INTRODUCTION TO CREATIVE WRITING: POETRY AND FICTION

ENGL 010 601
University of Pennsylvania
Tuesday 4:30pm-7:30pm
Fisher-Bennett 025

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Office Hours by Appointment

During this introductory course on poetry and fiction, we will consider the writer’s palette, those material tools available to a writer in order to generate effects in a reader: words, words in juxtaposition, metaphor, sound and rhythm, the order in which information is provided to the reader, dialogue, setting, plot and character. We will consider these elements as all in play with one another and also as the limits of the
possible, as a painter must struggle with the constraints of paint and canvas. Just as a painting doesn’t exist independently, we will consider the materiality of the words and how they appear: on paper, on screen, aloud, on architecture, etc. We will closely study how a writer’s decisions in all of these areas impact readers, and how we can read as writers in order to learn from the work of practitioners.

What power and freedom exists when we as writers choose to criss-cross binaries/genres and make a hybrid text, a mash-up of both poetry and prose (or, sometimes, “neither” poetry nor prose)? What can we do with language in both modes?

**As will directly be the case for us, how can poetry’s foregrounding of the nature of language and words inform our prose writing: the push and pull between connotations, denotations, the look and feel of a word?** Poetry as a genre often directly signals us to pay close attention to language. Prose may as well, depending on the reader’s attention and the writer’s intention—however, as a rule, much of what we call fiction is about while “poetry” concerns a network of words.

In addition to discussion of selected weekly craft readings and examples of poetry and prose, we will hone our skills as writers, readers, and generous editors of one another’s writing in weekly workshops.

**WORKSHOP**

The bulk of our classtime will be spent on this activity of workshopping, a process in which previously distributed student-writing first gets read aloud by the author, who then goes silent for our class discussion of the work. *Authors remain silent* as other students offer their experience of the work as readers—most immediately, this lets the writer see whether their intended effects are what in fact the writing evokes in different reader. As students, I expect you all to explain what you believe works in a given piece with specificity and above all to share your experience of the piece as a reader – your goal isn’t to try to guess the writer’s intention, but to provide the writer with an account of how you experienced the work and a clear explanation of WHY you experienced the work the way you did, on the word, sentence, image, detail, etc. level. You must both be a reader and a mechanical analyst of each others’ readings.

**The Workshop Rules:**

- Upload your draft to the course facebook page the night before class in order to give everyone the chance to print out your piece to bring it to class. Work submitted after midnight will not be workshopped.
- Raise hands – instructor will call on you. We will begin by going in a circle. Everyone must participate. After initial responses, we will move to a more freeform discussion.
- No interruption of other speakers.
• Awareness and acknowledgment of other’s comments – this is a collaborative, accumulative activity. Listen to what others are saying as well as holding on to your own thoughts until your turn comes.

• **Kind and empathic conduct, especially keeping in mind the writer. Failure to conduct oneself in such a way will result in severe penalty to your class participation grade.**

• Write your thoughts on your hard copy of the writer’s work throughout the workshop – copies will be returned to the writer at the end. If you have time before class to begin doing so, so much the better.

• **NOTE:** For workshop, I will distribute copies of everyone’s submissions. During Workshop, you should write all over your copy with notes, suggestions, observations, edits, in order to return it to the writer at the end. The writer will then have a batch of edited drafts in addition to all the comments made in class. Do your best to record your comments on the print out.

• You are welcome to revise and resubmit any writing for workshopping a second time.

The central goal of the course is to maximize the amount of workshop time that each student’s work receives. We will likely not get through everyone’s work each class, though in some cases we may. If necessary, we will split the class in half into two workshop groups in order to be able to give adequate attention to everyone’s submissions – in that case, the group without the instructor will have a group leader appointed by the instructor. We will begin workshop the subsequent class with where we left off as per the order of submission of files to facebook.

**You should post your own writing to the class Facebook page by Monday night at 11:59pm.**

**READINGS AND READING RESPONSES**

Each week we will read a selection of materials to use as models and on which we might practice critique. **PLEASE NOTE:** The readings assigned are meant to help inform and inspire your own writing. READ ONLY AS MUCH AS IS USEFUL TO YOU. The readings should never interfere with the time you need to write – if there’s too much for you to get through, either email the instructor to ask what to prioritize for you, yourself individually, or limit yourself to readings marked with a ★ within the required readings. The readings are a resource for YOU, to do with as you will. You can read things now, you can read things in the future. Think of the syllabus as a library of material built for you as a writer.

You are required to respond to the readings you do for each week in **at least** a solid paragraph or more on facebook, approximately 250 words. The response is open-ended, but you are not to “review” or offer your opinion about the material – you are to instead discuss your experience as a reader of the material and as a writer – what might
be curious to you? What techniques from the reader might you use yourself? Your job in workshop and in your responses is to not criticize the writer, and again, not to determine whether you “like” or “don’t like” the piece. You aren’t writing a review and opinion piece. Instead, you are to read and carefully observe your own responses and attempt to determine what in occurring in the writing itself that is provoking and shaping your experience. What is the writer doing effectively that you can learn from? The first person to post will begin the thread, and all subsequent responses should be posted as comments to that initial post. Most of this will happen during the week on the class Facebook secret group page which will be set up during the first class.

When we turn to the fiction portion of the course, Francine Prose will be our guide in close reading, in reading like writers. For the poetry, think about the particular ways in which the poet is arranging language and creating counterpoint and parallel relations in action between the material qualities of the language (sound, rhythm, and the denotations and connotations of the words and the overall content). Through the poems, we should become masters of form and content in mutual, complex, constructive relation. As well, think about the flow of information – is the poem linear? Circular? Both? We want to become technicians of the word, of sentences, stanzas, paragraphs.

You should post your analysis/response to the week’s assigned reading to Facebook by Sunday night at 11:59pm.

NOTEBOOK

You should purchase a blank lined notebook to take notes on any passing detail you notice, to capture any fragments of conversation you overhear. Several times before writing your short story, you should position yourself in a public place and observe and listen and take notes – you should do the same at a campus party or family event. Collect as much as you can – you never know how it might come into play in your writing. See “On Keeping a Notebook” by Joan Didion in the “JoanDidionSlouchingTowardsBethlehem” file located in the Week 8 folder on Canvas.

CONDUCT

See the END OF THIS SYLLABUS for University of Pennsylvania CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT and CODE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY. Plagiarism will be dealt with swiftly and severely. If you turn in work that isn’t yours, expect your professor to catch it – any writing that doesn’t feel or sound like yours will be met with strong suspicion and will be searched for online. Plagiarism will result in an automatic failure for the course due to the nature of the community of the workshop and our mission in this course specifically as writers. Lack of respect for the workshop format will result in severe penalty to grade.
Books required (All but one Available at the Penn Book Center at the corner of 34th and Sansom St.):

*Reading Like a Writer* by Francine Prose

*Autobiography of Red* by Anne Carson

*Citizen* by Claudia Rankine

*Fair Play* by Tove Jansson

*Solibo Magnificent* by Patrick Chamoiseaux

In addition to handouts and books, please be sure to always check the week’s folder in FILES for any recommended reading materials in addition to the books. Several films will be required viewing—these films will either be linked to as streaming video, will need to be rented as streaming video, or will be available to stream over the course Canvas page.

**ASSIGNMENTS OVERALL**

- Assigned readings.
- In-class writing exercises.
- Two short fiction exercises.
- Optional weekend writing excursions.
- One BRIEF report on a poetry reading that you attend. 2-5 pages
- Drafts and revisions of five poems.
- Draft and revisions of a short story.
- Participation in course Facebook page – responses to the reading assignments should be posted there. I will only accept late posts until the Friday after class, and you will only earn half credit for late posts. Zero credit after that.
- 20-25 page final portfolio of work including a cover letter describing the material included with description of expectations of how a reader might experience the work. Final portfolio must include at least five pages of revised poetry and fifteen pages of revised prose work.

**Grading:**

- 25% of the final grade will be based on workshop and general classroom discussion and participation in workshop, work on in-class writing exercises.
- 20% will be based on the timely completion and insightfulness of your Facebook reading response posts and other posts of interest to class to the Facebook group.
- 5% will be based on your report on a live reading of poetry or prose.
- 20% of the final grade will be based on on-time submission of your writing to the Facebook class page for workshop.
• 30% of the grade will be based on the final portfolio

**Final Portfolio is due December 20 by midnight.**

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Class One  August 30, 2016

**Introductions: The Materiality of the Word: Expression and Construction / Concrete Details**

**IN CLASS:**

• Introductions with follow-up questions
• watch The Dreamlife of Letters by Brian Kim Stefans:  
  http://www.arras.net/RNG/flash/dreamlife/dreamlife_index.html
• read aloud from Christian Bök’s *Eunoia*: complete text available here:  
  http://archives.chbooks.com/online_books/eunoia/text.html
• Study pages of Tom Phillip’s *Humument*, available here:  
  http://www.tomphillips.co.uk/humument
• Torn-out book page poem-making erasure exercise

**FOR NEXT WEEK, CLASS 2:**

• Post to Facebook a photograph of your erasure exercise page
• Post to Facebook at least one link related to your introduction
• Send a sample of your creative writing to Professor
• Post response to reading packet handed out in class
• Post poem in imitation of one of the poems in the reading packet.
• Read the contents of handout Packet  
  (the entire packet does not need to all be read except for items below with an *):

**PACKET CONTENTS:**

*Preface and Chapter 1, READING LIKE A WRITER by Francine Prose

from THE FIRST POEMS IN ENGLISH, edited and translated by Michael Alexander:
"The Ruin"
"Two Old English Poems"
Elegies - only "The Seafarer"
The Exeter Riddles: 7, 9, 12, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 33 34, 35, 38, 42  
(introductions to each are optional)

From THE LOST ORIGINS OF THE ESSAY edited by John D’Agata:
*excerpts from *The Pillow Book* by Sei Shonagon p. 57-61, 66-73, 76-77 (yes, written in the year 996)*
excerpt from *The Narrow Road to the Interior* by Matsuo Basho
(introductions to each are optional)

From THE COLLECTED POEMS OF WALLACE STEVENS:
*"The Plot Against the Giant"
*"The Emperor of Ice Cream"
*"The Poem that took the Place of a Mountain"

From "If Not, Winter: Poems of Sappho" edited and translated by Anne Carson:
*(read introduction)
*poem 1, 23, 24A, 42

From MADONNA ANNO DOMINI by Joshua Clover:
*"The Nevada Glassworks"

From SHAKING THE PUMPKIN edited by Jerome Rothenberg:
"The Invention of White People" by Leslie Marmon Silko

from THE GOLD CELL by Sharon Olds:
*"Rite of Passage"
*"35/10"

from A BERNADETTE MAYER READER:
*"The Way to Keep Going in Antarctica"

from THE COLLECTED BOOKS OF JACK SPICER:
"Ballad of the Little Girl Who Invented the Universe"
two letters to Lorca (who died long before the writing of these letters, namely the poet Federico Garcia Lorca)

from A HUMAN DOCUMENT by Tom Phillips:
p. 260
p. 330

from HUMANOPHONE by Janet Holmes:
"Humanophone" Parts I, II, III, IV, V, VI.

from CULTURE OF ONE by Alice Notley:
*"The Acquisition of the Senses"
"I Invented the Arts"

From NERUDA: SELECTED POEMS by Pablo Neruda and translated by Anthony Kerrigan:
*"Ode to the Tomato"
"Ode to the Storm"
*"Ode to the Clothes"
From HOW TO BY DRAWN by Terrence Hayes:
"The Deer"
"How to Be Drawn to Trouble"

Class Two  September 6, 2016

The Materiality of the Word: Expression and Construction / Concrete Details

IN CLASS:

NOTE: At the beginning of every class there will be a quick writing exercise to get your mind tuned and stretched for the work ahead that evening. You can definitely use these exercises as seeds for your own poems that you go on to turn in for workshop.

Sensory Detail Writing Exercise. Immediately upon entering the classroom, retrieve a piece of fruit and examine it with ALL FIVE of your senses. Write down as much SPECIFIC and PRECISE sensory detail as possible, using words from the sensory-words handout as needed.

Review Syllabus.

TO DO FOR CLASS THREE:

Read the two handout-packets: “Poetry Movements and Criticism” & “Formal Terms and Poetic Forms.”

Packet One includes a partial overview of various trends in primarily U.S.A. poetry over the past century or so. You do not need to memorize these movements, but you should be familiar enough with them to use them to think about differences between poems and in particular the particular relation of reader, poem’s voice, and poem. You should understand what each movement foregrounds. We will have time in class next week to go over any questions, so bring any that you might have.

Packet Two includes a partial survey of formal poetic terms that should be useful to you in thinking about the mechanics of a particular poem and above all should establish a common vocabulary for our use in workshop discussion.

I will mark below the material that I’m REQUIRING you to read with a ★. The rest is optional – the poems are here to help illustrate the terms beyond their definitions.

Poems and other materials included as illustrations of terms in Packet One:
★ Excerpt from “The Waste Land” by T.S. Eliot
★ “In a Station of the Metro” by Ezra Pound
★ “Sea Rose” by H.D.
“Aphorisms on Futurism” by Mina Loy (this isn’t a poem but a manifesto)
★ “Jessie Mitchell’s Mother” by Gwendolyn Brooks
“Riot” by Gwendolyn Brooks
★ selection of poems by Loraine Niedecker
selections from “Of Being Numerous: Sections 1-22” by George Oppen
bio of Charles Olson
★ “I, Maximus of Gloucester, to You” by Charles Olson
★ “I Know a Man” by Robert Creeley
★ “The Language” by Robert Creeley
“The Midnite Show” by Jonathan Williams
“The Window” by Diane di Prima
“Sunflower Sutra” by Allen Ginsberg
★ excerpt from “Howl” by Allen Ginsberg
“My Mother Would be a Falconress” by Robert Duncan
★ “Often I Am Permitted to Return to a Meadow” by Robert Duncan
“The Operation” by Anne Sexton
★ “Daddy” by Sylvia Plath
★ “Lady Lazarus” by Sylvia Plath
★ “Skunk Hour” by Robert Lowell
“Caedmon” by Denise Levertov
“What My House Would Be Like If It Were A Person” by Denise Levertov
Bio of Frank O’Hara
★ “Why I Am Not a Painter” by Frank O’Hara
“Ave Maria” by Frank O’Hara
★ “The Day Lady Died” by Frank O’Hara
“Poem [“Lana Turner has collapsed!”]” by Frank O’Hara
★ “A Step Away From Them” by Frank O’Hara
Bio of Barbara Guest
“Roses” by Barbara Guest
“Finnish Opera” by Barbara Guest
★ “Words” by Barbara Guest
“The Crystal Lithium” by James Schuyler
“The Bluet” by James Schuyler
★ “One Train May Hide Another” by Kenneth Koch
★ “Farm Implements and Rutabagas in a Landscape” by John Ashbery
“My Erotic Double” by John Ashbery
★ “Some Trees” by John Ashbery
★ From “Someone Is Writing a Poem” by Adrienne Rich
“Mothers, fathers, clasp the children” by Judy Grahan
★ “The Marilyn Monroe Poem” by Judy Grahan
“Incident” by Amiri Baraka
★ “The Great Pax Whitie” by Nikki Giovanni
"A Test of Poetry” by Charles Bernstein
"Questionnaire” by Charles Bernstein
“thinking I think I think” by Charles Bernstein
★ “All the Whiskey in Heaven” by Charles Bernstein
★ from My Life: “A name trimmed with colored ribbons” by Lyn Hejinian
“[A straight rain is rare...]” by Lyn Hejinian
“Home Federal” by Rae Armantrout
“Eden” by Rae Armantrout
★ “Crossing” by Rae Armantrout [audio recording]
“Vita Nova” by Louise Glück
“Hyacinth” by Louise Glück
★ “Mock Orange” by Louise Glück
★ “Elegy for My Father” by Mark Strand
“Is Flarf corrosive? (PoemTalk #33)” (you are free to just read through this or if you are curious to listen to the podcast)
Bio: Tyehimba Jess
“Blind Boone’s Vision” by Tyehimba Jess
Bio: Patricia Smith
★ “Hip-Hop Ghazal” by Patricia Smith
★ “Buried” by Patricia Smith
★ “Siblings” by Patricia Smith
“What You Pray Toward” by Patricia Smith
★ “Almost a Conjuror” by Lucie Brock-Broido

Poems and other materials included as illustrations of terms in Packet Two:

“Anniversary” by Marie Ponsot
★ “I Am Trying to Break Your Heart” by Kevin Young
“As” by Paul Muldoon
★ “Wild Nights! Wild Nights!” by Emily Dickinson
★ “To You” by Kenneth Koch
“Mother and Poet” by Elizabeth Barrett Browning
excerpt from “The Bounty” by Derek Walcott
excerpt from Beowulf
“Carrion Comfort” by Gerard Manley Hopkins
“Between Walls” by William Carlos Williams
★ “Poem to Some of My Recent Poems” by James Tate
“Preludes” by T. S. Eliot
“Second Mouth” by Franny Choi
“Latino Art and Ekphrasis” by Carmen Giménez Smith
excerpt from “Georgics II” by Virgil
excerpt from “The Sugar-Cane” by James Grainger
bio of Agha Shahid Ali
★ “Ghazal” by Agha Shahid Ali
★ “Tonight” by Agha Shahid Ali
★ “pantoum: landing: 1976” by Evie Shockley
★ “My Brother at 3 A.M.” by Nathalie Diaz
“Beautiful Poetry” by Camille Guthrie
★ “Sestina” by Elizabeth Bishop
“Sestina: As There Are Support Groups, There Are Support Words” by Albert Goldbarth
“Sonnet” by Alice Notley
“Incandescent War Poem Sonnet” by Bernadette Mayer
★ “Scorn Not the Sonnet” by William Wordsworth
“Sonnet In Search of an Author” by William Carlos Williams
★ “[Sonnet] You jerk you didn’t call me up” by Bernadette Mayer
★ “American Sonnet for Wanda C.” by Terrence Hayes
Links to Tracie Morris videos
★ “One Art” by Elizabeth Bishop
★ “Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night” by Dylan Thomas

RESPONSE AND WRITING ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK (choose one):

Your assignment for next week (WEEK 3) is first to respond on Facebook to the packets overall or to focus on a few poems and respond to them in terms of your experience and the craft of the particular poems you choose to focus on.

Then, you are to write a poem using one of the strict poetic forms described in the latter portion of the packet “Formal Terms and Poetic Forms” – chose one form from any of the following: Ghazal ∞ Pantoum ∞ Sestina ∞ Sonnet ∞ Villanelle. After completing one of these and posting to Facebook for workshopping, you are welcome to try your hand at writing another form or mode discussed – if you want to workshop a poem other than the first one you submit, that’s fine. There will be a microquiz next week as well on the terminology on this handout and the previous one. (HINT: you will be asked about which poetic movements are lyric-based and which work against the lyric, you will be asked about the difference between metaphor and metonymy as general terms, you will be asked one or two other things, and you will be asked to identify the basic formal terms from Packet Two via examples.)

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The first optional writing activity this week is to attend a reading at the Kelly Writer House on Locust Walk on Thursday or in West Philly on Sunday...see further instructions below...

MULTILINGUAL POETICS: PIERRE JORIS & NICOLE PEYRAFITTE
**Writers Without Borders**
**THURSDAY 9/8 6:30 PM**
**At the Kelly Writers House in the Arts Cafe**


**Nicole Peyrafitte** is a pluridisciplinary artist born and raised in the Gascony part of the French Pyrenees & residing in Brooklyn with poet Pierre Joris with whom she often collaborates, as she does tonight. Her texts, voice-work, paintings, videos, & (on occasion) her cooking are displayed in a range of multi-lingual & multi-faceted performances. Peyrafitte's work is informed & characterized by a daily practice — a quest for life in art and art in life between two continents & four languages. Her latest projects are: *Things Fall Where They Lie* a docu-vérté film in pre-production; *LandscOpe* a collection of texts & photographs — publication 2016. Recent publications include *Bi-Valve : Vulvic Space/Vulvic Knowledge*, 17 paintings, 17 multilingual texts, 1 recipe & 1 CD (Stockport Flats, 2013). She has performed all over the world, including at The Metropolitan Museum (NYC), the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, Poets House (NYC), The Poetry Project (NYC), Beyond Baroque (L.A.), Bard College (N.Y), Bergen University (Norway), Birbeck College at the University of London (UK), University of Edinburgh (UK), Center for Contemporary Art Glasgow (UK), Festival Occitania & Cave Poésie (Toulouse-France), Estivada de Rodez (France), the Universities of Bordeaux & Angoulême (France); Festival Des Voix Vives de Sète (France), Festival des Voix de la Méditerranée, Lodève (France), Université de Bruxelles (Belgium), and Anthology Film Archives (NYC). In 2012 she wrote & co-directed the documentary film *Basil King: MİRAGE* with Miles Joris-Peyrafitte. For more information: [www.nicolepeyrafitte.com](http://www.nicolepeyrafitte.com).

This weekend’s other entirely optional writing activity is to make your way out to West Philadelphia to the restaurant Dahlak on Baltimore Ave. between 47th and 48th Streets. On Sunday, September 11, at 7:30 pm, my crazy dancing boyfriend Andy (who is a fine poet) and myself will be doing a poetry reading.

You are going to be required this semester to attend at least one prose or poetry reading and to write a brief (one – two pages double-spaced) report that you will print out and turn in to me in class. This is a fine opportunity to get that task out of the way. You can be as critical as you’d like! But this is a very strange venue for a poetry reading — you’ll see what I mean. And in your performance event report I’d like you to focus more on the environment, the audience, the atmosphere, the ritual and oddities of the event.

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more so than the poems! Again, before or after attending a reading, be sure to skim over the essay by Peter Middleton about “The Contemporary Poetry Reading” in FILES and which I will hand out in class.

https://www.facebook.com/events/1604725469827493/

If you can’t make these readings, there will be plenty more of them this semester that I will list here in the syllabus. I’ll add new ones to the Canvas Syllabus Page as I find out about them and also post info to Facebook.

Class Three ♦ September 13, 2016

FINDING YOUR WAY FROM THE LAST 100 YEARS INTO YOUR OWN POEMS

IN CLASS:

Opening Writing Exercise: write with overwhelming force of consonance and assonance, even if you have to make up words.

Brief QUIZ on packets

Discuss any questions anyone has about any of the terminology

Discuss the tools available to the poet as compared to the materials and tools available to other artists. What are the material properties of language that allow us to do impractical things with it, or rather, make art? How do you feel about language not making sense, not working as a turbulence-free vehicle for information?

Look at examples of paintings related to the various poetic movements.

Workshop

TO DO FOR CLASS FOUR:

(All the below will be in FILES on the class Canvas site)

http://www.openculture.com/2015/01/seven-tips-from-edgar-allan-poe-on-how-to-write-vivid-stories-and-poems.html

★19-30, 36-40. 44-70. 81-108 of Making Your Own Days: The Pleasures of Reading and Writing Poetry by Kenneth Koch [In Files]

★ “The Difficult Poem” by Charles Bernstein [In Files]
Introduction to the anthology *American Hybrid: A Norton Anthology of New Poetry* by Cole Swensen [In Files]

Selections from *American Hybrid* [In Files]
Poems by ★Etel Adnan, ★Forrest Gander, Jorie Graham, Robert Hass, Brenda Hillman, ★Myung Mi Kim, Nathaniel Mackey, ★Jane Miller, ★Harryette Mullen, Eleni Sikelianos, ★CD Wright

Selection from Arthur Sze [In Files]

★Excerpt from *Tea* by D. A. Powell [in FILES]

Excerpt from *Kingdom Animalia* by Aracelis Girmay [in FILES]

(Burt discusses the idea of the “third way” mentioned elsewhere in these linked articles)
https://www.bostonreview.net/poetry/new-thing

★ A more recent essay summing up the field of contemporary poetry:
“Close Calls With Nonsense” by Stephen Burt
http://www.believermag.com/issues/200405/?read=article_burt

The following linked articles are OPTIONAL....

*American Hybrid* generated controversy when published! Different factions of poets not willing to “hybridize” took issue with the ease the anthology claimed the old turf wars to be over. To see some of the reactions, see some of the following...

“An Interview with the Editors of *American Hybrid*”
http://poemsoutloud.net/columns/archive/an_interview_with_the_editors_of_amERICAN_HYBRID/

“Poetry Makes Strange Bedfellows” by Travis Nichols
http://www.pw.org/content/poetry_makes_strange_bedfellows?cmnt_all=1

Poet Ron Silliman on his blog, posting about *American Hybrid*

“Whitewashing American Hybrid Aesthetics” by Craig Santos Perez
https://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2010/04/whitewashing-american-hybrid-aesthetics/

“FORUM: Poetry on the Brink: Reinventing the Lyric” by Marjorie Perloff et al.
https://www.bostonreview.net/forum/poetry-brink
AND right below is the original Stephen Burt piece mentioned in the discussion of “Elliptical Poetry” back in Packet 1 from the last class and a few others by him. I think “Hybrid poetry” as discussed by Swenson is quite close to what Burt is called “Elliptical Poetry” – it is worth your while to compare their approaches and terms.

“Review: Smokes by Susan Wheeler” by Stephen Burt
http://new.bostonreview.net/BR23.3/burt.html

Here, finally, is an indirectly related essay by Stephen Burt about why we enjoy watching YouTube videos of cats doing goofy things. Not about poetry, but nevertheless food for thought! Think about his argument here about how we experience things on the screen, about the particular “character” of the cat, and think how you might apply such an “aesthetic” in your writing.


WRITING ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK (choose one):

1) Unlimited. Write anything you’d like.

[[[No haiku or one line poems. (a batch of them would be ok). The poem should fill at least the upper left half of a printed page, more is fine, spacing is up to you... it should be rich and complex enough to sink one’s teeth into).]]]

or

2) Mash up language and form from at least three poems from American Hybrid in order to craft a poem that expresses your own self or another – use the material you gather to create a portrait. In other words, write a “hybrid” poem that addresses the concerns in Cole Swensen’s introduction. As you write, try to remove the direct material taken from the poems and overlay it with your own new words and moves and phrases. Be loose and open – the poem does not need to “make sense” on a logical level – it may make sense on an EMOTIONAL level, like music, though using words as score, imagine the reader as playing your poem on the instrument of his or her mind, his or her eyes, ears.

or

3) Go back to the Second Poetry Packet on Poetry Terms and Forms and write a poem in a form “constrained by content:” An Apostrophe poem, an Anaphora poem, a poem consisting ONLY of epigraphs, a Persona poem, an Ekphrastic poem, a Found / Documentary poem (you can’t just have a Found poem, it needs to consist of complexly arranged “significant” information that you research or otherwise gather), a Georgic (which could be a how-to-survive climate change or how one will not – the GEO in georgic means “of the Earth” – so a contemporary Georgic would be an instructional poem that concerns human relations with the Earth.
or

4) Watch TV or Hulu or Netflix and write a poem as you watch in conversation with the screen.

or

5) Research a topic, a limited topic—such as one particular shoe designer’s 2017 spring collection, one type of poison rainforest frog, the human endocrine system, the automatic automobile transmission, the rules for the filibuster in congress, the making of the movie *Apocalypse Now*, Betsy Ross, etc. etc. the possibilities are endless—and write a poem about that researched thing, process, system, person or event.

Or

6) Write a poem that immerses the reader either a) in a relationship b) underwater c) in the human body  or d) in a relationship underwater in the human body.

###

This weekend’s optional writing activity is to go canoeing in the New Jersey Pine Barrens on Saturday morning for about four to five hours – this will be a serious day trip of writing. Once we’ve determined who can go and wants to, we’ll make the practical plans. I can only take a limited number of people in the university van unless we are able to find students with cars in class. You should bring paper – a notebook you can try and keep waterproofed in a plastic bag and crayons or oil pastels --- in case your writing gets wet! We want to draw inspiration above all from Lorine Niedecker from Packet One that we read for Class Three. We will want to draw maps. We want to above all be inspired to write by the rhythms we encounter, from paddling to the sequence of trees. You’ll need to pack a water-tight lunch to bring...I will bring large ziplock bags. I will also bring field guides and language that describes the life we will see around us as well as some relevant poems and stories of the Jersey Devil. Of course, you can use the writing you generate to craft a poem to turn in for workshop – it might also turn into the basis for your short story later in the semester.

Field Guide:
http://www.pinelandsalliance.org/ecology/

Note, for example, common plant names that you might use in a poem:
*Bog Asphodel, Frostweed, Golden Hedge-Hyssop, Turkeybeard*...
http://www.pinelandsalliance.org/ecology/plants/herbaceous/

Ghost Towns:
http://www.pinelandsalliance.org/history/places/
The Jersey Devil:
http://weirdnj.com/stories/jersey-devil/

Please note that this will require some funds. If you want to go and will have trouble funding your trip please let the instructor know immediately.

We should be able to fit 2 people per canoe – see info about canoe rental here:
http://www.mickscanoerental.com/rates.html
http://www.mickscanoerental.com/index.html
http://www.mickscanoerental.com/history.html

Kayak Trip: New Jersey Pine Barrens
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INbYMFpLve8

Class FOUR ❄️ September 20, 2016

The Materiality of the Word: Expression and Construction of the Contemporary Poem, or The Hybridization of the Lyric with the Experimental Text, or Life After the War between the Lyric and the Anti-Lyric, or Is this the End of the Poetic Avant-Garde?

IN CLASS:

• Opening Writing Exercise: Come up with elaborate rules to prepare and enact a writing exercise, think of all that could be possible for your to do with your body, be as complex as you can. Think of this as a lavish and baroque recipe for creativity. Nothing is too crazy. Think of what it would take to relax, trigger,
spark your body and brain to produce something like one of the poems from *American Hybrid*. In your optional reading for next week, you will find EXTREME poetry writing exercises in the excerpt from CA Conrad’s *A Beautiful Marsupial Afternoon*.

- Discuss the introduction to *American Hybrid* and any poems that you struggled with.
- Workshop your poems.

**TO DO FOR CLASS FIVE:**

Read the following materials for pure enjoyment. You don’t need to analyze anything or solve anything. Just ride the poems and see where they take you. Pick what you want to read. Required is only the excerpt from *The Gurlesque: the new grlry, grotesque, burlesque poetics*, the excerpt by D. A. Powell from *Tea*, the excerpt from Teresa Hyuk Cha’s *Dicteé*, and the excerpt from SHAKING THE PUMPKIN.

**READ:**

**REQUIRED:**

★ Introduction and poems from *The Gurlesque: the new grlry, grotesque, burlesque poetics* edited by Arielle Greenberg and Laura Glenum [in FILES]

American Indian Language Policy by Ofelia Zepeda [in FILES]

★ Excerpt from *Shaking the Pumpkin* edited by Jerome Rothenberg [in FILES]

★ Excerpt from Teresa Hyuk Cha’s *Dicteé*. [In FILES]

Excerpt from *A Beautiful Marsupial Afternoon* by CA Conrad [in FILES]

Excerpt from *The English Language: A Historical Introduction* by Charles Barber 199-261 [in FILES]

★ Excerpt from *alphabet* by Inger Christensen

Excerpt from *Wild Grasses on the Riverbank* by Hiromi Ito [In FILES]

Excerpt from *With Deer* by Aase Berg [In FILES]

“American Indian Poetry” —A General History

“Suspicious Characters: Realism, Asian American Identity, and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha’s ‘Dicteé’” by Sue-Im Lee

**ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK:**
From the selection of poems, choose your favorite and prepare to read it aloud to the class. Figure out exactly how you want to deliver it. Practice. You don’t have to memorize it, but I want you to really think about how YOU can put your own unique verbal spin on the poem. Make yourself a “musical” score to read from if you need to.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK (choose one):

1) “Re-Translate” one of the translated poems in Shaking the Pumpkin. Don’t be skimpy. I expect at least ¾ of a page.

or

2) Create a Spoken Word Poem to be performed in class in lieu of a printout – the Spoken Word Poem will still be workshopped as performance!

or

3) Create a poem equally dense with sensory imagery AND language teeming with sounds, sights, rhythm. Double load the senses keeping in mind “counterpoint” – when two or more elements are generating sensory-cognitive friction through opposing yet simultaneously present elements. The most basic example would be the way a word sounds vs. what it means, if the word sounds beautiful but the word’s meaning is ugly...one of my favorite examples is “Chlamydia.” Another example would be from cinema, when, say, the music on the soundtrack is joyous while the image on screen is catastrophic. Branch out into all the possible combinations of counterpoint you might generate – use rhythm, spacing, sound, line-length, and so on. You need not only generate counterpoint – try creating parallel conglomerations where everything is working to hit the same note of feeling and meaning from all directions.

Or

4) Unlimited. Write anything you’d like.

No haiku or one line poems. (a batch of them would be ok). The poem should fill at least the upper left half of a printed page, more is fine, spacing is up to you... it should be rich and complex enough to sink one’s teeth into).

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Sept 24, Saturday Noon

The Magic Garden Trip to South Street
We will be taking public transportation!

READ IN ADVANCE:
https://www.phillymagicgardens.org/visitor-information/
https://www.phillymagicgardens.org/about-us/
https://disposableeverything.co.uk/2014/04/27/assemblage-in-contemporary-british-poetry/
http://www/english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/a_f/ford/collage.htm
https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2013/aug/09/poster-poems-found-poetry-cutup-collage

We will meander around the structures, observe, and see what kinds of words arrive.

We can write poems in the form of various mosaic structures.

We will read poems made out of fragments and learn about the Cento form:
https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/text/cento-poetic-form
https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/wolf-cento

We will read about the Italian baroque from Edward Hughes’s 1858 book Reading Lessons.

Mosaic definition:
[n] art consisting of a design made of small pieces of colored stone or glass
[n] assembly of aerial photographs forming a composite picture
[n] transducer formed by the light-sensitive surface on a television camera tube
[n] a pattern resembling a mosaic
[n] a freeware browser
[n] viral disease in solanaceous plants (tomatoes; potatoes; tobacco) resulting in mottling and often shriveling of the leaves
[adj] decorated with small pieces of colored glass or stone fitted together; "a mosaic floor"; "a tessellated pavement"
[adj] of or relating to Moses or the laws and writings attributed to him; "Mosaic Law"

We will read aloud the short story “Calligraphy” by Alex Kreis
We will read poems made of fragments and collage:
https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/detail/56849
http://poems.com/special_features/prose/essay_moxley.php
http://www.victorianweb.org/previctorian/stc/kktext.html
https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/43434
This location could as well be the inspiration for a location in a short story.

Class FIVE ✦ September 27, 2016

Playing With Language

IN CLASS:

Opening Writing Reading Exercise: Handout: John Taggart. Work with a partner to figure out how to read aloud John Taggart’s “Poem for Two Voices.” Read it aloud together.

Listen to Ofelia Zepeda read her poems in English and in Tohono O’odham.

Read your chosen poems from those assigned aloud to the class as prepared.

Workshop

FOR CLASS SIX:

Read:

★ Autobiography of Red by Anne Carson / Available at Penn Book Center on 34th St. and Sansom.

★ “Stealing the Language” (Essay) by Alicia Ostriker [IN FILES]

★ “Diving into the Wreck” by Adrienne Rich available here online: https://www.poets.org/print/node/47398

WRITING ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK (choose one):

1) Write a poem that uses at least five to ten different but not random or clashing metaphors. Be careful – don’t use clichés. Be original and use the metaphor to inject new imagery and feelings into what you already have. The importation of a new image that isn’t “present” in the reality of the poem is a very dangerous and
very powerful tool to be used with both wild abandon and high caution. The two things being compared through resemblance to give a richer feel for one of the two should have at least TWO sensory and/or conceptual similarities and should have at least ONE thing about them that is dissimilar. Metaphors should be create rich cognitive friction and amplification and to open tendrils beyond the surface meaning of the poem. This should be clearer after you read *Autobiography of Red*.

2) Write a poem that enacts the type of “revision” Ostriker outlines in her essay. If need be, check out some of the poets and poems that Ostriker cites for example. Usually, revisions—whether feminist or not—have some “goal” in mind, some way in which they want to alter or better the standard history that we have been given. You’re encouraged to do the same, but you are welcome to stretch the boundaries of what a “revision” can be. If you get stuck, think about what popular or historical characters you have emotional/intellectual investments in: What if JFK had lived? What if Madonna was a diner waitress? What if Selena Gomez had a secret lesbian life? These are all possibilities that may make for a revisionist poem. The point here is that you’re creating a new version of history, even if only a slice of history.

3) Head to the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts or the UPenn University Museum or to the Philadelphia Museum of Art or the ICA. Explore until you find an object that you find mysterious, appealing, marked in some way by time – sit before the art work for at least an hour and practice Ekphrasis. Ekphrasis relies on close description but above all on metaphor to bring the object alive, to give it soul and complexity, to invest it with YOUR imagination. Use metaphor. If there’s interest, we can go as a group.

https://www.pafa.org/exhibitions/current  
https://www.pafa.org/museum  
http://www.penn.museum/  
http://www.philamuseum.org/  
http://icaphila.org/

4) Unlimited. Write anything you’d like.

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Saturday Afternoon at the Biopond behind the Biology Buildings. Meet at 2pm. Exercises will ensue, whipped cream, the four elements, and so forth.

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Metaphor

IN CLASS:

Opening Writing Exercise: Close read one of the sections in the book, begin to re-write the section with the primary “mind” at work in the story belonging to a character other than Geryon. Rather, revise with a different third-person limited P.O.V. We don’t really know how other characters are feeling and experiencing as we are limited to a story from and about Geryon’s life. What if another character in a scene had been the experiential center, the one always present in the tale who motivates the language?

Discuss how a good metaphor works, using examples from Ann Carson provided by students.

Workshop.

FOR CLASS SEVEN:

★ Read Citizen by Claudia Rankine / Available at Penn Book Center on 34th St. and Sansom.

★ “Between Dreams and History” by Shimon Attie
Explore this website about Attie’s project thoroughly:

WATCH Jenny Holzer video:
http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/jenny-holzer

The Provenance of Beauty by Claudia Rankine (a narrated bus tour) in following link, read text and scroll down to short video.
http://thefoundrytheatre.org/the-provenance-of-beauty/
http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/18/theater/reviews/18provenance.html?_r=0

WRITING ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK:

REVISE>>>>You don’t need to write a new poem unless you want to. Work on revising several of the poems that you have already written. Try radical revision. Don’t be afraid to mash poems together, to make major cuts, to fine tune your words. Is your poem in the right verb tense? Is it too tightly packed or too loosely dispersed on the page? Work with what you have until you feel like you’ve achieved the right pitch, the master soufflé, the clearest cry of despair (or joy). We will workshop your revisions. You should
submit multiple drafts of the same poem for us to look at so that the class can offer advice on whether the revision is improving things or not.

Do-it-Yourself Excursion: Hippos! --- Travel by ferry to the Camden “Adventure” Aquarium and observe people and animals, but the hippopotamuses in particular. Hippo-poems will be generated.

Class SEVEN  October 11, 2016

Voice and the Limits of the Lyric, or The Boundaries between “poetry” and “prose”

Note: I won’t be able to attend class today. Instead, my partner Andy Emitt, poet and MFA student at Temple, will be leading our class.

IN CLASS:

Opening Writing Exercise: Write about your own awkward experiences of racism, homophobia, misogyny, or when people misjudged you given that they projected assumptions onto you. Write about when you did the same to someone else. Think of this as a confessional journal entry, an expression of rage, frustration, embarrassment, and/or fear.

Discuss Citizen by Claudia Rankine – is it a memoir? A lyric? A poem? Why? Which sections of the book were most powerful for you and which were least effective? Why?

Workshop

FOR CLASS EIGHT:

Reading REQUIRED: (in the following order)

★ Reading Like a Writer Francine Prose 35-63 Sentences, Paragraphs / Available at Penn Book Center on 34th St. and Sansom.

★ “Place” by Dorothy Allison

Here’s a key excerpt from Dorothy Allison’s essay on place. Please read the entire piece! It is one of the most pivotal readings of the semester.

“Place is visual detail: manicured grass or scrubby weeds, broken concrete or pristine tarmac glistening with morning dew. Place is conditions: weather, atmosphere. Are the
roads crowded or are they empty? When you step outside your house in the morning and you hit that clean, cool sidewalk, are there people walking around? Are they looking at you or are they looking away? Are you lonely? Are you nervous?

“Place requires context. Is it responsive? Does it notice me? Or is it porcelain, pristine, and just ignoring my passage through? Are there people on the street who flinch when I smile at them? Is there a reason they do that? Place is where the “I” goes. Place is what that “I” looks at, what it doesn’t look at. Is it happy? Is it sad? Is it afraid? Is it curious?

“What I am trying to say is that place is not just landscape—a list of flora and fauna and street names. That’s not place, that’s not even decent research. Which brings me to my other point.

“I cannot abide a story told to me by a numb, empty voice that never responds to anything that’s happening, that doesn’t express some feelings in response to what it sees. Place is not just what your feet are crossing to get to somewhere. Place is feeling, and feeling is something a character expresses. More, it is something the writer puts on the page—articulates with deliberate purpose. If you keep giving me these eyes that note all the details—if you tell me the lawn is manicured but you don’t tell me that it makes your character both deeply happy and slightly anxious—then I’m a little bit frustrated with you. I want a story that’ll pull me in. I want a story that makes me drunk. I want a story that feeds me glory. And most of all, I want a story I can trust. I want a story that is happening in a real place, which means a place that has meaning and that evokes emotions in the person who’s telling me the story.” —Dorothy Allison, “Place

Place reveals the character’s motivations, movement, and attentions – what a particular character notices both opens the space in which the character occupies and shows the reader what matters to that character and the state of mind of that character. What we notice is not arbitrary. — Read the following stories paying close attention to how the writer creates a sense of place. How many tools are in play? —JZ

★ “Stubborn Girls and Mean Stories,” “Deciding to Live” “River of Names” “Meanest Woman Ever Left Tennessee” by Dorothy Allison [In FILES]

★ “Some Dreamers of the Golden Dream” “Los Angeles Notebook” “On Keeping a Notebook” by Joan Didion [In FILES]

★ “Interpreter of Maladies,” by Jhumpa Lahiri [In FILES]

★ Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie “My Mother the Crazy African” [In FILES]

Flannery O’Connor: “Good Country People”

“A Distant Episode,” “He of the Assembly” by Paul Bowles

excerpt from Speedboat by Renata Adler 1-32 [In FILES]
REREAD “Place” by Dorothy Allison and think about it in relation to the stories you’ve just read. Do each of them follow Allison’s recommendations for the role of place in story? Your Facebook comments should pursue this line of thought. http://www.tinhouse.com/blog/35752/place-by-dorothy-allison.html

★ WATCH: Only Lovers Left Alive (Dir. Jim Jarmusch, 2013) ---
A physical copy of the film is in course reserves in Van Pelt – you can also rent the film here:

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With this movie, which has very little in the way of “plot” and the occasional burst of drama, the main factor is place, or places, namely Detroit in Michigan USA and Tangier in Morocco. The places help define the characters – why would “Adam” and “Eve” situate themselves in these locations? How do they relate to these locations? How does the film carefully build a sense of place – beginning in an interior space and then expanding out into the two cities? Does the film provide any unexpected detail? Above all, given the “situation” of the two main characters, what is the filmmaker limited to, as they are limited in terms of time and light? How does the filmmaker situate the viewer and adjust the viewer to that partial but – for Adam and Eve – entire world? Can you imagine adapting this film into a piece of fiction? What would you need to do? What would you lose? What might you gain? What places do you know well enough to set a story within? What place did you choose to set your short piece about the photograph as assigned below? Is it in the USA? In Europe? Elsewhere? Why did you make the specific decisions that you did? Did you move into an interior space? Did you keep the kids outside? Is it loud where they are? Quiet? Crowded beyond the frame? Empty? And so on.

“Tristes Tropiques” by Hilton Als [in FILES] (Amazing writing – but long – it was either this above and everything else optional. Take a look at a bit if you have the chance. It opens in medias res.

“A Good Man is Hard to Find” by Flannery O’Connor (short story – This is a canonical, crucial short story...but I chose to require “Good Country People” instead just because that one is less often read. If you liked that, you should read this if you haven’t already. If you don’t have time, come back another day and read this.) http://xroads.virginia.edu/~drbr/goodman.html
“When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine” by Jhumpa Lahiri [In FILES]

“A Distant Episode” and “The Time of Friendship” by Paul Bowles [in FILES]

★TED talk by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: “The Danger of a Single Story”
https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/tr anscript?language=en

Another TED talks by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: “We Should All Be Feminists”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hg3umXU_qWc

Paris Review; The Art of Fiction: Joan Didion interviewed by Linda Kuehl
http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/3439/the-art-of-fiction-no-71-joan-didion

The Art of Fiction: Joan Didion interviewed by Hilton Als
http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/5601/the-art-of-nonfiction-no-1-joan-didion

“Jhumpa Lahiri: 'Writing makes me so vulnerable'”
By Rachel Hore
http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/jhumpa-lahiri-writing-makes-me-so-vulnerable-845803.html

“Falling Hard” by Anna Wiener (on Speedboat and Renata Adler)

The Believer interview with Renata Adler
http://www.believermag.com/exclusives/?read=interview_adler


“Flannery O’Connor and the Habit of Art” by Kelly Gerald
http://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2012/04/30/flannery-o%E2%80%99connor-and-the-habit-of-art/

….“For the writer of fiction,’ Flannery O’Connor once said, ‘everything has its testing point in the eye, and the eye is an organ that eventually involves the whole personality, and as much of the world as can be got into it.”

WRITING ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK:
**Short-short Fiction Prompt:** Write a two-three page story based on the black-and-white photograph at the beginning of the syllabus. Confine yourself to TWO TO THREE DOUBLE-SPACES PAGES in a 12pt or 10pt font. Start “in medias res” or “in the middle of things” --- don’t worry about setting things up for the reader. Just jump into what is happening. Think about a movie that begins in the middle of a chase scene. It could be before the photo was taken or after the photo was taken. Figure out whether you will be telling the story in first-person, in an unreliable first-person, in second-person singular, in second-person plural (!!!), in third person limited (confined to only one character’s internal subjectivity and thoughts, third person extreme limited (no access to anyone’s interiority, or third-person omniscient. You can add in characters not visible in the photograph (for example someone would have to be holding the camera!) You need not bring things to a tidy finale – generate excitement, grab the reader, and above all, locate the reader in a PLACE through movement through space, through significant details. STUDY the Dorothy Allison essay on place carefully and be sure you do what she is suggesting must be done. That’s your task. Craft a start that the reader cannot put down. And don’t forget to work in elements of place as per the essay on place by Dorothy Allison that you are to read for next week! So the puzzle is, how to make something HAPPEN and how to anchor that happening in a place in which the reader can inhabit --- your length is limited, so you need to be very selective about how you quickly convey a sense of place. Pay very close attention to your sentences – this is short enough to give you the time to consider each sentence, each sentence in relation to one another, each paragraph, and each paragraph in relation to one another. You need not be linear – you can jump forward in time and/or place from paragraph to paragraph when needed – don’t over do it – but it need not be limited to one specific linear timeline.

For assistance in proceeding:

more on *in medias res*:
https://www.britannica.com/art/in-medias-res-literature
http://www.livewritethrive.com/2015/02/18/in-medias-res-cutting-to-the-chase/

Here’s a very short short story:
“Samsara” by Juan Pablo Villalobos

Here’s a longer short story that begins *in medias res*, take a look at how the decision on point-of-view impacts the use of *in medias res* here and how the beginning works:
“A&P” by John Updike
http://www.tiger-town.com/whatnot/updike/

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THURSDAY 10/13

ALEXANDR SKIDAN POETRY READING
*Writers Without Borders*
*6:00 PM in the Arts Cafe*


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Class EIGHT ✿ October 18, 2016

PLACE

IN CLASS:

Opening writing activity: Write down details of what you have observed, done outside of the routine, experienced, imagined, over the last week, working backwards, focusing on things that relation people to place. Save for possible incorporation / deformation in your fiction.

Closely read the first few pages of *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L’Engle

Workshop.

FOR CLASS NINE:

READ:

★ *Reading Like a Writer* Francine Prose 85-109 Narration

★ “Talk of Heroes” by Carol Bly [In FILES]

“Piss on Water” by Rachel B. Glazer [In FILES]

★ “Fever” by John Edgar Wideman [in FILES]

★ “The Sea of Information” Andrea Barrett [In FILES]
★ “Form as a Response to Doubt” by Lydia Davis, “Telling Tales” by Lynne Tillman from *Biting the Error: Writers Explore Narrative* [In FILES]

★ “26 Monkeys” by Kij Johnson  
http://www.kijjohnson.com/26_monkeys.htm

★ “The Elephant Vanishes” by Haruki Murakami  [In FILES]

★ “The Quest of Narrative” by Tzevtan Todorov [In FILES]

“The Cavemen in the Hedges” by Stacey Richter [In FILES]

“Twin Study” by Stacey Richter [in FILES]

★ excerpt from American Tabloid by James Ellroy 523-end [In FILES]

Optional: Additional Murakami stories [In FILES]

Listen:

★ “The Refugees” by Andrew Solomon (remember that this is a nonfiction piece!)  
https://themoth.org/stories/the-refugees

Watch (Streaming on Canvas & YouTube):

★ *Ydessa, the Bears, etc.* (Dir. Agnes Varda, 2004) [Streaming under heading “RESERVES” on Couse Canvas Site]

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ieMCKk_7Hs8

WRITING ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK:

Begin a story. Try to compose at least the first seven pages. Include, after those seven or so, a note or partial outline about what you see happening in the rest of the story. Don’t worry about spoilers! It’s okay to give it all away here. As readers of each others’ work next week, we will want to focus on the writing itself AND also to offer opinions about whether what’s already written and the vision for the rest of the story match up in a satisfying way.

For this week’s Facebook post –

Focusing on one or more of the pieces required for next week, comment on how additional information interacts with and transforms/warps/twists/enhances/complicates already provided information.
TUESDAY 10/25 NOON

LUNCH WITH POET ZHIMIN LI
12:00 PM in the Arts Cafe
hosted by: Charles Bernstein
rsvp: wh@writing.upenn.edu or call (215) 746-POEM

Li Zhimin is a poet in both the English and Chinese languages. He has published numerous chapbooks of poem since 2001. His most recent collection is Zhonglish: Think and Feel Globally (August 2016). Currently, Li serves as Chief Professor of Western Literature Studies at the School of Foreign Studies, Guangzhou University, and is Director of both its Modern Poetry Studies Centre and Foreign Languages Training Centre. He is also a Fellow of the British and American Language and Literature Studies Institute of Sun Yat-sen University, and of the English Poetry Studies Institute (EPSI) at Sun Yat-sen University. He is Deputy President and Secretary-General of the English Language Poetry Studies Association of China, Board Member of Chinese / American Association for Poetry and Poetics (CAAP) and has been the prime mover of The Pearl River Poetry Conference, a gathering of Chinese and English poets held in Guangzhou in 2005 and 2008. Li Zhimin's publications reflect his broad interests in modern culture, philosophy, modernism and contemporary poetry and their interrelations, in pedagogy, and in poetic and translation theory. He was a Fulbright Scholar at the University of California Santa Barbara in 2008. He was invited to give a lecture and a reading at Kelly Writers House in February of 2009.

Class NINE October 25, 2016

NARRATIVE AND THE ART OF SEQUENCING INFORMATION

IN CLASS:

Opening writing exercise: Think about your own life’s informational trajectory - write note on any significant information (or partial information or misinformation) that has over the course of your life thus far been revealed to you or discovered by you and how this interacts with and transforms/warps/twists/enhances/complicates already provided, learned, overheard, or otherwise input or understood-to-be-withheld information you had or didn’t have or thought you had.

***Discuss interest in possible upcoming activities -- determine whether there is enough time in the week to pursue any of these. The first two can definitely be done independently.

1. Visit Mutter Museum to observe instruments and body parts.
2. Visit Graveyard to imagine lives.
3. Narrative Scavenger Hunt where, in New Hope?
4. Visit Nursing Home to talk to residents and gather stories.
**Workshop:** In order to get through everyone’s work, we will split up into two groups. The instructor will switch groups after break. When the instructor isn’t present, someone will be appointed as moderator and will be required to watch the time and move the group on to the next writer after a set period of time in order for everyone to have a turn. We will continue in this way for the rest of the course – don’t worry, at the end of the course everyone will post their final drafts and you’ll be able to read everyone’s work.

**FOR CLASS TEN:**

★ *Reading Like a Writer* Francine Prose 109-193 Character, Dialogue

**POINT OF VIEW**

Point-of-View: Samples of stories written from different points of view – these are all very short excerpts just so you can see the effect of various decisions -

- ★ Excerpt from “Les Guérillères” by Monique Wittig [In Files in Point-of-View Packet] (collective first-person POV)
- ★ Excerpt from *Bright Lights, Big City* by Jay McInerney [In Files in Point-of-View Packet] (singular second-person POV)
- “Bitterness for Three Sleepwalkers” by Gabriel Garcia Marquez (sorry the scan is a bit tiny) (Collective first-person POV)
- ★ “Boys” by Rick Moody (third-person collective)
- ★ Excerpt from *Riddley Walker* by Russell Hoban (Unreliable or limited first-person – this story is being told by a narrator millennia after the end of society as language is just being reconstructed – his vocabulary is severely limited)
- Excerpt from *Pamela* by Samuel Richardson (narrative through letters written – or the epistolary narrative)
- ★ Excerpt from *West of Eden* by Jean Stein (Collage of different first-person accounts)
- [http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/09/were-the-only-plane-in-the-sky-214230](http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/09/were-the-only-plane-in-the-sky-214230) [Multiplicity of first-person voices]

“Brownies” by ZZPacker [In FILES]

★ “The Basics of Point of View for Fiction Writers” by Jane Friedman

★ “Points of View”
[http://www.ohio.edu/people/hartleyg/ref/fiction/pov.html](http://www.ohio.edu/people/hartleyg/ref/fiction/pov.html)

“We Can Do A Lot: The rise of first-person plural narration” by TaraShea Nesbit
https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2014/may/14/first-person-plural-narration-novels-stories

“Third-Person Omniscient vs. Third-Person Limited” by Nathan Bransford

Dialogue

★ *Fair Play* by Tove Jansson / Available at Penn Book Center on 34th St. and Sansom.

“The Daughters of the Late Colonel” by Katherine Mansfield

Read around the following articles and websites as needed:

Dialogue-Only Short-Short Stories
https://mjshorts.wordpress.com/tag/dialogue-only-stories/
(this site and the Mansfield story should be useful for the week’s assignment)

★ “9 Easily Preventable Mistakes Writers Make with Dialogue” by Joanna Penn
http://www.thecreativepenn.com/2012/10/04/dialogue-mistakes/

Dialogue Q&A
https://www.writingclasses.com/toolbox/ask-writer/what-is-indirect-dialogue

★ “Writing Great Dialogue”
http://www.aliventures.com/writing-great-dialogue/

★ “Dialogue” by William H. Coles
http://www.storyinliteraryfiction.com/essays-on-writing/dialogue/

Character(s) – Pay close attention to dialogue in the stories!

★ “Chaos Theory: A Unified Theory of Muppet Types” by Dahlia Lithwick
http://www.slate.com/articles/life/low_concept/2012/06/what_kind_of_muppet_are_you_chaos_or_order_.html

“Sue” sketches, *Saturday Night Live*
http://www.nbc.com/saturday-night-live/video/surprise-party/n12233
Scroll down when you get to that page for three more “Sue” sketches – you will see that we don’t learn a huge amount about Sue in further sketches other than what we learn in the initial sketch about the surprise party. Please think through what makes the Sue sketches funny – if you do actually find them funny. What
distinguishes Sue from the other characters exactly? Why is the sketch built the way it is, with a group of people? Is Sue a plausible, believable character? Why? What known people etc. does Sue resemble that might allow her to feel “plausible” if also outrageous? Why is Kristen Wiig’s delivery of Sue’s lines vocally so crucial?

★ “Girl” by Jamaica Kincaid [In FILES]

★ “Lyndon” by David Foster Wallace [In FILES]

‘The Arrangements’: A Work of Fiction by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

★ “A Rose for Miss Emily” by William Faulkner
http://xroads.virginia.edu/~drbr/wf_rose.html

★ “A Romantic Weekend” by Mary Gaitskill [In Files]

★ “Valley of the Girls” by Kelly Link
http://subterraneanpress.com/magazine/summer_2011/valley_of_the_girls_by_kelly_link

Comet in Moominland by Tove Jansson. Tove Jansson was initially a writer of books for young readers – this is one of a series following the same array of characters who live in or visit Moominvalley. This is a pretty good character study of a group of distinct individuals – they aren’t exactly “complex” but they are each quite distinct. That’s easier when they are actually distinctly different types of creature, each illustrated by the author and the illustrations visible among the book’s pages. Available at Penn Book Center on 34th St. and Sansom.

“Tove Jansson: Love, War and the Moomins” by Mark Bosworth

BBC Documentary on the life of Tove Jansson (59min):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8HVN5Ey3yuE

More Tove Jansson – profile in The New Yorker
http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/the-hands-that-made-the-moomins

Here’s a link to a stop-motion animation version of the Moomin books, made in Poland – this brief (4:47min) first episode is called “Hobgoblin’s Hat.” Many episodes are available on YouTube. (My favorites are the ones based on Moominland Midwinter. A conventional animated series of the Moomins was subsequently made in Japan but it has much less charm. I recommend this:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utXbpKrWRBs
“on character” by heriberto yépez from *Biting the Error: Writers Explore Narrative*  
[In FILES – see “WritesExploreNarrative” packet from previous week]

Whoopi Goldberg’s *Direct From Broadway* (1985) in which she performs monologues by five entirely different characters, male and female, young and old. This is how Whoopi Goldberg became famous.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmHr8L0KRg4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmHr8L0KRg4) (60min)

**WRITING ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK:**

**Short-short fiction prompt:** Write a two-to-three page story in the form of a portrait of two people created primarily or only through dialogue. Something should happen – it should not be an interview but an active conversation spoken as other things are going on – if only elsewhere in the restaurant the two people are at, say, if that’s where you want to set the story, or on a hike, or cleaning an apartment together, or – well, it’s up to you. The two characters should already know each other – and that knowledge of each other – and maybe something up until the conversation yet unknown between them, for example – can be one of the tools you use to create both intimacy and drama.

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**DIALOGUE ACTION ACTIVITY.** If possible given workloads and interest, based on our discussion above. We will travel to Center City, to the Reading Terminal Market, for lunch. You will eavesdrop on conversations occurring at nearby tables and take notes, trying to record as much “real language” as you can – you can use this in your piece for this coming week’s workshop. OR we will travel across the Delaware to the Camden Aquarium, plant ourselves in the giant hippo room, and stay there to listen to the way people talk to the hippos and talk amongst each other. We may do either or both.

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**Class TEN ✉ November 1, 2016**

**CHARACTER, DIALOGUE, MOTIVATION**

**IN CLASS:**

Opening writing exercise: Write about election from odd angles, odd things you have observed or your own observations, frustrations, day dreams.

Discussion of election.

Discussion of the difficulties of dialogue.

**WORKSHOP.**
FOR CLASS ELEVEN:

★ *Reading Like a Writer* Francine Prose 193-209 Details

**REVISIT** Joan Didion’s writing...she is a master of the detail. Reread “On Keeping a Notebook."

★ “The Tower of Babylon” and “Story of My Life” by Ted Chiang [In Files]

★ “Exhalation,” by Ted Chiang [in WESLEYAN SCIFI File in FILES]


★ “Aye, and Gomorrah . . .” by Samuel R. Delany [in WESLEYAN SCIFI File in FILES]

★ “Bloodchild” by Octavia Butler [In FILES]

“The Machine Stops” by E. M. Forster [in WESLEYAN SCIFI File in FILES]

★ “Nine Lives” by Ursula K. LeGuin [in WESLEYAN SCIFI File in FILES]

“Henry’s Penis” by Charlie Jane Anders
http://www.flurb.net/8/8anders.htm

★ “Ponies” by Kij Johnson

“What Happened to Arab Science Fiction?” by Nesrine Malik
https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2009/jul/30/arab-world-science-fiction

“Use imagery to bring your story to life: Give readers the right descriptive details so they can create a picture in their heads.” By Stephen King [In FILES]

“Zola’s Horse: Using a Reporter’s Techniques to Strengthen Fiction and Creative Nonfiction” by Russell Working

“The Art of Fiction: Samuel Delany interviewed by Rachel Kaadzi Ghansah”
http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/6088/the-art-of-fiction-no-210-samuel-r-delany
WRITING ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK:

Continue writing your long short story and turn in for workshop. Try and double the length. Pay extreme attention to your details – they need to build your world while also building the character of the speaker – what the speaker notices tells us a great deal about the speaker. Details should be exquisitely precise. We will discuss this in workshop, but even beforehand you might give a friend a bit to read and ask them to describe their experience across all five senses. All five senses should be engaged. Not just for the sake of doing so – all details should be relevant and important -- activate your reader’s body, put it inside the body of your speaker.

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Wednesday 11/2 6:00pm

A POETRY READING BY PETER MIDDLETON

Whenever We Feel Like It
6:00 PM in the Arts Cafe

Peter Middleton is professor of English at the University of Southampton. He is the author of three books of scholarship, including Distant Reading: Performance, Readership, and Consumption in Contemporary Poetry, and a book of poetry, Aftermath; and he is the co-editor of Teaching Modernist Poetry. Middleton’s research interests include science and literature, modern and contemporary poetry, poetry performance, ecology and climate change, critical theory, gender studies, and philosophy and literature. Currently he is writing a book on American science and poetry in the Cold War.

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Class ELEVEN  November 8, 2016

DETAILS AND SCIENCE FICTION

IN CLASS:

Discuss experience of the stories.

Workshop  (divide into two groups)

FOR CLASS TWELVE:

Read:

★Reading Like a Writer Francine Prose 209-233  Gesture
The following stories push the bounds of what we might consider fiction and even prose:

★ *The Age of Wire and String*: “Water,” “Food,” by Ben Marcus [in FILES]

Excerpt from *Letters to Wendy’s* by Joe Wenderoth

“Play” by Matthias Svalina [in FILES]

★ “First Love” by Samuel Beckett [in FILES]

The following are more conventional – the Dillard piece is nonfiction but should help you deepen your development of sensory detail and place.

★ “Seeing” by Annie Dillard

★ “Cathedral” by Raymond Carver [In FILES]

★ “In the Tunnel” “Mlle Dias de Corta” “The Moslem Wife” “In Plain Sight” by Mavis Gallant [In FILES]

★ “The Werewolf” “In the Company of Wolves” “Wolf Alice” by Angela Carter  [In FILES]

★ “15 Unconventional Story Methods” by Richard Thomas

“St. Lucy’s Home for Girls Raised by Wolves” by Karen Russell [in FILES]

from *Nightwood* by Djuna Barnes: “Night Watch,” “Watchman, What of the Night?”  [In Files]

Helen Oyemi *The Icarus Girl* 1-63 [In FILES] The opening of a novel for those who like Harry Potter!! Begins with the protagonist locked in a cupboard, plot develops based on African myth.

Jhumpa Lahiri interviews Mavis Gallant:
https://granta.com/useless-chaos-is-what-fiction-is-about/

on Angela Carter:
https://www.bl.uk/20th-century-literature/articles/an-introduction-to-the-bloody-chamber-and-other-stories

More on Mavis Gallant:

Paris Review: “The Art of Fiction No. 160” Mavis Gallant Interviewed by Daphne Kalotay

WRITING ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK:

Finish your story and begin revising and reshaping. You should submit a finished if still raw rough story for workshop.

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Class TWELVE ▦ November 15, 2016

NETWORKS OF DETAIL, GESTURE, CHARACTER AND PLAUSIBILITY

FOR CLASS THIRTEEN:

★ Reading Like a Writer Francine Prose Learning from Chekhov

★ “The Party,” “The Darling,” “The Lady with a Dog” by Anton Chekhov
http://www.eldritchpress.org/ac/jr/

“The Darling” by Scott Bradfield [in FILES]

★ “Pterodactyl” by Mahasweta Devi [in FILES] (This is a long and difficult story, but perhaps one of the most important ones we will be reading. We will talk about it in terms of craft in class, and I’d like you to reflect on it in your posting.)

★ “Have Not Have” by Geoff Ryman
http://clarkesworldmagazine.com/ryman_06_14_reprint/

★ “We Work in Miraculous Cages” by Brenda Peynado
http://quarterlywest.com/?p=2726

Stories by Borges – from among them:
★ “The Author of the Quixote” [in FILES]

WRITING ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK:
First full revision of story for workshop.

Class THIRTEEN ✠ November 29, 2016 =

CHEKHOV & WHAT MATTERS, WHAT IS IN THIS FOR THE READER?
Or, The Atentions of the Story and The Themes Beneath the Story

FOR CLASS FOURTEEN:

★ Read Solibo Magnificent by Patrick Chamoiseaux

“Men” by Lydia Davis [In Files]

Excerpt from The Great Fires by Jack Gilbert [In Files]

More on Patrick Chamoiseaux – You’ll need to log into your library account to get access to jstor:
http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt12f5bg

★ On assembling a manuscript (or portfolio): “The Assemblage of Poems” by A. Van Jordan

WRITING ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK:

Bold, close, and careful revision of draft of your story submitted for final workshop.

Class FOURTEEN ✠ December 6, 2016

ART OF PACING, ART OF DETAIL, ART OF ECONOMIES OF SCALE AND ATTENTION:
WHAT DOES YOUR READER NEED TO KNOW NOW? WHY SHOULD YOUR READER CARE? What will the reader do when you are no longer there?

OR

RELENTLESS REVISION UNTIL . . .
Due December 20 by midnight: Creative Writing Portfolio (5 poems [page count open]+ 15-20 page prose) This will be sent as a double-spaced .docx Word file to the instructor. Margins and exact placement of the words is up to the student, but unconventional white space should be there for a reason. Otherwise, keep to one-inch margins. The student's name should be on each page, and the pages should be numbered.
CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

1. Preamble

When Benjamin Franklin founded the Pennsylvania Academy, he defined its mission as “education for citizenship.” In pursuit of this mission, the University of Pennsylvania is committed to achieving academic excellence, to creating an environment for inquiry and learning, and to cultivating responsible citizenship in the larger society.

The University of Pennsylvania is a community in which intellectual growth, learning from others, mutual tolerance, and respect for freedom of thought and expression are principles of paramount importance. In an environment that promotes the free instruction, and expanding their educational experience beyond their academic programs. Members of the Penn community participate actively in the greater Philadelphia, state, national, and international communities in which they reside. “Citizens” of the University community include students, faculty, staff and those otherwise affiliated with the University interchange of ideas, cultural and intellectual diversity, and a wealth of social opportunities, Penn students take advantage of the academic and non-academic opportunities available to them, deepening their intellectual insights through formal.

Accepting membership into the University of Pennsylvania community as a student entails an obligation to promote its welfare by assuming the rights and responsibilities listed below. Each individual member of this community is responsible for his or her own actions and is expected to respect the rights of others.

1. Rights of Student Citizenship

Membership in the University of Pennsylvania community affords every student certain rights that are essential to the University’s educational mission and its character as a community:

1. a) The right to have access to and participate in the academic and non-academic opportunities afforded by the University, subject to applicable standards or requirements.
2. b) The right to freedom of thought and expression.
3. c) The right to be free from discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, or status as a disabled or Vietnam Era veteran.
4. d) The right to fair University judicial process in the determination of accountability for conduct.

III. Responsibilities of Student Citizenship

Students are expected to exhibit responsible behavior regardless of time or place. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action by the University. Responsible behavior is a standard of conduct which reflects higher expectations than may be prevalent outside the University community. Responsible behavior includes but is not limited to the following obligations:

1. a) To comply with all provisions of the University’s Code of Academic Integrity and academic integrity codes adopted by the faculties of individual schools.
2. b) To respect the health and safety of others. This precludes acts or threats of physical violence against another person (including sexual violence) and disorderly conduct. This also precludes
the possession of dangerous articles (such as firearms, explosive materials, etc.) on University property or at University events without University authorization.

3. c) To respect the right of fellow students to participate in university organizations and in relationships with other students without fear, threat, or act of hazing.

4. d) To refrain from conduct towards other students that infringes upon the Rights of Student Citizenship. The University condemns hate speech, epithets, and racial, ethnic, sexual and religious slurs. However, the content of student speech or expression is not by itself a basis for disciplinary action. Student speech may be subject to discipline when it violates applicable laws or University regulations or policies.

5. e) To refrain from stealing, damaging, defacing, or misusing the property or facilities of the University or of others. This also precludes the disruption of University computing services or interference with the rights of others to use computer resources.

6. f) To be honest and truthful in dealings with the University, about one’s own identity (e.g., name or Social Security number), and in the use of University and other identification.

7. g) To cooperate fully and honestly in the Student Judicial System of the University, including the obligation to comply with all judicial sanctions.

8. h) To comply with all contracts made with the University, such as Residential Living Occupancy Agreements and Dining Services contracts.

9. i) To comply with policies and regulations of the University and its departments (e.g., the University's Guidelines on Open Expression, Anti-Hazing Regulations, Drug and Alcohol Policies, Sexual Harassment Policy, etc.).

10. j) To comply with federal, state and local laws.

**CODE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Since the University is an academic community, its fundamental purpose is the pursuit of knowledge. Essential to the success of this educational mission is a commitment to the principles of academic integrity. Every member of the University community is responsible for upholding the highest standards of honesty at all times. Students, as members of the community, are also responsible for adhering to the principles and spirit of the following Code of Academic Integrity.

**Academic Dishonesty Definitions**

Activities, that have the effect or intention of interfering with education, pursuit of knowledge, or fair evaluation of a student’s performance are prohibited. Examples of such activities include but are not limited to the following definitions:

1. Cheating: using or attempting to use unauthorized assistance, material, or study aids in examinations or other academic work or preventing, or attempting to prevent, another from using authorized assistance, material, or study aids. Example: using a cheat sheet in a quiz or exam, altering a graded exam and res-submitting it for a better grade, etc.

2. Plagiarism: using the ideas, data, or language of another without specific or proper acknowledgment. Example: copying another person's paper, article, or computer work and submitting it for an assignment, cloning someone else's ideas without attribution, failing to use quotation marks where appropriate, etc.
3. Fabrication: submitting contrived or altered information in any academic exercise. Example: making up data for an experiment, fudging data, citing nonexistent articles, contriving sources, etc.
4. Multiple submission: submitting, without prior permission, any work submitted to fulfill another academic requirement.
5. Misrepresentation of academic records: misrepresenting or tampering with or attempting to tamper with any portion of a student’s transcripts or academic record, either before or after coming to the University of Pennsylvania. Example: forging a change of grade slip, tampering with computer records, falsifying academic information on one’s resume, etc.
6. Facilitating academic dishonesty: knowingly helping or attempting to help another violate any provision of the Code. Example: working together on a take-home exam, etc.
7. Unfair advantage: attempting to gain unauthorized advantage over fellow students in an academic exercise. Example: gaining or providing unauthorized access to examination materials, obstructing or interfering with another student’s efforts in an academic exercise, lying about a need for an extension for an exam or paper, continuing to write even when time is up during an exam, destroying or keeping library materials for one’s own use, etc.

*If a student is unsure whether his action(s) constitute a violation of the Code of Academic Integrity, then it is that student’s responsibility to consult with the instructor to clarify any ambiguities.

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FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR READING!

In File “ADDITIONAL SHORT STORIES FOR YOU PLEASURE” on Canvas

Steven Amsterdam “The Theft that Got Me Here” “Dry Land”
Ingeborg Bachman “Word for Word”
Aimee Bender “The Girl in the Flammable Skirt”
Bharati Mukherjee “The Man...”
David Foster Wallace “Brief Interviews With Hideous Men”
David Foster Wallace “Girl With Curious Hair”
Gabriel Garcia Marquez – stories “A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings” etc.
Lorrie Moore “People Like That Are the Only People Here”
Helen Oyeyemi excerpt from The Icarus Girl
Mary Gaitskill “Tiny, Smiling Daddy”
NoViolet Bulawayo “Shhhhhhh”
Susan Power “Moonwalk”
Susan Sontag “The Way We Live Now”
Tao Lin “Love Is a Thing On Sale”
Kelly Link “The Summer People”
Tao Lin excerpt from Mason & Dixon
Tim O’Brien “The Things They Carried”
Yiyun Li “A Man Like Him”
Zadie Smith “Meet the President!”
Grace Paley – Selected Stories

A CROWDSOURCED LIST.

Dear Friends, I'm teaching a Creative Writing Fiction class. What is one of your indispensable short stories that you'd recommend being included? or two or three?

Like

CommentShare

14 You, Anna B. Wilkes, Malequl Hoque and 11 others

Comments

Christopher Nelson Bowcutt JM Coetzee's “He and His Man”:
http://www.nobelprize.org/.../2003/coetzee-lecture-e.html

J. M. Coetzee - Nobel Lecture: He and His Man

Nobelprize.org, The Official Web Site of the Nobel Prize
Mark Twain: A Tramp Abroad: CHAPTER VIII. The Great French Duel-I Second...

Magdalena Zurawski Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown" and Kelly Link, "The Summer People" -- They could actually work quite well together.

Eric Alan Weinstein Rip Van Winkle by Irving, Bartleby by Melville, A Party in Miami Beach by IB Singer, Ann Petry's Like A Winding Sheet, and this one: http://sensitiveskinmagazine.com/ronald-reagan/
Why I Want to Fuck Ronald Reagan, by J. G. Ballard

Jeremy Dixon I love, love, love Bartleby!

Timmy Dunn "When I was Thirteen" by Denton Welch

Timmy Dunn also Jhumpa Lahiri's "A Temporary Matter"

Timmy Dunn and Flannery O'Connor's "A Good Man is Hard to Find"

Megan Gillespie I could teach that story for a month, easy. Maybe a whole semester!

Pattie McCarthy Jamaica Kincaid's Girl, beckett's texts for nothing, Bishop's In the Village.

Megan Gillespie Girl was one of my favorites when I was teaching SDP juniors and seniors. It's the best short high-school read ever, period, end of story! Some of that magic may be lost by college, but still . . . any young adult who hasn't been exposed to it absolutely needs to be, and it's an easy enough little thing to tack onto any short fiction syllabus, just in case ;(
Sarah Blake Schoenholtz: George Saunders' Sea Oak, Susan Minot's Lust, really so many in here.
https://www.amazon.com/Scribner-Anthology.../dp/1416532277/

The Scribner Anthology of Contemporary Short Fiction: 50 North American Stories...
AMAZON.COM


Peter Nowogrodzki: Rachel glaser pee on water.

Joe O'Malley: Tobias Wolff's "Bullet in the Brain." Charles Baxter's "Gryphon."

Jeremy Dixon: The Snail-Watcher by Patricia Highsmith. The whole of The Bloody Chamber by Angela Carter.

Aalex Heilner: "In Dreams Begin Responsibilities" Delmore Schwartz

Jackie Kari: Brian Evenson's "Anskan House"!!

Jackie Kari: I also like to teach Little Red Riding Hood and Joyce Carol Oates's "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?"
Denise Tanyol  This is a great idea.
Like · Reply · August 9 at 7:13pm

Write a reply...

Denise Tanyol  "Neighbors" by Raymond Carver, "Car Crash While Hitchhiking" by Denis Johnson.
Unlike · Reply · 3 · August 9 at 6:46pm

Denise Tanyol  Ooh, and "Charlotte" by Tony Earley.
Like · Reply · August 10 at 3:00am

Joshua Ratner  Atwood's "Happy Endings"
Unlike · Reply · 3 · August 9 at 8:29pm

Drew Daniel  Patricia Highsmith seconded (anything from "Eleven")
Unlike · Reply · 1 · August 9 at 9:02pm

Megan Gillespie  No One's a Mystery, Elizabeth Tallent. And of course Ms. O'Connor's, above.
Unlike · Reply · 1 · August 10 at 1:20am

Tootight Lautrec  Raymond Carver's "Cathedral." Michael Cunningham's "White Angel."
Unlike · Reply · 1 · August 10 at 8:49am

Michael Schwebel  The Puss that Licked herself by Lola!
Unlike · Reply · 1 · August 10 at 9:11am

Jon Loomis  Richard Ford's "Rock Springs" is a great one for talking about character, internal and external conflict, point of view and story arc. Denis Johnson's "Emergency" is fun. Hemingway's "The Short Happy
Life of Francis Macomber" is great for talking about POV and character arc. Also, "Hills Like White Elephants" is really interesting as an exercise in POV.

Ben Reynolds Hills Like White Elephants +1

Jon Loomis Objective POV, plus the entire conflict is revealed through dialog. Say what you will about Hemingway, but he was a pretty damn bold stylist, and knew what a story was and how to tell it.

Jason Schneiderman Pair Chekov's the Darling with Scott Bradfield's The Darling

Walter Svekla or The Seven Chinese Brothers (but that's a children's book but still short)

Tootight Lautrec Also, Cheever's "Goodbye, My Brother."