The Art and Craft of Poetry  
WRTNG-UG 1560-002, Fall 2015  
The Gallatin School, New York University  
1 Washington Place, room 601  
Professor Stacy Pies  
Tuesday and Thursday, 3:30-4:45 p.m.

SYLLABUS

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Office: Gallatin, 1 Washington Place, Room 509  
Office hours: Tuesday, 10:00-11:00 a.m. by appt.; Thursday, 12:30-2:00 p.m. by appt.;  
Thursday, 2:00-3:30 p.m. and 4:45-5:45 p.m.  
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"Poetry is an act of mischief." Theodore Roethke

"Talking becomes poetry as walking becomes dancing." Josephine Miles

Course description: In this workshop poets will focus on the foundations and intricate  
dynamics of poetry as a writer’s process. A weekly reading of a poem by each poet in the  
circle will serve as point of departure for discussion of the relationships of craft and  
expression. Each student will also briefly present a favorite poet/poem for the enjoyment  
and learning of the class. The final assignment will be a short manuscript of revised  
poems, and we will have an end-of-term Best of Workshop reading.

Course objectives: We will write, read, and discuss poems to sharpen our sensibilities  
and skills as writers, readers, listeners and observers. We will also hone the skills of close  
reading through writing about other poets’ work.

Required Texts:  
Addonizio, Kim and Dorianne Laux. The Poet’s Companion: A Guide to the Pleasures of  
Handouts and texts posted on NYUclasses.

Titles are abbreviated in the syllabus as PC (The Poet’s Companion) and PH (A Poetry  
Handbook). These books contain assigned readings and are also meant as sources of  
inspiration and reference. Please feel free to read widely in them!

Requirements:  
* Every week: One poem or serious revision due each week. I will give you suggestions  
for assignments and examples for work due the following week. Some assignments are  
springboards; for those, you are free to write from a different angle. Assignments later in
the term on rhythm and form are less flexible because struggling with those may be a good exercise.

* Every meeting: Observations, both in class and in writing, of your colleagues' work (we'll do this together and you'll understand what to do).

* Occasional treats: Bring in a poem by another poet whom you are reading that you would like to read aloud. Please let me know in advance if you'd like to read one of these poems, and I can try to make copies for the class, too.

* There are assignments besides reading widely, writing poems, listening, observing and writing your weekly observations to your colleagues:

a. September/October assignment: Memorize a poem from your reading or from the chapter on the stanza in Strand and Boland (pp. 136-153) with a rhythm that compels you that you will recite. Due in the first part of the course; students will sign up for dates.

b. Short Close Readings: We will do periodic short (one to two paragraph) observations of a line or a passage from a poem. Your job is to articulate as precisely and concretely as you can how the poem creates the effect it produces. Please pay attention to word choice, lines, line breaks, sentences, punctuation, rhythm, syllables, shape, images, and tone.

c. November assignment: Pick a poem by another poet and write what you observe and love in these poem. Analyze as carefully as you can how the poem works. This part of the assignment grows out of the Short Close Reading assignments. For the November assignment, you should aim to do a fuller and longer close reading of a poem. Your goal is to show your analytical wingspan. The length of this essay is about 500 words. (This doesn't mean that you should write until you hit 500 words; it means that you should write and get down your best, most precise ideas about the poem and thoroughly develop them, and then cut your essay down to your best 500 words!). Then, write your own poem under this poem's influence, perhaps imitating the form or responding to the ideas. Allow your poem to be inspired by, or in response to, or in dialogue with that poem. Look at the section in PC on Voice and Style, pp. 115-28. Due: November 10.

c. Final assignment—portfolio of eight, typed, double-spaced pages of poems.

* I encourage you to attend readings, and we can exchange reading news and info. Also go to bookstores and libraries and read as much poetry as you can.

* Finally, a word about format and organization: All work must be typed and carefully proofread. Carelessness counts against you. Grammar matters. Please keep copies of all work that you submit and that we discuss.

Grading:
10% Attendance, workshop participation, observations of other poets' work
5% October assignment
15% Short Close Readings
20% November Assignment
50% Weekly poem assignments and portfolio

**Academic Integrity**
As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website for a full description of the academic integrity policy www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/integrity.html

**SCHEDULE**
9/3  Introduction


9/10 Readings/Observations of Letter poem

9/15 **The Line**

9/17 Readings/Observations of poem 2. Sign up for September/October Assignment recitations. **Short close reading #1 due.**


9/29 **Images and Stanzas**
Assignment #4 due. Readings/Observations of poem 4. Reading due: PH, "Imagery" and "Diction, Tone and Voice." Recitations. **Short close reading #2 due.**

10/1 **Music**

10/6 **Syllables and Syllabics**
Assignment #5 due. Readings/Observations. Recitations.
Reading due: PC, pp. 138-150; PH, "Some Given Forms" and "Verse that is Free."

Reading due: PC, 151-60. Recitations.

10/13 No class. Fall break.

10/15 **Rhythm and Meter**

**Short close reading #3 due.**

10/22 **Sonnets and Villanelles**
Assignment #7 due. Readings/Observations. Recitations.


10/29 **Sonnets, Villanelles, and Open Form Option**
Assignment #8 due. (Halloween poem? Scary poem?) Readings/Observations.

11/3 Readings/Observations of poem 8.

11/5 **Sestinas**

11/10 Readings/Observations of poem 9 and of November assignment poems.
**November Assignment due!**

11/12 Readings/Observations of November assignment poems.

11/17 Readings/Observations of November assignment poems.


11/26 No class. Thanksgiving.

12/1 Assignment #11 due. Readings/Observations of poem 11. Reading due: Chapters in PC and PH on Revising.

12/3 Revisions due. Readings/Observations. Reading due: Chapters in PC and PH on Revising.

12/10 Manuscript due. Best of Workshop Reading.

12/15 Manuscript due. Best of Workshop Reading. Celebration!


The Greek word poēsis conveys two kinds of creation: the inspired creation that resembles a god-like power and the difficult material struggle with making that is human labor. This kind of making cannot proceed by spontaneity alone and it cannot proceed by following rules; it is rather a process that unfolds with all the transport of music and all the deliberation of laying down one sentence, one utterance, one word at a time. In the end there is no visible difference between the act of creation and the act of apprehension; a poet must be ready to take the reader's stance and the reader must be ready to anticipate and identify the intentions of the poet. This is the reciprocity between "I" and "you," the hinge upon which all lyric poetry revolves and recurs in time--and across time.

Poetry helps us to cross thresholds--to traverse the distance between speaker and listener, between the unconscious and the conscious, between the generations of the dead and our own.