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English 213

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English 213, Mary Ann Samyn, Spring 2007

English 213: Creative Writing: Poetry

Spring 2007

TR 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m.

111 White Hall

Mary Ann Samyn

Office: 463 Stansbury, 293-3107 x33453

E-mail: MaryAnn.Samyn@mail.wvu.edu

Office Hours: TR 1:15-2:30 p.m. and by appt.

Course Description

English 213 is an introduction to the pleasures of reading and writing poetry within a community of writers. The class depends on the workshop model— that is, the understanding that we are all craftspeople working together to hone our skills by studying the poems of more accomplished writers, developing a vocabulary with

which to talk about those poems, identifying our own material for poetry, and sharing and critiquing each other's work with generosity and vigor.

This course is NOT for those who are completely satisfied with their writing and simply want to share what they already know. Nor is this class for those interested in writing song lyrics. Songwriting is an entirely different discipline, one about which I know very little. Rather, English 213 will introduce you to the reading and writing of contemporary poetry.

We'll spend our time discussing poetry from our texts, generating material through freewriting and other activities, and doing close readings of your poems. You will be responsible for submitting all assignments on time and in multiple copies and for reading and responding to your classmates' work both verbally and in writing. Our course goals include not only writing poems but also learning how to return to those pieces in revision. We will also discuss general issues of craft (the line, rhythm, figurative language, white space, etc.) as we discover how a writer's vision of the world moves from inside to outside, from a private space to the public space of the page.

Course Goals

- participate in a community of writers and readers through workshops and conscientious completion of all reading and writing assignments
- employ critical writing, thinking, and reading processes in responding to the work of professional authors and other students

- develop a process for writing poetry
- acquire and use a vocabulary to express the formal aspects of poetry
- revise poems based on workshop feedback
- develop a sense of writing as a way to understand the world around us
- consider and express the connections between writing and the other arts
- evaluate your own work by identifying weaknesses and acknowledging and building on strengths

Texts

Poetry 30: Thirty-something American Thirty-something Poets. ed.

LaFemina & Crocker

Sleeping on the Wing. Koch & Farrell

The Triggering Town. Hugo

Other Resources: interesting and helpful. . .

The Academy of American Poets: www.poets.org Poetry Society of America: www.poetrysociety.org The Associated Writing Programs: www.awpwriter.org Poetry Daily: www.poetrydaily.org Poets & Writers Magazine: www.pw.org Web del Sol: www.webdelsol.com

Assignments/Evaluation In addition to a final portfolio (original drafts and revisions and a final essay about your work), your grade will also be based on the poems you bring to class (both exercises and "free" poems; with copies, ready for workshop, not first

drafts), analytical responses, reading quizzes, and your general preparedness for class and willingness to participate in all workshops, discussions of the reading, in-class activities, etc.

Remember: creative writing is an academic discipline. That means this course and its grading policies are rigorous. I do not accept late work.

Attendance and Participation I take attendance seriously; so should you. This class is, I assume, something you're choosing to take, so attendance shouldn't really be an issue. There are many more people who want to be in this class than can be, so if you're not truly interested in learning to become a better poet, please let someone else have your spot. The attendance policy is as follows: you're allowed (but not entitled!) to three absences. Beyond that, your final grade will go down 1/3 of a letter for each absence. Once you reach six absences, you will fail the course--no matter how "well" you're doing, how good a writer you are, what your reasons for being absent. Excessive tardiness will also result in a lowered final grade. If you are absent for some unavoidable reason, it's your responsibility to contact me and/or a classmate and keep up with all assignments. Attendance without participation is pointless; you'll want and need to participate if you want to get an A or B in this class.

Social Justice WVU is committed to social justice, as am I. That means you can expect a learning environment that is constructive, based on mutual respect and non-discrimination. If you have any questions, please ask.

Plagiarism Plagiarism, as you no doubt know, is passing off someone else's work as your own. Don't do this; it will only

complicate my life and quite possibly change the trajectory of yours in very serious ways.

Please remember to keep this syllabus and all other course handouts.

Course Schedule

Week 1: January 9 & 11

Course introduction. Freewriting/generating essential material. For Thursday: read Wing introduction (3-23), Whitman (25-38), Dickinson (39-46). Do the Whitman and Dickinson exercises (38, 46): typed, ready to turn in. For next week: read Hopkins (47-57) and do the exercise (56) for Tuesday.

Week 2: January 16 & 18

Discuss Hopkins exercise. Building a poetic glossary. For Thursday: read Stevens (107-122) and do the exercise (120). For next Tuesday: read Williams (137-149) and do the exercise (148).

Week 3: January 23 & 25

Re-cap. Discuss exercises. For Thursday: poem #1. Workshop. For next week: finish commenting on all the poems.

Week 4: January 30 & February 1

Workshop. For Thursday: read Triggering Town (xi-36). For next Tuesday: read Triggering Town (37-74).

Week 5: February 6 & 8

Discuss Triggering Town. For Thursday: read Pound (160-168) and

Eliot (169-180) and do the Pound exercise (167). For next Tuesday: read Ginsberg (226-238) and O'Hara (239-253). Do either the Ginsberg exercise (237) or the O'Hara exercise (251).

Week 6: February 13 & 15

Discuss exercises. For Thursday: read Ashbery (254-267) and do the exercise (265). For next week: poem #2.

Tuesday, February 13: Poetry reading by John McKernan, 7:30, Gold Ballroom

Week 7: February 20 & 22

Workshop.

Week 8: February 27 & March 1

Workshop. Critical writing for poets. Bring Poetry 30 to class. For next Tuesday: read some of Poetry 30 and bring a one-page, single-spaced close reading of any one poem in that book. Week 9: March 6 & 8

Discuss Poetry 30 critical responses. Thursday: poem #3 due.

Workshop.

Wednesday, March 7: English Department pizza party, 11:30-1:30, 346 Stansbury

Week 10: March 13 & 15

Workshop. For next Tuesday: critical essay... (details forthcoming...)

Thursday, March 15: fiction reading by Lee K. Abbott, 7:30, Robinson Reading Room

Week 11: March 20 & 22

Discuss essays. Thursday: poem #4 due. Workshop.

Spring Break

Week 12: April 3 & 5

Workshop. For next Tuesday: final imitation: Poetry 30.

Week 13: April 10 & 12

Workshop Poetry 30 imitations. For next week: bring poems to revise.

Week 14: April 17 & 19

Revision: editing vs. re-vision. Writing a critical preface for the portfolio. Draft due Thursday.

Thursday, April 19: Calliope reading, 7:30, Rhododendron Room

Week 15: April 24 & 26

Tuesday: final things. Thursday: Portfolio due. No late work accepted. Class reading.

Thursday, April 26: MFA reading: 7:30, Rhododendron Room

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