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Fall 9-1-2018

CRWR 511.01: Poetry Workshop

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Graduate Poetry Workshop—CRWR 511—Thursday 6:30-9:20—Fall 2018

Henrietta Goodman—COR 337

Office Hours—MWF 11:00-11:50 (& by appointment)

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Course Description:

This is a graduate-level workshop focused upon the writing and revision of poems. This course has two primary goals. First, you will explore possibilities for connection between and among the poems you write this semester with the goal of viewing your individual poems as parts of a holistic body of work, connected by subject, theme, concept, and/or style. Because each of you is working, ultimately, toward a book-length thesis manuscript, considering the elements that connect your poems (whether or not you are working on a distinct project or series) is a beneficial part of this process.

Also, you will work to recognize the ways in which conceptions about what poetry should and shouldn't be and do might limit the content and form of your work. These "personal taboos" (about subjects and styles that may seem *too ugly*, *too mundane*, *too grand*, *too personal*, *too political*, *too formal*, *not formal enough*, *too experimental*, *too conventional*, *too direct*, *too abstract*, *too emotional*, etc.) may prevent poets from writing to their full potential. So, you will do some assignment-based work designed to challenge those assumptions.

Texts:

The Best American Poetry 2017, David Lehman and Natasha Tretheway

The Practice of Poetry, Robin Behn and Chase Twichell

When I Grow Up I Want to Be a List of Further Possibilities, Chen Chen

Imaginary Vessels, Paisley Rekdal

Weather Inventions, Emily Rosko

American Sonnets for my Past and Future Assassin, Terrance Hayes

Course Procedure:

You will write and turn in one poem-draft per week, for a total of 12 poem-drafts, approximately half of which will be workshopped in class and all of which will receive commentary from me. You will turn in a final portfolio of 10 revised poems prefaced by a contextual essay. At least once during the semester (more often if you wish), you will meet with me individually to discuss your work. You will also write brief reflective/analytic responses to assigned readings.

You will email each week's poem to me on or before Tuesday at 5 p.m., and I will create and email to you a PDF of the poems to be workshopped in Thursday's class. You are responsible for printing this document and preparing for the week's workshop.

We will begin each class with a short writing exercise and/or a discussion of the week's reading, but the majority of our class time will be spent discussing your work. We will workshop six poems each week, so we will try to maintain a 15-20 minute time limit for each poem.

We will generally follow conventional workshop protocol, in that the poet will remain silent for the first portion of the discussion. However, given the fact that we can help each other best the

better we understand each other's intentions and goals, we will allow time for the poet to pose questions to the class and for the class to pose questions to the poet. In workshop, we will begin by considering the literal, thematic, and stylistic elements the poet is working with and the apparent purpose of the poem. From here, we will move to a discussion of the most and least effective portions of the poem in terms of freshness, clarity, precision, and impact. This discussion may include suggestions for line-level edits, but our overall emphasis will be holistic rather than symptomatic.

Rather than attempting to impose any particular aesthetic on your poems, I ask that you each work toward understanding and articulating your own individual aesthetic. As workshop leader, my first and most important task is to understand and respect your intentions. As workshop participants, you have the same task: not to help others write like you, but to help them write more like themselves.

Grading:

- Participation 30%
- Poem-drafts 30%
- Final portfolio 30%
- Short responses to assigned reading 10%

Attendance:

Because we meet only once a week, one absence is allowed without penalty. If you must miss a second class, please speak with me about make-up options. Any absence beyond two will lower your course grade by a full letter grade.

Academic Honesty:

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the [Student Conduct Code](http://www.umt.edu/student-affairs/dean-of-students/): (<http://www.umt.edu/student-affairs/dean-of-students/>). Plagiarism is the use of another person's words or ideas without attribution and is a violation of the Student Conduct Code.

Disability Accommodation:

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you have a disability that affects your academic performance, and you are not already registered with DSS, please contact DSS in Lommasson Center 154 or 406.243.2243. I will work with you and DSS to provide appropriate modification.

Course Schedule: forthcoming...