Creative Expression: Vision and Voice

Course Description:
Creative Expression: Vision and Voice is a writing class that explores daily creative practice through readings, prompted exercises, improv, games, collaboration, workshop, and revision. Throughout this class, you’ll examine that forces that shape your writing voice, and how you see the world, and discover new wellsprings for your creative work.

This is an introductory course and recommended for students who have never taken a Creative Writing class before. It is a safe space to take risks and fail. You’ll walk out with dozens of pages of new material, and a self-awareness of your own creative process.

Required texts:
Course reader, available from CopyAmerica, and Chiyuma Elliot’s *California Winter League* (available through the instructor).

Grade:
*Participation (35%):*

- Come to class prepared and on time
- Contribute thoughtfully to discussions
- Read and respond insightfully to published or peer work
- Participate in various group activities

This class depends on the full participation of its members. Please keep the tone in the classroom professional, constructive, and respectful; it is possible to be both generous and rigorous.

If you must miss class for illness, sports, etc: 1) let me know in advance. 2) expect some make-up work. Unexcused absences will lower your grade by a half-letter each time, i.e. one unexcused absence knocks A down to A-, etc.

*Written Exercises (35%):* Over the course of the quarter, you will complete multiple written exercises, both in class and out. These exercises will include imitations, flash fiction, poetry and prose poems, etc. You will keep a daily creativity notebook. At the end of the quarter you will compile and turn in originals and revisions of some of your exercises.
Late assignments automatically receive a C grade.

Collaborative Project (15%): End-of-term collaborative project, to be presented to the class.

Reading Attendance (15%): You must attend at least three creative writing events over the course of the quarter, including poetry or prose readings, The Art of Writing series workshops, Spoken Word Collective events or workshops, etc.

Content of Creative Pieces:
Because this class is based on collective trust, you should not include references to any instructors or students in your work.

Laptops, Cell Phones:
We’ll write by hand in class. Occasionally we may use our laptops, but I’ll alert you in advance to these rare circumstances. Because ringing and buzzing and One Direction are disruptive, all cell phones should be switched off prior to entering the classroom. If for some reason you must be reachable, please talk to me before class.

Students with Documented Disabilities:
Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, URL: http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/oae).

ABRIDGED CALENDAR
subject to change, depending on the needs of the class

Week 1: CREATIVITY, VISION, AND VOICE
--Where does inspiration come from? Where does your writing voice come from? How do you see the world?

Readings:
Wisława Syzmborska, “Possibilities”
Christopher Smart, “…from Jubilate Agno”
Curzio Malaparte, “The Black Wind”
Maxine Hong Kingston, “No-Name Woman”
Stephen Kuusisto, “Night Song”
Sandra Cisneros, “My Name”
**Week 2: BECOMING A PERSON ON WHOM NOTHING IS LOST**

--How can we become observers of both our internal and external worlds? How can concrete details create an experience—i.e. of loss, of longing, pleasure, contentment, isolation—for the reader?

**Readings:**
- Stephanie Vaughan, “Able, Baker, Charlie, Dog”
- Robert Hass, “A Story About the Body”
- Some descriptions of faces
- Kevin Young, “Ode to Pork”
- Pablo Neruda, “Ode to My Socks”
- Sei Shonagon, “Hateful Things”
- Miroslav Holub, “Man Cursing the Sea”

**Week 3: THE LAND OF THE FIGURATIVE**

--How does art and writing transcend the “real”? The “real” vs. the “true.”

**Readings:**
- Aloysius Bertrand “Five Fingers of the Hand”
- Sandra Cisneros, “Hair”
- Jack Gilbert, “Michiko Dead”
- Jean Toomer, “Portrait in Georgia”
- Haruki Murakami, “Upon Meeting the 100% Perfect Girl One April Morning”