CRWRI-UA9815L01,
Introduction to Creative Writing

Instructor Information

- Dr. Emma Claire Sweeney
- Thursday, 12pm-1pm, Room 303. Where possible, please email me to make an appointment in advance.

Course Information

- Thursdays, 9am-12pm
  - Room 301, 6 Bedford Square

Course Overview and Goals

The literary-steeped surroundings of London provide the perfect backdrop for students to develop their own creative skills. This course therefore provides students with the rare opportunity to develop their own work within the context of UK and international writing in English.

We will take a decidedly practical approach to the drafting of short stories and poetry as we learn to read as writers, gleaning tips on the craft. Our textual analysis will provide a springboard for our own writing, with ‘close reading’ forming the usual method of critiquing both published works and the writing of class members. We will develop our own powers of imagination, self-criticism and craft through a combination of structured creative writing exercises and independent assignments.

Writing workshops will be simultaneously rigorous and nurturing, providing students with the perfect forum for collective and constructive critique. The approach will focus on imaginative task setting, scrupulous analysis, sincere encouragement and constructive criticism. By the end of the course, each class member will have collected a portfolio of work consisting of both poetry and prose.

This course will consist of tutor-led discussions, student-led discussions, creative-writing exercises, field trips, group feedback and creative-writing workshops.

Upon Completion of this Course, students will be able to:

- Read as writers, developing their critical faculties and their confidence so that they can analyze their own writing as well as that of others.
- Identify and use a range of writing craft techniques.
- Structure their work through a variety of different voices and forms.

Course Requirements
Grading of Assignments
The grade for this course will be determined according to these assessment components:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments/A c tivities</th>
<th>Description of Assignment</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>Class participation includes the following:</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Ongoing. Workshop and peer critique schedules will be provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Leading class discussions and presentations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Informed, lively, and insightful contributions to discussions and to Q&amp;A sessions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Arrival at the workshops on time, well prepared and willing to engage in discussions and writing exercises.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Your willingness to challenge yourself and support others.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Peer critiques of your classmates’ drafts, a copy of which must be submitted to me on its due date. <strong>Failure to do so will result in at least half a letter grade being deducted from class participation grade.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final portfolio</td>
<td>The final portfolio must include the following:</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>Draft submission schedules will be provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 1 x 1500-2000-word complete redrafted short story (45%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 30-60 lines of poetry, comprising at least 3 redrafted homework/in-class exercise poems. In special circumstances, and with express permission from the professor, you might replace one of the homework or in-class exercise poems with another of your poems written during this course (45%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Drafts will be considered as part of all the writing assignments and will be collected on their due dates. <strong>Failure to submit each draft on its due date will result in at least half a letter grade</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assignments/Activities | Description of Assignment | % of Final Grade | Due
--- | --- | --- | ---
Midterm assessment | being docked from the final portfolio grade. | | |
| • A redrafted in-class or homework poem and a redrafted in-class or homework prose exercise. Please consult NYU classes for details of word/line lengths and suitable exercises. | 0% | |
| • In ordinary circumstances, the mid-term grade will be advisory only but failure to submit on time all or part of the homework exercises will result on each occasion in at least half a letter grade being docked from the final portfolio grade. | | |

Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class

Grades
Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| A | 89.5% and higher | To receive an “A” in Creative Writing, students must fully engage with the coursework by:
| | | • Submitting all written exercises and assignments on time
| | | • Making an effort to apply “craft” concepts to creative work and critiques
| | | • Coming to class prepared to discuss assigned readings and student work
| | | • Actively contributing to class discussions and providing thoughtful, constructive feedback as part of the workshop
| | | • Refining and revising creative work as required for the final portfolio, demonstrating improvement/growth over the course of the term.
| | | Assignments in this category will be outstanding. There will be a sense of a
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>79.5% - 89.49%</td>
<td>These assignments will show a great deal of promise and technical expertise. They will be a 'good read' but the overall piece of writing may be less consistent or fully achieved. The use of language will show some flair and clarity but may falter at times. Tone, style, structure and pace will be appropriate for the most part. Good editing and redrafting practice will be in evidence. The assignments will be well presented with correct layout and a high level of accuracy in grammar, punctuation and spelling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>69.5% - 79.49%</td>
<td>These assignments will be competently conceived and written, showing a grasp of relevant concepts, but they may be somewhat unoriginal or underdeveloped. There may be gaps, omissions or implausible elements. The language may sometimes be striking, but sometimes also stale and unfocused. Tone, style, structure and pace will sometimes be inappropriate. Some editing will have been undertaken though this may not be complete. Presentation will attain a general good standard, with some inconsistencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>64.5% - 69.49%</td>
<td>Assignments in this band show some attempts at using appropriate methods or concepts, but there will be too many gaps and confusions. Language and/or tone, style and structure may be muddled. Some editing may be in evidence, though parts may be seriously over-written or under-developed. Presentation will be variable, inaccurate at times in layout or in basic grammar, punctuation and spelling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>64.49% and lower</td>
<td>There may be some evidence of familiarity with appropriate methods or concepts but quite a lot of confusion and misunderstanding, and few coherent attempts at using suggested methods. Parts will be in need of greater development, redrafting and editing. Presentation will be inconsistent or poor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Course Materials

Required Textbooks & Materials


Optional Textbooks & Materials


Resources

- **Access your course materials:** [NYU Classes](nyu.edu/its/classes)
- **Databases, journal articles, and more:** [Bobst Library](library.nyu.edu)
- **NYUL Library Collection:** [Senate House Library](catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk)
- **Assistance with strengthening your writing:** [NYU Writing Center](nyu.mywconline.com)
- **Obtain 24/7 technology assistance:** [IT Help Desk](nyu.edu/it/servicedesk)

Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session/Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 1:</td>
<td>Introductions and Inspirations</td>
<td>Readings provided in class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Poems of the Decade</em>: ‘To My Nine-Year-Old Self’ by Helen Dunmore</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Owl Song at Dawn</em> by Emma Claire Sweeney, Ch 1-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Session 3:   | Scenes and Senses                 | *The Penguin Book of the British Short Story II*: ‘Phonefun Limited’ by Bernard Mac Laverty  
<p>|              |                                   | <em>Out of Bounds</em>: ‘Look We Have Coming to Dover’ by Daljit Nagra        |                |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session/Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Owl Song at Dawn</em> by Emma Claire Sweeney, Ch 4-6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 4:</td>
<td>Form and Structure</td>
<td><em>Closure: ‘Yoruba Man Walking’</em> by Bernadine Evaristo  &lt;br&gt;<em>Out of Bounds: ‘Western Ferry’</em> by Tariq Latif  &lt;br&gt;<em>Owl Song at Dawn</em> by Emma Claire Sweeney, Ch 7-9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 5:</td>
<td>Perspective 1</td>
<td><em>Poems of the Decade: ‘Poems to My Mother’</em> by Hugo Williams  &lt;br&gt;<em>Out of Bounds: ‘Sausages’</em> by Hannah Lowe  &lt;br&gt;<em>Owl Song at Dawn</em> by Emma Claire Sweeney, Ch 10-12</td>
<td>Midterm assignment: A redrafted in-class or homework poem and a redrafted in-class or homework prose exercise. Please consult NYU classes for details of word/line lengths and suitable exercises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 6:</td>
<td>A: Setting  &lt;br&gt;B: Perspective 2</td>
<td>A: <em>Owl Song at Dawn</em> by Emma Claire Sweeney, Ch. 13-15  &lt;br&gt;A &amp; B: Handouts provided on NYU Classes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 7:</td>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td><em>The Penguin Book of the British Short Story II: ‘The 40-Litre Monkey’</em> by Adam Marek  &lt;br&gt;<em>Poems of the Decade: ‘Wa, Harmony’</em> by Judy Kendall  &lt;br&gt;<em>Owl Song at Dawn</em> by Emma Claire Sweeney, Ch. 16-Epilogue</td>
<td>To be announced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Session/Date | Topic | Reading | Assignment Due
--- | --- | --- | ---
Session 8: | Workshop 1 | Groups and schedules to be provided | To be announced
Session 9: | Workshop 2 | Groups and schedules to be provided | To be announced
Session 10: | Workshop 3 | Groups and schedules to be provided | To be announced
Session 11: | Workshop 4 | Groups and schedules to be provided | To be announced
Session 12: | NYUL Literary event | Handouts to be provided | To be announced
Session 13: | Workshop 5 | Groups and schedules to be provided | To be announced
Session 14: | Workshop 6 | Groups and schedules to be provided | To be announced
Session 15: | Moving forwards | Handouts to be provided | Not applicable
Final Assessment: | Final Portfolio | Not applicable | 

### Co-Curricular Activities
- New Daughters of Africa, Southbank Centre, Purcell Room
- Make your own way to the Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room on the Southbank [map](https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/venues/queen-elizabeth-hall) - scroll down to see. Nearest tube stations Embankment and Waterloo.
- Meet at the foyer of the Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room at 3pm sharp.
- Please see NYU Classes for suggested additional co-curricular activities

### Classroom Etiquette
- In order to focus intensively on literary conversations, the creative writing workshop will – for the most part – be a device free zone. As such, mobile phones should be set on silent or should be switched off and laptops, tablets etc. are only to be used with the express permission of the professor.
- Toilet breaks should be taken before or after class or during class breaks.
- Food & drink, including gum, are not to be consumed in class.
- Please kindly dispose of rubbish in the bins provided.

### NYUL Academic Policies

#### Attendance and Tardiness
- Key information on NYU London’s absence policy, how to report absences, and what kinds of absences can be excused can be found on our [website](http://www.nyu.edu/london/academics/attendance-policy.html)

#### Assignments, Plagiarism, and Late Work
• You can find details on these topics and more on this section of our NYUL website (https://www.nyu.edu/london/academics/academic-policies.html) and on the Policies and Procedures section of the NYU website for students studying away at global sites (https://www.nyu.edu/academics/studying-abroad/upperclassmen-semester-academic-year-study-away/academic-resources/policies-and-procedures.html).

Classroom Conduct

Academic communities exist to facilitate the process of acquiring and exchanging knowledge and understanding, to enhance the personal and intellectual development of its members, and to advance the interests of society. Essential to this mission is that all members of the University Community are safe and free to engage in a civil process of teaching and learning through their experiences both inside and outside the classroom. Accordingly, no student should engage in any form of behaviour that interferes with the academic or educational process, compromises the personal safety or well-being of another, or disrupts the administration of University programs or services. Please refer to the NYU Disruptive Student Behavior Policy for examples of disruptive behavior and guidelines for response and enforcement.

Disability Disclosure Statement

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

Instructor Bio

Emma Claire Sweeney has won Society of Authors, Arts Council, Royal Literary Fund, Escalator and Nudge Book Awards. She was also named as a Hive Rising Writer and an Amazon Rising Star.

Emma publishes literary features and pieces on disability for the likes of TIME, the Washington Post, and the Paris Review, as well as all the major UK broadsheets.

Owl Song at Dawn, a prize-winning novel inspired by her autistic sister, was published by Legend Press in 2016 and in Germany and China in 2018.

A Secret Sisterhood: The Hidden Literary Friendships of Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte, George Eliot and Virginia Woolf, which Emma co-wrote with her own friend and NYU colleague, Emily Midorikawa (with a foreword by Margaret Atwood), came out in 2017 with Aurum Press in the UK and Houghton Mifflin Harcourt in the USA.

Here’s Emma’s website. Emma is represented by Veronique Baxter at David Higham Associates and you can follow her on Twitter with @emmacsweeney.