ENGLISH 192: INTERMEDIATE POETRY
Autumn 2015, Tu/Th 3:00-4:50PM

Instructor: Solmaz Sharif
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Office Hours: Tu 5:00PM-6:30PM / W 1:15PM-3:15PM
Margaret Jacks Room 209

Poetry is life distilled.
-Gwendolyn Brooks

We make out of the quarrel with others rhetoric, but of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry.
-W.B. Yeats

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Throughout this course we will be looking at the lyric self. Who speaks the poems? Where is the intersection between voice and self? What is the relationship between voice /self and form /content? What is the relationship between the intimate lyric self and the social? This course, of course, is designed to develop your voice. So it will be writing intensive. The goal is to produce a chapbook that you will distribute to your peers in class—and beyond, if you wish—at the end of the quarter. We will be reading several collections by individual poets so that we can spend more time with their modes of lyricism. This will also give us a chance to look at how poems in a collection speak to each other. The books are selected for their aesthetic and social diversity. While these books will be supplemented with other readings throughout the course, the goal of this course is depth, not breadth. I welcome and encourage you to bring poems by others that you may come across throughout the quarter that excite you, or poems that speak class discussions. This class will be what we make of it. Courage and curiosity are musts. And will be developed.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Books—
Headwaters by Ellen Bryant Voigt
When My Brother Was an Aztec by Natalie Diaz
Crush by Richard Siken
Lunch Poems by Frank O’Hara
Don’t Let Me Be Lonely by Claudia Rankine

Journal/notebook—There will be a number of in-class and take-home writing exercises aimed at giving you raw material. Or stretch your writing muscles. Or at least raw material to get out of your system. Sometimes we write just to get to the good stuff. Be willing to throw things away.

Folder—There will be many handouts, drafts, hastily written ideas on scraps of paper, and other ephemera. Please have a folder or binder exclusively for this class’s use. You are required to hold on to every handout and critiqued poem.
Copies—You will have to bring in copies of your poems (probably around 10 copies) for workshop. Please budget accordingly.

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<th>GRADING</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation 30%</td>
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<td>Creative Work 40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leading Discussion 20%</td>
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<td>Reading Attendance 10%</td>
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Participation (30%)—The success of this course relies largely on your participation. The amount you give to your peers is the amount you get in return. You are expected, out of respect to your peers’ work as writers and your own work as writers, to attend each workshop fully prepared. Full preparation means having completed all the reading to date, being ready to pose and answer questions on these readings, having prepared comments on your peers’ writing, making a good faith effort to prepare your own writing for workshop, and being willing to share your insights with the class. Please speak. This class’s success relies on our willingness to feel our way around out loud, respectfully, curiously. If this is difficult for you, please speak with me about it. If you do these things, you will receive full credit. I will be happy to discuss your participation grade as it stands at week 5, if you wish, in office hours.

Creative Work (40%)—There will be time in each class devoted to writing based on in-class prompts. You will write short emulation of each of the poets we read. You will write a short manifesto. You will write around five new poems for workshop. They must be written this quarter. You will have plenty of material—don’t worry. At the end of the course, in lieu of a final portfolio, you will make copies of a bound chapbook for your classmates. More simply: you will put your work in the world.

Leading Discussion (20%)—During the quarter, you will either individually or in groups lead a class discussion on the assigned text for the day. This requires: 1) giving a 1-2 minute fly-over view of the major thematic and formal concerns of the collection you will discuss; 2) giving a 1-2 minute introduction to the writer; 3) be prepared to read and discuss 1-3 poems from the book 4) have three discussion questions prepared to set off a conversation about these poems, drawing connections between the poems; 5) bring in one supplementary quote that speaks to the poet’s beliefs in poetry (e.g. from interviews, essays). If two or more people are presenting, you must present as a team. I will be jumping in from time to time to add my own thoughts as well.

Attending readings (10%)—The department requires attending at least three department readings. You can find the schedule here: http://creativewriting.stanford.edu and http://events.stanford.edu. At the end of the quarter, you will submit a brief write-up of the events you attended.

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<th>ATTENDANCE POLICY</th>
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<td>You are allowed two AND ONLY TWO absences. This includes absences due to unforeseen circumstances. To best accommodate long-term illnesses or medical situations, I will be happy to</td>
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work with you in coordination with a medical professional. Any additional absence will result in your final grade dropping a whole letter grade (A- will become B-, etc.). Leaving early or arriving more than 10 minutes late will count as an absence. It is your responsibility to contact a colleague to follow-up on missed work.

Makeup work: If you miss a class, or cannot make three readings, please read an author interview on The Paris Review’s website, as part of their Art of Poetry series theparisreview.org/interviews and write a two-paragraph analysis of it, due on the last day of class.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Late assignments will not receive a grade higher than a C. This includes assignments that were completed but not printed or copied when required. I will not accept any late assignments by email. They must be printed out and placed in my box.

FORMATTING

All poems must include your name, the date, the course number and my name. All poems must be titled. In this class, we will not be playing with typeface—12 point font and black ink, please. No Comic Sans. No Papyrus.

OFFICE HOURS/CONFERENCES

Office hours is a chance to get in-depth feedback on your work and your revisions, to ask about the readings, to ask about other possible readings, to discuss any trepidations or reservations you might have, and on and on. I would be thrilled to see you.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If you have any questions, please see me in office hours before you email me. I check and respond to email only once a day. I suggest, if you are comfortable, exchanging emails with a couple of people in this class. Many lasting poetic friendships have begun in workshops—you might even send each other work for years to come.

ELECTRONICS

Please: seriously: no open laptops, no cell phones, no other electronic devices in class. This class is about paying keen attention to those around you. Just bring that notebook and pen. Anyway, it’s a good exercise in minimizing distraction when writing outside of class.

TRUST

All of these requirements—participating in conversation, working together to lead a discussion, not disrupting the class by being late or being on your phone, etc.—are designed to foster an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect. It’s not easy to write our selves. It’s even harder to share them out loud. Harder, still, to share them for criticism. Know that you are all sharing this risk.
So, the final thing: please do not share any writing classmates have written with people outside this classroom.

While you are in this class, you will be treated as poets—not just students who are writing poems. You will be taken seriously as poets. I trust you will find yourself willing to give the same in turn.

**HONOR CODE**

The Honor Code is the University's statement on academic integrity written by students in 1921. It articulates University expectations of students and faculty in establishing and maintaining the highest standards in academic work. The Honor Code is an undertaking of the students, individually and collectively:

1. That they will not give or receive aid in examinations; that they will not give or receive unpermitted aid in class work, in the preparation of reports, or in any other work that is to be used by the instructor as the basis of grading;
2. That they will do their share and take an active part in seeing to it that others as well as themselves uphold the spirit and letter of the Honor Code;
3. The faculty on its part manifests its confidence in the honor of its students by refraining from proctoring examinations and from taking unusual and unreasonable precautions to prevent the forms of dishonesty mentioned above. The faculty will also avoid, as far as practicable, academic procedures that create temptations to violate the Honor Code;
4. While the faculty alone has the right and obligation to set academic requirements, the students and faculty will work together to establish optimal conditions for honorable academic work.

**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/oaes).
COURSE CALENDAR: WORKSHOP SCHEDULE & DUE DATES

(subject to change based on class discussion & size)

WEEK 1

TU, SEP 22  Course Overview
What is do we want from poetry?

TH, SEP 24  Your Work, Your Tastes: Bring copies (probably 10) of an older poem of
your (preferably from English 92) and a published poem by another poet

WEEK 2

TU, SEP 29  Headwaters by Ellen Bryant Voigt

TH, OCT 1  Workshop

WEEK 3

TU, OCT 6  Mixtapes

TH, OCT 8  Workshop and in-class writing

WEEK 4

TU, OCT 13  When My Brother Was An Aztec by Natalie Diaz

TH, OCT 15  MEET AT CANTOR?

WEEK 5

TU, OCT 20  CONFERENCES—bring your journal, computer, pens, etc.

TH, OCT 22  CONFERENCES—bring your journal, computer, pens, etc.

WEEK 6

TU, OCT 27  Crush by Richard Siken
Discuss revising

TH, OCT 29  Workshop revised poem

WEEK 7

TU, NOV 3  Lunch Poems by Frank O’Hara

TH, NOV 5  Workshop
WEEK 8
TU, NOV 10  Don’t Let Me Be Lonely by Claudia Rankine
TH, NOV 12  Workshop

WEEK 9
TU, NOV 17  “The Glass Essay” by Anne Carson
TH, NOV 19  Workshop

NOV 24 & NOV 26 THANKSGIVING—NO CLASS

LAST WEEK
TU, DEC 1  Manifestos
TH, DEC 3  Chapbook distribution party!