

ENG 405-01 Advanced Writing Workshop: *Crossing Genres*

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TR 1:00-2:30 p.m.

Office hours: TR. 2:30-3:30

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Poems, prose poems, stories, personal essays, memoirs—they are never just islands in the ocean of words. It is our job, as writers and poets, to build bridges to cross, to borrow crafts and voices from different genres in order to express ourselves more effectively, more refreshingly, more powerfully. This workshop, "Crossing Genres," is designed for writers who move between poems and stories. We will explore different forms and modes of expression in poetry and prose, and experiment with combining fragments of mixed genres. We will study translated texts, learn the importance of translation as writing apprenticeship, how we work with languages, how languages affect and transform us in the process. We'll also study prose poems and short short fiction and work towards longer pieces in both genres, then come back to short works again, with greater economy and efficiency, with better understanding, more freedom. Through such a fusion of different voices, styles and crafts, we hope to expand our horizons and venture into new territories. American as well as international works will be studied closely as our guides to enter the world where raw materials are transformed into original, artistic voices, where form and content work in harmony. Weekly reading, discussion, and workshop of the students' work.

1. *Bite Hard*, Justin Chin, Manic D Press, San Francisco
2. *Sudden Fiction: International*, ed. Robert Shapard and James Thomas, Norton
3. *The Business of Memory: The Art of Remembering in an Age of Forgetting*, ed. Charles Baxter, Graywolf
4. *To Live*, Yu Hua, Anchor Books
5. *Interpreter of Maladies*, Jhumpa Lahiri, Houghton Mifflin
6. *Dien Cai Dau*, Yusef Komunyakaa, Wesleyan
7. *Master Butcher's Singing Club*, Louise Erdrich

Requirements

1. Class attendance, discussion of reading assignments and critique of the writing exercises with constructive, detailed comments
2. Revision after each workshop
3. Journal for the reading materials.
4. Three or four pieces of writing (any genre) for the class anthology
5. Presentation on one author (any genre)
6. Three readings at Ruminator or off-campus site and brief reports
7. A final portfolio with all the writings, revisions, reading journal and field reports

Grades are based on

attendance, class discussion of reading materials and critique, writing assignments (revision, quality and development of writing), book report and presentation, reading journal, portfolio and anthology

Schedules

- 1/27/04 Introduction
reading: Sudden Fiction: International, pp. 1-157
- 1/29/04 discuss Sudden Fiction (names: _____)
Hugh Hinton visits class,
Core Ensemble performs Silken Phoenix on Jan. 30, 8pm in the Janet Wallace Concert Hall, attendance counted as one of the three readings
Writing: short fiction, narrative, monologue, performance (500 words)
- 2/3/04 workshop
reading: *Interpreter of Maladies* pp.1-70
- 2/5/04 discuss Lahiri (_____)
workshop
reading: *Interpreter of Maladies*
writing: use details build characters and move a story
- 2/10/04 workshop
reading: *Bite Hard*, pp. 1-69
author presentation: _____
- 2/12/04 discuss Chin (_____)
workshop
writing: narrative poetry, prose poems
- 2/17/04 workshop
reading: *Bite Hard* (complete)
author presentation _____
- 2/19/04 discuss Chin: raw and refined, what moves a poem forward (_____)
workshop
writing: content and form, political and lyrical
- 2/24/04 workshop
reading: *Interpreter of Maladies* (complete)
author presentation _____
- 2/26/04 discuss Lahiri (_____)
writing: using objects and details for a character's inner world
Reading: Dien Cai Dau
- 3/2/04 workshop
Dien Cai Dau (complete)
Author presentation _____

- 3/4/04 Yusef Komunyakaa visits our class
Y K reads at the campus center lecture hall at 7:30, attendance required
Writing:
- 3/9/04 workshop
reading: *To Live*, pp. 1-87
author presentation _____
- 3/11/04 discuss Yu Hua (_____)
workshop
writing: a tragic story that gives hope
reading: complete *To Live*
- 3/16/04 spring break
3/18/04 spring break
- 3/23/04 workshop
reading: *Business of Memory*, 1-86
author presentation _____
- 3/25/04 Discuss (_____)
workshop
writing: personal essays
- 3/30/04 workshop
reading: *Business of Memory* (complete)
author presentation _____
- 4/1/04 discuss (_____)
workshop
writing: memoirs, creative non-fiction
- 4/6/04 workshop
reading: *Master Butcher's Singing Club* 1-
author presentation _____
- 4/8/04 discussion Erdrich (_____)
workshop
writing: prose in fragments
- 4/13/04 workshop
reading: *Master Butcher* (complete)
author presentation _____
- 4/15/04 discuss Erdrich (_____)
workshop

writing: different voices in one piece

- 4/20/04 workshop
reading: *Sudden Fiction* (complete)
author presentation _____
- 4/22/04 discussion (_____)
workshop
writing: short fiction again
- 4/27/04 workshop
compiling the anthology
portfolios due
- 4/29/04 Ping in Boston
workshop with a guest writer
author presentation _____
- 5/4/04 last class: anthology
author presentation _____