

HZ 301/HZ9301: Advanced Creative Writing

Division of English, Nanyang Technological University

Semester 2, 2018/2019

Seminars: Thursdays 9.30 – 12.30 PM

Assistant Professor Broc Rossell

Contact details:

Office:

This course is designed to give students experience and support in the development of a sustained, polished writing project, with the goal of publication or meeting production standards. Please consult with the professor if you wish to work in a genre with which you have little experience, or is not mentioned here. Student projects are comprised of poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction, multi-media writing and combinations or hybrids of these genres. Your semester's work should be conceived of as a single project (a collection of poems or short stories, stylistically integrated or formally linked collections, a single long prose work, etc.), with your project developed while critically examining work in all genres listed here, and in concert with other student projects. Students will commit themselves to a program of writing, reading and revision, enriched by group feedback and discussion. We will collaboratively develop strategies for managing the pleasures and challenges of longer writing projects and the business of taking work to publication and production. Students will select an author and/or journal within their chosen genre to investigate and report in-depth. We will also read into the theory and practice of creative writing.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND EXPECTATIONS

Seminar format:

Students will attend one three-hour seminar per week during the semester. Seminars are broken into parts: the discussion of assigned texts and relevant concepts, including texts nominated by both professor and students; writing exercises as or when time permits; and the workshopping of students' work by fellow students and, lastly, professor. The latter weeks of the course will also include student presentations at the beginning of class. The workshop is a classroom format where students and professor meet (envision a round table) to discuss works in progress in order to deepen and strengthen our relationships to the art and craft of writing. It depends on students who are respectful, thoughtful, and engaged. We assume that everyone in

the class is committed to improving their craft as artists of the written word. We will treat each other and our work with the respect and effort it requires, and deserves.

This work is primarily collaborative, and student writers hold each other accountable. The course is designed to help you achieve your writing aims, so you will be proactive in connecting the reading and discussion topics with your current writing situation. Your active engagement in the discussion is a requirement of the course, as it will contribute to both your own development as a writer and the development of your fellow students. The workshop schedule is determined at the beginning of the term and must be adhered to.

Presentations

Beginning Week 5 students will give a ten-minute presentation on the works of an author who has some relation to their own work at the beginning of class. Please time your presentation and ensure that it doesn't take longer or less than ten minutes. See assessment guidelines for more information on this requirement.

Workshopping

The thought of letting other people read and discuss your writing may seem intimidating if you have not done this before. Please remember this is also true for most if not all of your potential classmates. A workshop is not a place for perfect work; it is a place where we are required to take risks, to try things we haven't mastered, and to grow as writers together. We can learn from our own and each other's experiments and adventures, including those that don't ultimately satisfy us. You are to bring work that you are unsure of and that will benefit from feedback.

During workshop, we offer impressions and descriptions of the work at hand, ask questions about it, locate and analyze specific literary strategies that the author is employing, discuss how the work's form and structure relate to its themes, identify areas that may need improvement, offer suggestions for revision and strategies that may take the writing further, and discuss ideas that the work evokes. Students are expected to be constructive and insightful in their feedback, while also respectful and supportive.

Please see Appendix 1 for further notes and the workshop schedule.

SEMINAR NOTES:

- Please be present and on time. If you enter late, there's no need to apologise, but settle into the class with the minimum disruption.
- Turn phones off, and if you use a laptop, don't socially network during class time.

- Your comments, questions and contributions are very much invited and welcome. You don't need to know a correct answer to offer your thoughts. Please also try to listen as well as speak, and to respect writing time as silent time, unless otherwise advised.
- Let me as soon as possible if you have any disability or other issue that requires special accommodation in class (examples: you need to sit in a special position so you can see or hear well; you need to leave your phone on in case of a family emergency; you need to leave class early to attend a medical appointment, etc.).

BEYOND THE SEMINARS:

Writing time

Your participation in this course needs to be supported by substantial time spent writing outside of class. This is necessary for basic completion of the assignments.

For those of you who wish to have creative writing as an active part of your lives in the future, success in this course will not be measured by grades, but by how effectively you set up the physical and intellectual habits of writing, reading and engaging with new ideas. Evaluation of your work will be determined in large part by the evolution of your work over the course of the term, and your ability to articulate how your work has evolved as a result of your activities and participation in the class. Keeping early, flawed drafts of your work is a central requirement. This is not a course to show others your talent and ability, but to develop your abilities, skills, and writerly imagination in order to maximize your talent.

Enjoy this rare opportunity.

Writing sources

Language is shared; texts always bear the traces of the texts that surround and precede them. You are encouraged to make conscious and creative use of source texts of many kinds and in many ways. You might, for example, re-situate in a poem the fragments of a conversation you've overheard, or use the narrative structure of a song you know as the basis for a story. Be aware of (and avoid) the problems of plagiarism, but also partake in the ever-generating ecology of language around you. You can use your Reading & Writing Journal as a place to collect source material if you wish, or keep other notebooks.

Revision

Published and publishing writers hardly ever write work that achieves all its aims on the first draft. This is not a skill that can be learned in a semester. Almost all published work has gone through many phases of revision – and learning to revise is central to the aims of this class. Keep early drafts of your work, and take risks as you make new versions. Not everything you try will work, but if you are only willing to change the odd word or punctuation mark, you will miss at least half of the adventure of writing.

ASSESSMENT

Course Assessment Summary

1. Class Participation: 25%
2. Major project proposal and sample 5%
3. Major project, 40%
4. Development portfolio 30%

****Warning****

Plagiarism is an unacceptable practice in universities.

See Appendix 3 for the English Division policy on plagiarism and additional notes for creative writers.

1. Participation

Requirement: Your participation mark will reflect your attendance, your willingness to come to class prepared and your contributions to class discussion and activities. Your primary responsibility in terms of participation is the peer critique you will bring each week for one of your classmates, which you submit for credit and use as notes to lead our class discussions.

You'll submit two hard copies of a one-page, double-spaced peer critique every week. Critiques consist of three short sections (one or two paragraphs each) on one-to-two double-spaced pages. The first section characterizes and describes the text; it is a hypothesis regarding the true nature of the text. Use the first section to identify what qualities, strategies, and decisions are *most important* to understanding this text. This first section requires that you conceptualize the text as a whole, synthesize its essence, and characterize that essence in your own words. The second section includes quotes and/or paraphrases of the text that supports the characterization of it given in the first section; the value of your second section is determined by the accuracy and relevance of those selections: whether you've chosen the most relevant text as examples of what you're describing in the first section. Choose your quotes and examples carefully and wisely. The third and final section explains how the quotes and/or paraphrases presented in the second section support the assertions in the first. You explain exactly how those quotes are evidence of your hypothesis, your description, or your characterization of the text. It is your interpretation and analysis.

Students who are up for a workshop upload or email copies of their writing to the class one week before their scheduled workshop. This is a hard deadline that cannot be ignored under any circumstances. Failure to share your work by this deadline, and preventing your classmates from thoughtfully considering your work, will result in the lowering of your final mark.

Assessment weighting: 25 %**2. Proposal****Requirement:**

- a) A one-page (double-spaced) description of your intentions for your project. This should be specific, and should address form, content and style. It is a provisional document: your intentions will evolve as you write the work, but crystallizing your current intentions is an important part of getting this process started.
- b) A sample of the work-in-progress. Fiction and Non-Fiction: 1000 words. Poetry: 300 words. Mixed media: 4 pages with a minimum of 600 words.
- c) EITHER the name of the author you have selected for your Author Study and a brief description of the relation of his or her work to your own (1 paragraph). A bibliography of author's works, with a selection of those you intend to read over this semester.
- d) Or the name and a brief description of the journal or magazine and its relation to your work (1 paragraph).

In addition to submitting proposals in for grading, we will discuss these in class. Be prepared to read from your sample and describe a, c and d CONCISELY. Expect to discuss your work for 15 minutes.

Assessment weighting: 5%**Due date: TBD****3. Major project****Requirement:** Fiction 5000-6000 words OR

Poetry 1500-2000 words OR

Script 4000-5000 words.

PLUS draft material towards your major project equivalent to half the required word-count for your genre above.

The project word count may be divided between individual fictions or individual poems as you wish. Students who wish to work in cross-genre or multimedia forms should consult with the lecturer regarding a suitable word-count.

Assessment weighting: 40%**Due date: TBD****4. Development portfolio****Requirement:** The portfolio should include the following

- a) Workshop critiques
- b) Your author or journal study
- c) A three-page introduction to your portfolio describing how its contents reflect development

Please see Appendix 2 for further details.

Assessment weighting: 30%

Due date: TBD

ASSESSMENT NOTES:

- Please contact me immediately if you think you will have difficulty completing any of the requirements or submitting your work on time. Extensions are only granted in exceptional circumstances (for example, for medical reasons or in cases of family emergency), and documentation is required. However, support or resources may also be available to help you manage more minor difficulties, so please don't hesitate to contact me for an appointment to discuss anything that comes up.
- Please include the grading sheet from your syllabus with each submission.
- Assignments should be printed in a plain, legible 12 font, except where your creative intentions demand otherwise (for concrete/visual poetry, for example). Choosing an unusual font can make your work harder to read. Make sure your choice is logically justified in terms of the goals you have for your project.
- *Prose* assignments should be double-spaced.
- *Poetry* assignments should be submitted with new poems clearly labeled as such and beginning at the top of a new page.
- Assignments should be stapled, or secured in a closed manila folder. Please DO NOT submit your work in clear-files. Your Reading and Writing Journal may be compiled in a scrapbook if you wish, or printed out as usual. The journal may be handwritten if you wish, but any handwriting should be clear and legible.
- Assignments should be submitted to my CLOSED assignment box at the English Division office.

Seminar Schedule:

Seminars and readings will be oriented to the evolving requirements of student projects – we may well re-order and add to the readings listed below.

WEEK	READINGS, WORKSHOPS, PRESENTATIONS
1 14 th August	Process: Sources and Scope Ed Sanders: "Creativity and the Fully Developed Bard" Federico Garcia Lorca: "The Duende"
2 21 nd August	Generative Sites: Places for writing and places written Katherine Mansfield: from <i>Notebooks</i> Albert Camus: "The Artist at Work" DISTRIBUTING WORK: 1) 2)
3 28 th August	Choices of voice Deleuze and Guattari: "What is a Minor Literature?" WORKSHOPPING: 1) 2) DISTRIBUTING WORK: 1) 2) 1 st Buddy rotation: 1st wk
4 4 th September	Beginnings: Establishing information Beginnings samples. Proposal discussions. WORKSHOPPING: 1) 2) DISTRIBUTING WORK: 1) 2) 1 st Buddy rotation: 2nd wk ASSIGNMENT 2: PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE
5 11 th September	Character: Development through dialogue Dialogue samples WORKSHOPPING: 1) 2) DISTRIBUTING WORK: 1) 2) 1 st Buddy rotation: 3rd wk
6 18 th September	Character/speaker, place/situation: triggering, layering, pacing Janet Frame (from <i>Faces in the Water</i>), Stephen Crane (from <i>The Red Badge of Courage</i>) WORKSHOPPING: 1) 2)

	DISTRIBUTING WORK: 1) 2) 1 st Buddy rotation: 4 th wk
7 25 th September	Structure and the episode Christina Stead (from <i>The Man Who Loved Children</i>), Willa Cather (from <i>My Antonia</i>) WORKSHOPPING: 1) 2) DISTRIBUTING WORK: 1) 2)
8 BREAK	FIRST DRAFT COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED: FRIDAY 3rd of OCTOBER
9 9 th October	INDIVIDUAL CONSULTATIONS 2 nd Buddy rotation: 1 st wk
10 16 th October	About the about (concept, stakes, affective centres) Pitch exercise WORKSHOPPING: 1) 2) DISTRIBUTING WORK: 1) 2) 2 nd Buddy rotation: 2 nd wk
11 23 th October	Titles, Paratext, Framing & Audience Title samples, paratext samples WORKSHOPPING: 1) 2) DISTRIBUTING WORK: 1) 2) 2 nd Buddy rotation: 3 rd wk
12 30 th October	Endings and Closure Lyn Hejinian: from <i>In Rejection of Closure</i> Ending samples WORKSHOPPING: 1) 2) DISTRIBUTING WORK: 1) 2) 2 nd Buddy rotation: 4 th wk
13 6 th November	Publication & Production strategies WORKSHOPPING: 1) 2)
14 13 th November	ASSIGNMENTS 3 & 4: MAJOR PROJECT & PROCESS PORTFOLIO DUE

APPENDIX 1: WORKSHOP INSTRUCTIONS

In the first week of seminars you will be assigned dates to distribute work, and to workshop the following week. You should have two opportunities to do this during the semester.

On the day you are due to distribute your work, bring copies for the class of up to five pages of your work towards your major project. You may include notes to your class members on particular questions or difficulties you have.

All students must make sure to read all the work that is due to be workshopped that week, make notes on the work to help you participate in discussion, and bring your copies of the work back to class.

APPENDIX 2: DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO NOTES

BUDDY WORK GUIDELINES

You will be assigned two buddies to work with over this semester (consecutively). In your own time, you will exchange your project work with your buddy TWICE, and offer written feedback on that work. You will also give your buddy a writing exercise or outing to complete.

Your buddy work notes should include:

- 1) Your buddy's work with the notes you gave them in response (up to 500 words). Notes could include creative revision of their work and/or critical description and suggestions.
- 2) The exercise/outing you assigned them.
- 3) The results of the exercise/outing your buddy assigned you.

AUTHOR STUDY GUIDELINES

Choose an author to read alongside your writing project this semester. The author's works should be in the genre you intend to write in, and they should 'speak' to your work in some way. These works should inspire you and be a source of learning for you. The author should be a 'major' author in the sense that they have produced a large body of respected work which you can explore.

Your author study should include:

- 1) The name of your author and a brief description of the relation of his or her work to your own (1 paragraph). A bibliography of the author's works, with a selection of those

you intend to read over this semester. (To be submitted and discussed in Week 4 with project proposals).

- 2) A two to four page excerpt from the author’s works, with close reading notes (500 words)
- 3) A reflective essay discussing your readings and how they have informed your technical development as a writer (1000 words)

JOURNAL STUDY GUIDELINES

Choose a respected journal or magazine that publishes works of the genre and kind you are writing in. Read as many issues as you can over the semester. Those writing scripts or works for children should consult with me.

Your journal study should include:

- 1) The name and a brief description of the journal or magazine and its relation to your work (1 paragraph. To be submitted and discussed in Week 4 with project proposals).
- 2) A 500 word description of your discoveries in reading the journal or magazine, and how your readings have informed your development as a writer. Do you intend to submit work to this journal, now or in the future? Why or why not?

APPENDIX 3: ASSESSMENT SHEETS

STUDENT:

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT: 1. Participation

CRITERION	SCORE / GRADE RANGE				
	F	D	C	B	A
Attendance	/ 13				
Distributed workshop copies on time	0 1 2				
Attended own workshop session	0 1 2				
Discussion contributions	-----				

SUMMATIVE GRADE:	PLEASE NOTE: Criteria may not be equally weighted in their assessment value.
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STUDENT:

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT: 2. Major project proposal and sample

DATE SUBMITTED:

CRITERION	GRADE RANGE				
	F	D	C	B	A
1. Description of intentions is clear, specific, achievable and evocative of the spirit of the project	-----				
2. Sample of the work in progress shows creative liveliness and focused intentions	-----				
3. Author study is carefully and appropriately selected	-----				
4. Journal study is carefully and appropriately selected	-----				
SUMMATIVE GRADE:	PLEASE NOTE: Criteria may not be equally weighted in their assessment value.				

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STUDENT:

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT: 3. Major project

DATE SUBMITTED:

CRITERION	GRADE RANGE				
	F	D	C	B	A
1. Work is both conceptually original and demonstrates (implied) awareness of established work within the genre/style.	-----				
2. Demonstrates control at a structural level, and sustained creative application over the whole.	-----				
3. Shows awareness and control over the technical specifications of the genre (e.g Fiction: character, plot development, point of view. Poetry: voice, image, line. Script: Dialogue, scene development)	-----				
4. Exhibits care with language: demonstrates interesting word choice and dynamic sentence or phrase variation.	-----				
5. Demonstrates control of grammar , punctuation and presentation, including any intentional manipulation of received conventions.	-----				
SUMMATIVE GRADE:	PLEASE NOTE: Criteria may not be equally weighted in their assessment value.				

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STUDENT:**ASSESSMENT COMPONENT: 4. Development portfolio****DATE SUBMITTED:**

CRITERION	SCORE / GRADE RANGE				
	F	D	C	B	A
1. Notes from buddy work show constructive and imaginative approach to critical/creative collaboration	-----				
2 Author study (close reading) shows careful selection and technical analysis of material	-----				
3. Author study (reflections) shows depth of reading and thoughtful, useful connections made to student's own work	-----				
4. Journal study shows alert reading and thoughtful connections made to student's own work (and possible publication intentions)	-----				
5. Correct and complete citations (MLA-style) are included.	-----				
SUMMATIVE GRADE:	PLEASE NOTE: Criteria may not be equally weighted in their assessment value.				

APPENDIX 4: HSS English Division: Definition and Penalties for Plagiarism

Definition

Plagiarism (from the Latin word for 'kidnapper') is the deliberate or accidental presentation of someone else's ideas or words as your own. This includes:

- The unacknowledged use of words, images, diagrams, graphs, or ideas derived from any source such as books, journals, magazines, the visual media, and the internet. Note: cutting and pasting words from the internet into your own essay, even if you reword them, is still plagiarism.
- Copying the work of a fellow student, having another student write one's assignments, or allowing another student to borrow one's work.
- Buying and/or copying essays, assignments, projects etc from the internet or any other source and handing them in as your own.

Please bear in mind that your lecturers know the subject and have read widely. They therefore can spot unreferenced quotations, and can tell the difference between university level writing and that of published scholars.

Penalties

- If a first year student is caught plagiarizing, and it is the student's first offense, the student will have the opportunity to rewrite the paper with one grade reduction.
- After the first year of studies, it is expected that a student thoroughly understands the implications of plagiarism. Thus, after the first year, or if a student is caught plagiarizing a second time, the student will receive an F for the assignment.

Why plagiarism is academically dishonest

- The unacknowledged borrowing of another's work is theft.
- Independent and creative thinking, as well as intellectual responsibility, are fundamental to a humanities education, and cannot be developed if one simply borrows the work of another.

How to avoid academic dishonesty

Plagiarism

- If you use an author's exact words, you must put them in quotation marks. If you paraphrase another's ideas, you again must indicate the source to your reader.

- Facts and statistics that are not “common knowledge” must be referenced.
- Be sure to use the method of citation recommended by your professor.
- If in doubt, it is always best to reference your material.
- Remember that your lecturer wants to see your ideas and interpretations. Avoid excessively quoting secondary sources and show your reader your thinking.

Collusion and complicity

- Ask your lecturer if you are allowed to work on assignments in groups.
- Get the approval of your professor if you want to hand in material that you have already submitted for another course.
- Do not allow students to copy your work (including work from previous semesters).
- Follow the examination rules set out by the university.

If you still have questions, please ask your professors, or consult the website:

<http://www.plagiarism.org>.

Sources for this document:

The Little, Brown Essential Handbook. Ed. Jane E. Aaron. New York: Pearson Longman, 2006.

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR CREATIVE WRITERS:

The conventions for acknowledgement in creative writing are somewhat different to those for acknowledgement in academic writing. It is acceptable to appropriate material from source texts, AS LONG AS your use of these texts demonstrates substantial independent and creative thinking. There are a number of ways to acknowledge the use of source texts in creative writing, and these vary according to your stylistic imperatives, the level of dependence on the source text and the level of familiarity your audience is likely to have with the source text. For the purposes of this course, you need not always use quotation marks for quoted material if this interferes with your stylistic imperatives (they may be intrusive in a poem, for example). You should, however, include a bibliographic list acknowledging any source texts you use.