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English 213

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Mary Ann Samyn, ENGL 213, Fall 2003, Creative Writing: Poetry

English 213: Poetry Workshop ~ Fall 2003

MW 2:30-3:45 pm ~ 46A Stansbury Hall

Mary Ann Samyn

Office: 463 Stansbury, 293-3107 x453

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

Office Hours: T 10-12pm on even dates, 1-3pm on odd dates, W 1:30-2:30pm, and by appt.

Texts

The Poet's Companion:A Guide to the

Pleasures of Writing Poetry   : Kim Addonizio & Dorianne Laux

The City of Salt by Greg Orr

Mad River   by Jan Beatty

The Good Thief   by Marie Howe

Hip Logic   by Terrance Hayes

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

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-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 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 when required 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

3 participate in a community of writers and readers through workshops and conscientious completion of all reading and writing assignments

3 employ critical writing, thinking, and reading processes in responding to the work of professional authors and other students

3 develop a process for writing poetry

3 acquire and use a vocabulary to express the formal and thematic aspects of poetry 3 revise poems based on workshop feedback

3 develop a sense of writing as a way to understand the world around us

3 consider and express the connections between writing and the other arts

3 evaluate your own work by identifying weaknesses and acknowledging and building on strengths

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 (with copies, ready for workshop, not first drafts), responses to readings, reading quizzes, and your general preparedness for class and willingness to participate in all workshops, discussions of the reading, in-class activities, etc.

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 1earning 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 ten 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.

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

Course Schedule

Week 1

Course introduction. Begin reading poetry: Jan Beatty Finding essential material.

Week 2

Jan Beatty; discuss first lines; more freewriting and sharing; what makes a poem? One-page response due.

Week 3

Greg Orr; images, first poems due: discuss in small groups and comments by me; one-page response due.

Week 4

Poet's Companion   :
read 19-38 and be prepared to discuss. In-class exercises.

Week 5

Workshop poem #2 based on exercises.

Week 6

Poet's Companion: 39-63. In-class project.

Week 7

FW. Write a poem about the project for next week.
Poet's Companion   :
64-81.

Week 8

Workshop project poems. *Poet's
Companion*   : 85-114.

Week 9

Marie Howe. Persona poems. One-page response due.

Week 10

Workshop persona poems.

Week 11

Terrance Hayes. Writing an imitation. One-page response due.

Week 12

Identify the features of a poem. Write imitation for next week.
Poet's Companion   :
115-128.

Week 13

Workshop imitations.

Week 14

Revision strategies. *Poet's Companion*   : 186-192. Reflective essay...

Week 15

Final poems... /revision.

Week 16

Reading/portfolio.

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