. The senior workshop offers students the opportunity to work exclusively with classmates who are at the same high level of accomplishment in the major. Students in the senior workshops will produce and revise a new and substantial body of work. In-class critiques and conferences with the professor will be tailored to needs of each student.

WRIT 3125 Apocalypses Now. 3 points.
Not offered during 2022-23 academic year.
From ancient myths of the world's destruction to cinematic works that envision a post-apocalyptic reality, zealots of all kinds have sought an understanding of "the end of the world as we know it." But while apocalyptic predictions have, so far, failed to deliver a real glimpse of that end, in fiction they abound. In this course, we will explore the narrative mechanisms by which post-apocalyptic works create projections of our own world that are believably imperiled, realistically degraded, and designed to move us to feel differently and act differently within the world we inhabit. We will consider ways in which authors craft immersive storylines that maintain a vital allegorical relationship to the problems of the present, and discuss recent trends in contemporary post-apocalyptic fiction. How has the genre responded to our changing conception of peril? Is literary apocalyptic fiction effective as a vehicle for persuasion and for showing threats in a new light? Ultimately, we will inquire into the possibility of thinking beyond our present moment and, by doing so, altering our fate.

WRIT 3129 Writing Nature in the Age of Climate Change. 3.00 points.
This class aims to look seriously at how we write literature about the environment, landscape, plants, animals, and the weather in an age of worsening climate change. What genres, forms, and structures can we use to creatively respond to and depict the conditions of the anthropocene? How can we use time to capture the simultaneous tedium and terror of the emergency? Can we write about the individual as well as the collective? Is it possible to write about climate change not as something that is coming, but as a phenomenon that's already a part of our lives? In answering these questions, students will determine how best to address these issues in their own creative work. While this is a fiction class, we will take our lessons from writers working across many different formats. We will read novels and short stories, but also poetry, creative non-fiction, journalism, and theory. Through writing exercises, field journals, critical essays, and their own creative pieces, students will work through, and with, the despair and radical imaginative changes wrought on all our lives by the anthropocene.
WRIT UN3130 The Punchline. 3.00 points.
Levy’s worth taking seriously. This seminar examines satire in several forms, including polemics from the late Roman Empire, stand-up from the late British Empire, and novels from the healthy and indestructible American Empire. We’ll explore satirical reactions to historic disasters, and how to apply those techniques during the next one. We’ll see satire flourish on bathroom walls and street signs (my specialty, admittedly).
We’ll learn why every subculture has its own version of The Onion. Finally, we’ll apply lessons from the above to develop our own writing with creative responses, in-class exercises, and a final project. Anyone can be a satirist. Dealing with reality is the hard part.

WRIT 3111 Fiction Seminar: Exercises in Style. 3 points.
Prerequisites: No prerequisites. Department approval NOT required. Raymond Queneau, in his book Exercises in Style, demonstrated that a single story, however unassuming, could be told at least ninety-nine different ways. Even though the content never changed, the mood always did: aggressive, mild, indifferent, lyrical, sensitive, technical, indirect, deceitful. If, as fiction writers, one of our pursuits is to stylize various forms of information, and to call the result a story or novel, it is also tempting, and easy, to adopt trends of style without realizing it, and to possibly presume we operate outside of stylistic restrictions and conventions. Some styles become so commonplace that they no longer seem stylistic. V.S. Naipaul remarked in an interview that he was opposed to style, yet we can’t exactly summarize his work based on its content. His manner of telling is sophisticated, subtle, shrewdly indirect, and elegant. He is, in short, a stylist. His brilliance might be to presume that this is the only way to tell a story, and to consider all other ways styles. This course for writers will look at a wide range of prose styles, from conspicuous to subtle ones. We will not only read examples of obviously stylistic prose, but consider as well how the reigning prose norms are themselves stylistic bulwarks, entrenched in the culture for various reasons that might interest us. One project we will undertake, in order to deepen our understanding and approach to style, will be to restylize certain of the passages we read. These short fiction exercises will supplement our weekly readings and will allow us to practice rhetorical tactics, to assess our own deep stylistic instincts, and to possibly dilate the range of locations available to us as we work.

WRIT UN3113 Fiction Seminar: Voices from the Edge. 3 points.
Prerequisites: No prerequisites. Department approval NOT required. What does it mean to be marginalized? Does it simply mean that white folks or men or heterosexuals or Americans don't listen to you very much? This is a reductive way of thinking that limits both minorities and majorities. In this seminar we’ll read work that challenges our received notions about “the edge” and who’s in it. We’ll read with an eye toward issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality but we’ll also think about marginalization in terms of genre, geography, and even personal politics. Our goal won't be to categorize and quantify hardships, but to appreciate some great—though overlooked—writing. And, finally, to try and understand how these talented artists wrote well. During the semester students will write short fiction inspired by the work they read and the craft issues discussed in class.

WRIT UN3127 Time Moves Both Ways. 3 points.
What is time travel, really? We can use a machine or walk through a secret door. Take a pill or fall asleep and wake up in the future. But when we talk about magic machines and slipstreams and Rip Van Winkle, we are also talking about memory, chronology, and narrative. In this seminar, we will approach time travel as a way of understanding “the Fourth Dimension” in fiction. Readings will range from the speculative to the strange, to the realism of timelines, flashbacks, and shifts in perspective. Coursework will include short, bi-weekly writing assignments, a completed short story, and a time inflected adaptation.
WRIT UN1200 Beginning Nonfiction Workshop. 3 points.

Prerequisites: No prerequisites. Department approval NOT required.

The beginning workshop in nonfiction is designed for students with little or no experience in writing literary nonfiction. Students are introduced to a range of technical and imaginative concerns through exercises and discussions, and they eventually submit their own writing for the critical analysis of the class. Outside readings supplement and inform the exercises and longer written projects. By the end of the semester, students will have produced thirty to forty pages of original work in at least two traditions of literary nonfiction.

Spring 2022: WRIT UN1200

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<td>001/11231</td>
<td>Th 2:10pm - 4:00pm 511 Kent Hall</td>
<td>Galina Nemirovsky</td>
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<tr>
<td>WRIT 1200</td>
<td>002/11232</td>
<td>W 4:10pm - 6:00pm 608 Lewisohn Hall</td>
<td>Elaine Richards</td>
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WRIT UN2200 Intermediate Nonfiction Workshop. 3 points.

Prerequisites: The department’s permission required through writing sample. Please go to 609 Kent for submission schedule and registration guidelines or see http://www.arts.columbia.edu/writing/undergraduate. The intermediate workshop in nonfiction is designed for students with some experience in writing literary nonfiction. Intermediate workshops present a higher creative standard than beginning workshops and an expectation that students will produce finished work. Outside readings supplement and inform the exercises and longer written projects. By the end of the semester, students will have produced thirty to forty pages of original work in at least two traditions of literary nonfiction.

Spring 2022: WRIT UN2200

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<td>John Vincler</td>
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<tr>
<td>WRIT 2200</td>
<td>001/11828</td>
<td>Th 10:10am - 12:00pm 308a Lewisohn Hall</td>
<td>John Vincler</td>
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WRIT UN3200 Advanced Nonfiction Workshop. 3 points.

Prerequisites: The department’s permission required through writing sample. Please go to 609 Kent for submission schedule and registration guidelines or see http://www.arts.columbia.edu/writing/undergraduate. Advanced Nonfiction Workshop is for students with significant narrative and/or critical experience. Students will produce original literary nonfiction for the workshop, with an added focus on developing a distinctive voice and approach.

Fall 2022: WRIT UN3200

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<td>W 6:10pm - 8:00pm 652 Schermerhorn Hall</td>
<td>James Yeh</td>
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WRIT UN3201 Senior Nonfiction Workshop. 4 points.

Prerequisites: The department’s permission required through writing sample. Please go to 609 Kent for submission schedule and registration guidelines or see http://www.arts.columbia.edu/writing/undergraduate. Senior Nonfiction Workshop

Spring 2022: WRIT UN3201

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<td>WRIT 3201</td>
<td>001/11681</td>
<td>M 6:10pm - 8:00pm 306 Uris Hall</td>
<td>Mallika Rao</td>
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Nonfiction Seminars

WRIT UN2211 Nonfiction Seminar: Traditions in Nonfiction. 3 points.
Prerequisites: No prerequisites. Department approval NOT required.
The seminar provides exposure to the varieties of nonfiction with readings in its principal genres: reportage, criticism and commentary, biography and history, and memoir and the personal essay. A highly plastic medium, nonfiction allows authors to portray real events and experiences through narrative, analysis, polemic or any combination thereof. Free to invent everything but the facts, great practitioners of nonfiction are faithful to reality while writing with a voice and a vision distinctively their own. To show how nonfiction is conceived and constructed, class discussions will emphasize the relationship of content to form and style, techniques for creating plot and character under the factual constraints imposed by nonfiction, the defining characteristics of each author's voice, the author's subjectivity and presence, the role of imagination and emotion, the uses of humor, and the importance of speculation and attitude. Written assignments will be opportunities to experiment in several nonfiction genres and styles.

Fall 2022: WRIT UN2211

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<td>Kayla Heisler</td>
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WRIT UN3214 Hybrid Nonfiction Forms. 3 points.
Prerequisites: No prerequisites. Department approval NOT required. Creative nonfiction is a frustratingly vague term. How do we give it real literary meaning; examine its compositional aims and techniques, its achievements and especially its aspirations? This course will focus on works that we might call visionary - works that combine art forms, genres and styles in striking ways. Works in which image and text combine to create a third interactive language for the reader. Works still termed "fiction" "history" or "journalism" that join fact and fiction to interrogate their uses and implications. Certain memoirs that are deliberately anti-autobiographical, turning from personal narrative to the sounds, sight, impressions and ideas of the writer's milieu. Certain essays that join personal reflection to arts and cultural criticism, drawing on research, imagination and the vernacular and the formal, even prose and poetry. The assemblage or collage that, created from notebook entries, lists, quotations, footnotes and indexes achieves its coherence through fragments and associations, found and original texts.

Fall 2022: WRIT UN3214

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<td>Margo Jefferson</td>
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WRIT UN3224 Writing the Sixties. 3.00 points.
In this seminar, we will target nonfiction from the 1960s—the decade that saw an avalanche of new forms, new awareness, new freedoms, and new conflicts, as well as the beginnings of social movements and cultural preoccupations that continue to frame our lives, as writers and as citizens, in the 21st century: civil rights, feminism, environmentalism, LGBTQ rights, pop culture, and the rise of mass media. We will look back more than a half century to examine the development of modern criticism, memoir, reporting, and profile-writing, and the ways they entwine. Along the way, we will ask questions about these classic nonfiction forms: How do reporters, essayists, and critics make sense of the new? How do they create work as rich as the best novels and short stories? Can criticism rise to the level of art? What roles do voice, point-of-view, character, dialogue, and plot—the traditional elements of fiction—play? As we go, we will witness the unfolding of arguably the most transitional decade in American history—with such events as the Kennedy assassination, the Watts Riots, the Human Be In, and the Vietnam War, along with the rise of Pop art, rock 'n' roll, and a new era of moviemaking—as it was documented in real time by writers at The New Yorker, New Journalists at Esquire, and critics at Partisan Review and Harper's, among other publications. Some writers we will consider: James Baldwin, Joan Didion, Susan Sontag, Rachel Carson, Dwight Macdonald, Gay Talese, Tom Wolfe, Truman Capote, Pauline Kael, Nik Cohn, Joseph Mitchell, Lillian Ross, Gore Vidal, Norman Mailer, Thomas Pynchon, John Updike, Michael Herr, Martha Gellhorn, John McPhee, and Betty Friedan. We will be joined by guest speakers.

Fall 2022: WRIT UN3224

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<td>Mark Rozzo</td>
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WRIT UN3216 Nonfiction Seminar: Truths & Facts. 3 points.
Prerequisites: No prerequisites. Department approval NOT required. As writers of literary nonfiction, we seek to articulate the truth about people, personal experiences, and events. But how do those pesky facts figure in? Demarcating the boundaries of reasonable artistic license is an ongoing debate among writers, editors, fact-checkers, and audiences. Can changing chronologies and identifying details help the writer arrive at a deeper truth about her subject? Or are the facts intractable? Where do we draw the line between fabrication and artistry? Is there any merit to what Werner Herzog deems "the ecstatic truth?" Do different rules apply for writing memoir versus writing reported essays and articles? How can we work responsibly with quotes while making dialogue readable? Just how experimental can we be while earning the mantle of nonfiction? In this class we will read works that take different approaches at mining toward the truth and unpack various distinct points of view on the debate. Our classes will consist mainly of discussion, with occasional in-class writing exercises and presentations. Students will write reflection papers on the assigned texts throughout the course and compose their own code of nonfiction ethics by the term's end, and examine their own work under this rubric.

Spring 2022: WRIT UN3216

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<td>Elizabeth Greenwood</td>
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WRIT UN3222 The Role of the Critic. 3.00 points.
Criticism is an ancient art form: in the West, it dates all the way back to Aristotle and Plato. But is criticism an art form? What purpose(s) does it really serve? In this seminar, we will examine the critic's role in society, paying special attention to American critics from the 20th and 21st centuries. Reading closely, we will unpack arguments, examine the changing criteria writers have used in responding to cultural products, and address issues of voice, technique, and practice. We will also draft (and redraft) our own responses, in the form of a reviews and a critical essay. Throughout, our goal is to understand how others see, hear, and experience the world, so that we may better understand our own reactions and learn how to translate them effectively (i.e., with style and authority) to the page. Students will complete three critical pieces: A hundred-word capsule review (to be revised throughout the semester); a newspaper-length review (750 words); and a longer critical essay, which may be written in the first person.

WRIT UN3222 The Taste Profile. 3.00 points.
"Some of the most significant stories today are about food. But you won't find them in the food section, where journalism has been supplanted by fantasy." — Molly O'Neill, Columbia Journalism Review, 2003 It's been over a decade and a half since the late Molly O'Neill made that proclamation about American food writing's state of affairs, and, in some key ways, her laments still ring true. Look at prominent food publications today and food writing may seem like a genre of limited possibilities, doing little more than fulfilling an immediate service for readers. A vividly-written recipe column can tell you what to cook for dinner; an evocative restaurant review can tell you where to go for dinner. Both of these aforementioned schools of food writing take great skill, but there's far more to the genre than recipes and restaurant reviews. Some of the English language's most astute food writers have honored a basic truth: Food has unique narrative potential to tell us about where someone comes from, the cultures that shaped them, and who they are. In this seminar, you will learn how to engage with food as a writer beyond mere sensory terms, instead using food as a tool of memory—a memory that lives inside us, the memory of others. When practiced with rigor and empathy, food writing can touch on matters that go far beyond the plate, providing broader insight into human behavior. You'll read and critique some of the most thought-provoking examples of the genre before taking a stab at different forms yourself, including the personal essay and the posthumous profile. Your capstone project will be a posthumous essay on a figure in the food world of your choosing—a food writer, a chef, a cooking teacher—that memorializes their legacy in a clear-eyed way, writing against the fantasy that O'Neill so astutely critiqued.

WRIT UN3200 Beginning Poetry Workshop. 3 points.
Prerequisites: No prerequisites. Department approval NOT required.
The beginning poetry workshop is designed for students who have a serious interest in poetry writing but who lack a significant background in the rudiments of the craft and/or have had little or no previous poetry workshop experience. Students will be assigned weekly writing exercises emphasizing such aspects of verse composition as the poetic line, the image, rhyme and other sound devices, verse forms, repetition, tone, irony, and others. Students will also read an extensive variety of exemplary work in verse, submit brief critical analyses of poems, and critique each other's original work.

WRIT UN2300 Intermediate Poetry Workshop. 3 points.
Prerequisites: The department's permission required through writing sample. Please go to 609 Kent for submission schedule and registration guidelines or see http://www.arts.columbia.edu/writing/undergraduate.
Intermediate poetry workshops are for students with some prior instruction in the rudiments of poetry writing and prior poetry workshop experience. Intermediate poetry workshops pose greater challenges to students and maintain higher critical standards than beginning workshops. Students will be instructed in more complex aspects of the craft, including the poetic persona, the prose poem, the collage, and others. Students will also be assigned more challenging verse forms such as the villanelle and also non-European verse forms such as the pantoum. They will read extensively, submit brief critical analyses, and put their instruction into regular practice by composing original work that will be critiqued by their peers. By the end of the semester each student will have assembled a substantial portfolio of finished work.
WRIT UN3300 Advanced Poetry Workshop. 3 points.
Prerequisites: The department’s permission required through writing sample. Please go to 609 Kent for submission schedule and registration guidelines or see http://www.arts.columbia.edu/writing/undergraduate. This poetry workshop is reserved for accomplished poetry writers and maintains the highest level of creative and critical expectations. Students will be encouraged to develop their strengths and to cultivate a distinctive poetic vision and voice but must also demonstrate a willingness to broaden their range and experiment with new forms and notions of the poem. A portfolio of poetry will be written and revised with the critical input of the instructor and the workshop.

WRIT UN3301 Senior Poetry Workshop. 4 points.
Prerequisites: The department’s permission required through writing sample. Please go to 609 Kent for submission schedule and registration guidelines or see http://www.arts.columbia.edu/writing/undergraduate. Seniors who are majors in creative writing are given priority for this course. Enrollment is limited, and is by permission of the professor. The senior workshop offers students the opportunity to work exclusively with classmates who are at the same high level of accomplishment in the major. Students in the senior workshops will produce and revise a new and substantial body of work. In-class critiques and conferences with the professor will be tailored to needs of each student.

Poetry Seminars
WRIT UN2311 Poetry Seminar: Traditions in Poetry. 3 points.
Prerequisites: No prerequisites. Department approval NOT required. The avenues of poetic tradition open to today’s poets are more numerous, more invigorating, and perhaps even more baffling than ever before. The routes we chose for our writing lead to destinations of our own making, and we take them at our own risk—necessarily so, as the pursuit of poetry asks each of us to light a pilgrim’s candle and follow it into the moors and lowlands, through wastes and prairies, crossing waters as we go. Go after the marshlights, the will-o’-wisps who call to you in a voice you’ve longed for your whole life. These routes have been forged by those who came before you, but for that reason, none of them can hope to keep you on it entirely. You must take your steps away, brick by brick, heading confidently into the hinterland of your own distinct achievement.

For the purpose of this class, we will walk these roads together, examining the works of classic and contemporary exemplars of the craft. By companioning poets from a large spread of time, we will be able to more diversely immerse ourselves in what a poetic “tradition” truly means. We will read works by Edmund Spencer, Dante, and Goethe, the Romantics—especially Keats—Dickinson, who is mother to us all, Modernists, and the great sweep of contemporary poetry that is too vast to individuate.

While it is the imperative of this class to equip you with the knowledge necessary to advance in the field of poetry, this task shall be done in a Columbian manner. Consider this class an initiation, of sorts, into the vocabulary which distinguishes the writers who work under our flag, each of us bound by this language that must be passed on, and therefore changed, to you who inherit it. As I have learned the words, I have changed them, and I give them now to you so that you may pave your own way into your own ways, inspired with the first breath that brought you here, which may excite and—hopefully—frighten you. You must be troubled. This is essential.
WRIT UN3315 Poetry Seminar: Poetic Meter And Form. 3 points.
Prerequisites: No prerequisites. Department approval NOT required.
This course will investigate the uses of rhythmical order and disorder in English-language poetry, with a particular emphasis on 'formal' elements in 'free' verse. Through a close analysis of poems, we'll examine the possibilities of qualitative meter, and students will write original creative work within (and in response to) various formal traditions. Analytical texts and poetic manifestos will accompany our reading of exemplary poems. Each week, we'll study interesting examples of metrical writing, and I'll ask you to write in response to those examples. Our topics will include stress meter, syllable-stress meter, double and triple meter, rising and falling rhythms, promotion, demotion, inversion, elision, and foot scansion. Our study will include a great range of modern writers, from Keats to W.D. Snodgrass, Shakespeare to Denise Levertov, Blake to James Dickey, Whitman to Louise Gluck etc. As writers, we'll always be thinking about how the formal choices of a poem are appropriate or inappropriate for the poem's content. We'll also read prose by poets describing their metrical craft.

WRIT UN3316 West to East: The San Francisco Renaissance and the New York School in American Poetry. 3 points.
This course examines two central movements in post World War II American poetry, The San Francisco Renaissance and The New York School, and uncovers their aesthetic impacts on language and cultural production, as well as the relationship to "the city" as a defining agent in the poetic imagination.

WRIT UN3319 POETICS OF PLACE: AMERICAN LANDSCAPES, VOICES, AND INHERITANCE. 3 points.
When the American Poet Larry Levis left his home in California's San Joaquin Valley, "all [he] needed to do," he wrote, "was to describe [home] exactly as it had been. That [he] could not do, for that [is] impossible. And that is where poetry might begin." This course will consider how place shapes a poet's self and work. Together we will consider a diverse range of poets and the places they write out of and into: from Philip Levine's Detroit to Whitman's Manhattan, from Robert Lowell's New England to James Wright's Ohio, from the Kentucky of Joe Bolton and Crystal Wilkinson to the California of Robin Blaser and Allen Ginsberg, from the Ozarks of Frank Stanford to the New Jersey of Amiri Baraka, from the Pacific Northwest of Robinson Jeffers to the Alaska of Mary Tallmountain. We will consider the debate between T. S. Eliot and William Carlos Williams about global versus local approaches to the poem, and together we will ask complex questions: Why is it, for example, that Jack Gilbert finds his Pittsburgh when he leaves it, while Gerald Stern finds his Pittsburgh when he keeps it close? Does something sing because you leave it or because you hold it close? Do you come to a place to find where you belong in it? Do you leave a place to find where it belongs in you? As Carolyn Kizer writes in "Running Away from Home," "It's never over, old church of our claustrophobia!" And of course home can give us the first freedom of wanting to leave, the first prison and freedom of want. In our reflections on each "place," we will reflect on its varied histories, its native peoples, and its inheritance of violent conquest.

Our syllabus will consist, in addition to poems, of manifestos and prose writings about place, from Richard Hugo's "Triggering Town" to Sandra Beasley's "Prioritizing Place." You will be encouraged to think about everything from dialect to economics, from collectivism to individualism in poems that root themselves in particular places, and you will be encouraged to consider how those poems "transcend" their origins. You will write response papers, analytical papers, and creative pieces, and you will complete a final project that reflects on your own relationship to place.
WRIT UN3320 Provocations in Twentieth-Century Poetics. 3.00 points.
This is a class about poetry and revolt. In a century of wars, unchecked proliferation of industrial and market systems in the continued legacy of settler-colonialism and the consolidation of state powers, does language still conduct with revolutionary possibilities? In this class, we will read manifestos, philosophical treatises, political tracts, literary polemics, poems, scores, and so on, as we consider poetry’s long-standing commitment to visionary practices that seek to liberate consciousness from the many and various structures of oppression. The term “poetry” is not limited to itself but becomes, in our readings, an open invitation to all adjacent experiments with and in the language arts. As such, we will look at the emergence of the international avant-gardes as well as a few student movements that populate and complicate the explorations of radical politics in the twentieth century. In addition to our readings, students will be asked to produce creative responses for class discussion. Final projects will be provocations of their own design.


WRIT UN3321 Ecopoetics. 3.00 points.
"There are things / We live among / and to see them / Is to know ourselves." George Oppen, "Of Being Numerous" In this class we will read poetry like writers that inhabit an imperiled planet, understanding our poems as being in direct conversation both with the environment as well as writers past and present with similar concerns and techniques. Given the imminent ecological crises we are facing, the poems we read will center themes of place, ecology, interspecies dependence, the role of humans in the destruction of the planet, and the "necropastoral" (to borrow a term from Joyelle McSweeney), among others. We will read works by poets and writers such as (but not limited to) John Ashbery, Harryette Mullen, Asiya Wadud, Wendy Xu, Ross Gay, Simone Kearney, Kim Hyeson, Marcella Durand, Arthur Rimbaud, Geoffrey G. O’Brien, Muriel Rukeyser, George Oppen, Terrance Hayes, Juliana Spahr, and W.S. Merwin—reading several full collections as well as individual poems and essays by scholars in the field. Through close readings, in-class discussions, exercises, and creative/critical writings, we will invest in and investigate facets of the dynamic lyric that is aware of its environs (sound, image, line), while also exploring traditional poetic forms like the Haibun, ode, prose poem, and elegy. Additionally, we will seek inspiration in outside mediums such as film, visual art, and music, as well as, of course, the natural world. As a class, we will explore the highly individual nature of writing processes and talk about building writing practices that are generative as well as sustainable

WRIT UN3010 Cross Genre Seminar: Short Prose Forms. 3 points.
Note: This seminar has a workshop component.

Prerequisites: No Prerequisites. Department approval NOT required. "Flash fiction," "micro-narratives" and the "short-short" have become exciting areas of exploration for contemporary writers. This course will examine how these literary fragments have captured the imagination of writers internationally and at home. The larger question the class seeks to answer, both on a collective and individual level, is: How can we craft a working definition of those elements endemic to "short prose" as a genre? Does the form exceed classification? What aspects of both crafts – prose and poetry – does this genre inhabit, expand upon, reinvent, reject, subvert? Short Prose Forms incorporates aspects of both literary seminar and the creative workshop. Class-time will be devoted alternatingly to examinations of published pieces and modified discussions of student work. Our reading chart the course from the genre’s emergence, examining the prose poem in 19th-century France through the works of Mallarme, Baudelaire, Max Jacob and Rimbaud. We’ll examine aspects of poetry – the attention to the lyrical, the use of compression, musicality, sonic resonances and wit – and attempt to understand how these writers took, as Russell Edson describes, "experience [and] made it into an artifact with the logic of a dream."
The class will conclude with a portfolio at the end of the term, in which students will submit a compendium of final drafts of three of four short prose pieces, samples of several exercises, selected responses to readings, and a short personal manifesto on the "short prose form.

WRIT UN3016 Cross Genre Seminar: Walking. 3 points.
Prerequisites: No Prerequisites. Department approval NOT required. As Walter Benjamin notes in The Arcades Project: "Basic to flaneur, among other things, is the idea that the fruits of idleness are more precious than the fruits of labor. The flaneur, as is well known, makes 'studies.'" This course will encourage you to make "studies" -- poems, essays, stories, or multimedia pieces -- based on your walks. We will read depictions of walking from multiple disciplines, including philosophy, poetry, history, religion, visual art, and urban planning. Occasionally we will walk together. An important point of the course is to develop mobile forms of writing. How can writing emerge from, and document, a walk’s encounters, observations, and reflections? What advantages does mobility bring to our work? Each week you will write a short piece (1-3 pages) that engages your walks while responding to close readings of the assigned material.
WRIT UN3027 Science Fiction Poetics. 3.00 points.
"If you wish to make an apple pie from scratch, you must first invent the universe." —Carl Sagan "Tomorrow belongs to those who can hear it coming." —David Bowie "I grew up reading science fiction." —Jeff Bezos Science fiction is the literature of the human species encountering change. It is the literature of the Other, of philosophy and ideas, of innovation and experimentation. This seminar will examine how poets and writers from around the world have imagined alternate realities and futures, linguistic inventions, and new poetic expressions inspired by science. We will discuss what these imaginings might tell us about the cultural and political presents in which they were conceived, as well as what the extreme conditions offered by science fiction might teach us about writing into the unknown. Topics will include cyberpunk and apocalyptic eco-poetics, extraterrestrial arophrodites, monstrous bodyscapes, space exploration and colonization, future creoles and the evolution of language, bio-poetics and crystalline formations, immortal texts, and global futurisms—from the European Futurists of the early 20th century to Afrofuturism, as well as recent figurations such as Gulf Futurism and Arabfuturism. Course reading will include work by Aase Berg, Etel Adnan, Chen Quifan, Johannes Heldén, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Velimir Khlebnikov, Hao Jingfang, Eve L. Ewing, Sun Ra, Ursula K. Le Guin, Italo Calvino, Anaïs Duplan, Ursula Andkjær Olsen, Dempow Torishima, Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, Octavia E. Butler, Tracy K. Smith, Cathy Park Hong, and others.

WRIT UN3017 Incarcerated Yet Inspired: Exploring Criminal Justice Through Creative Writing. 3 points.
Welcome to the Incarcerated Yet Inspired, a cross-genre, creative writing seminar. Over the course of this semester, we will conduct a close reading of literary works that are based on the lives of individuals who have been ostracized, incarcerated, and isolated from their communities. While some of the writers we will study have been personally affected by the criminal justice system, others have drawn upon their research, observations, and experiences working in prisons to tell a compelling story. Through our weekly analysis and discussion, we will explore the thematic elements and artistic choices each writer employs in their work. We will also challenge our existing thoughts about prisons as an institution and develop a better understanding of how the prism of art and justice can be valuable to you as writers.

WRIT UN3015 Daily Life. 3 points.
Prerequisites: No prerequisites. Department approval NOT required. In his poem A Few Days, James Schuyler reflects "A few days / are all we have. So count them as they pass. They pass too quickly / out of breath." Before we know it, as Schuyler says, "Today is tomorrow." This course will encourage us to slow down time and document today while it is still today. One of the course's main points is to pursue the ordinary, and to recognize that the ordinary — whether presented as poems, essays, stories, fragments, etc. — can become art. Assignments will provide broad examples of how to portray dailiness. Each week you will write a short piece (1-3 pages) that responds to these assignments while engaging your own daily life. The form is open. You could, for example, write a poem or story with a brief critical preface, or you could compose an essay that explores formal and/or thematic qualities. You can also create multimedia work. The important thing is to treat the materials we will read as springboards into your own artistic practice.

WRIT UN3011 Translation Seminar. 3 points.
Prerequisites: No prerequisites. Students do not need to demonstrate bilingual ability to take this course. Department approval NOT needed. Corequisites: This course is open to undergraduate & graduate students. This course will explore broad-ranging questions pertaining to the historical, cultural, and political significance of translation while analyzing the various challenges confronted by the art's foremost practitioners. We will read and discuss texts by writers and theorists such as Benjamin, Derrida, Borges, Steiner, Dryden, Nabokov, Schleiermacher, Goethe, Spivak, Jakobson, and Venuti. As readers and practitioners of translation, we will train our ears to detect the visibility of invisibility of the translator's craft; through short writing experiments, we will discover how to identify and capture the nuances that traverse literary styles, historical periods and cultures. The course will culminate in a final project that may either be a critical analysis or an original translation accompanied by a translator's note of introduction.
WRIT UN3018 Inhabiting Form: Writing the Body. 3 points.
The body is our most immediate encounter with the world, the vessel through which we experience our entire lives: pleasure, pain, beauty, horror, limitation, freedom, fragility and empowerment. In this course, we will pursue critical and creative inquiries into invocations and manifestations of the body in multiple genres of literature and in several capacities. We will look at how writers make space for—or take up space with—bodies in their work.

The etymology of the word “text” is from the Latin textus, meaning “tissue.” Along these lines, we will consider the text itself as a body. Discussions around body politics, race, gender, ability, illness, death, metamorphosis, monstrosity and pleasure will be parallel to the consideration of how a text might function itself as a body in space and time. We will consider such questions as: What is the connective tissue of a story or a poem? What is the nervous system of a lyric essay? How is formal constraint similar to societal ideals about beauty and acceptability of certain bodies? How do words and language function at the cellular level to build the body of a text? How can we make room to honor, in our writing, bodies that have otherwise been marginalized?

We will also consider non-human bodies (animals & organisms) and embodiments of the supernatural (ghosts, gods & specters) in our inquiries. Students will process and explore these ideas in both creative and analytical writings throughout the semester, deepening their understanding of embodiment both on and off the page.

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