

NYU ACCRA

CRWRI-UA - 9815, Creative Writing

Instructor Information

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Course Information

- CRWRI – UA - 9815
- Creative Writing
- By a special arrangement, NYU students will join a small group of University of Ghana Advanced Creative Writing students on the University of Ghana campus.
- Lecture hours : **Wednesday, 9:30am -12:30 pm**
Venue: CODERIA Office, Institute of African Studies (Old Site), UG-Legon.

Course Overview and Goals

This is a workshop type course intended for a small group of students, each with a keen interest, a strong aptitude and/or demonstrated talent for creative writing. Our basic objective is to guide students into a systematic approach to creative writing, with special focus on short fiction (the short story) non-fiction prose (memoir, auto/biography, portrait), and poetry. Students are expected to engage in critical discussions on samples of their own writing as well as writing by other members of the class. We shall devote special attention to developing a grasp of the rudiments and general mechanics of the writer's craft, while at the same time allowing for a fuller realization of the personal/individual creative impulse, talent, and skill. We shall emphasize competence in the use of language as the fundamental tool for the expression of the creative imagination. Class sessions will be devoted to various writing exercises and to the discussion of sample texts, especially those produced by members of the class. Each student will be expected to share her/his work with the class and possibly with a wider audience when possible. Selected works of at least three established writers (including at least one guest writer) will provide opportunities for creative and critical dialogue. Sample work by each guest writer will be read in advance by the class in order to allow for a meaningful dialogue. It is expected that this class will:

- encourage the creative use of language

- help students explore the inner world of the imagination
- enable students to lay the foundations of a possible future career in creative writing
- .help students cultivate the habit of organizing one’s thoughts and sentiments into carefully ordered verbal expressions as objects of aesthetic and sometimes moral value.

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

- cultivate an appreciation for creative writing as one of the most enduring testimonies and legacies of a culture or civilization
- develop the habit of critical observation and reflection on significant life situations..
- gain a deeper understanding of human nature.

Course Requirements

Class Participation

As stated above, “Class sessions will be devoted to various writing exercises and to the discussion of sample texts, especially those produced by members of the class. Each student will be expected to share her/his work with the class and possibly with a wider audience when possible.”

Weekly Writing Assignments

As indicated in the Course Outline below

Assigned Readings

See Column 3 of Course Schedule Below

Grading of Assignments

The grade for this course will be determined according to the following formula:

Assignments/Activities	% of Final Grade
Class Attendance & Participation	15%
Average of Weekly Assignments	25%
Mid-Term Interim Portfolio	10%
Final Portfolio	50%

Letter Grades

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

Letter Grade	Points	Percent
A	4.00	94%-100%
A-	3.67	90%-93%
B+	3.33	87%-89%
B	3.00	84%-86%
B-	2.67	80%-83%
C+	2.33	77%-79%
C	2.00	74%-76%
C-	2.00	70%-73%
D	1.00	65% -69%
F	.00	Below 65 %

View Grades

All assignments will be graded and handed over in class. However, midterm grades and final grades will be uploaded onto NYU Classes.

Course Schedule

Topics and Assignments

Week/Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
Week 1, Aug. 29	<p>Intro: An Overview</p> <p>Students are expected to turn in a sample of their own creative work and be prepared to share them with the class for open discussion.</p>	<p>J.H. Kwabena Nketia: "Welcome Address" [to the 20th Annual Meeting of the ALA, Accra, Mar '94.]. <i>Beyond Survival: African Literature and the Search for New Life</i>, pp. 13-16.</p>	<p>In-class exercise: Students to close their eyes, keep them closed for up to 15 minutes while imagining themselves to be somewhere else. Let them write a paragraph or two about where they've been, what they saw and heard.</p>
Week 2, Sep. 05	<p>A Guided Tour of PAWA House, Accra. Attention on the Gallery of Portraits of Writers of the Pan-African World.</p>	<p>K. Anyidoho, "In Retrospect: An Introduction. Kofi Awoonor, <i>The Promise of Hope</i>.</p>	<p>Write a Bio-Literary Portrait of a Well-Known Writer of Your Choice</p>
[Week 3, Sep 12	<p>Writing the Self: Autobiography Peculiar Challenges of Autobiographical Narratives The autobiographer as writer-narrator-hero/ine; What to tell, how much of it & what not to touch; How much of other lives to write into your life story; The socio-political contexts of your life story; The question of significance</p>	<p>Kofi Awoonor, "An Autobiographical Essay'.</p>	<p>An Autobiographical Piece</p>

[Week 4, Sep 19	<p>Sites of Memory: A Place Piece Personal creative responses to a Visit to the Slave Forts and Castles of Elmina & Cape Coast Reading and discussion of initial drafts of narrative, reflective, or poetic pieces on the slave fort/castle as a Site of Memory. A focus on Punctuation as a system of ordering thought into meaningful segments/units.</p>	K. Opoku-Agyemang, <i>Cape Coast Castle</i>	A Piece inspired by the visit to Elmina/Cape Coast Slave Castles
[Week 5, Sep 26	<p>Writing Other Lives: The Pen Portrait The descriptive power of words/language Character/Personality Portrayal Anecdote as point of entry into character/personality Dialogue as self-revelation Creative Writing & Cultural Grounding/Relevance</p>	Fred Agyeman, Amu The African. Chimamanda Adichie, "The Danger of a Single Story."	A Pen Portrait
Week 6, Oct 03	<p>An in-class exercise: TRIAL</p> <p>To be worked on as a longer narrative for submission at the end of the semester.</p>		An In-Class Exercise
Week 7, Oct 10	<p>The Poet's World: Poetry as Re-Presentation of Reality; Poetry as Imagination Some Fundamentals of the Language of Poetry The Poetry of Language & the Language of Poetry A focus on Poetic Diction.</p>		A Poem

Week 8, Oct 17	MID-TERM BREAK Submission of revised versions of pieces done so far.		An occasional piece inspired by a special mid-term experience
Week 9, Oct 24	Dialogue with a GUEST WRITER:		Review of a work by the Guest Writer
Week 10, Oct 31	Writing the Memoir: Encounter with Africa through Students' Memoir]	A Memoir
Week 11, Nov 07	The Short Story – Basic Elements and Structure	Ama Ata Aidoo, <i>The Girl Who Can & Other Stories</i>	A piece of short fiction
Week 12, Nov 14	A Field Visit: Springfield Lodge, Peduase. Location/Setting and Inspiration:		A piece inspired by the special view from the mountain top.
Week 13, Nov 21	Focus on Form, Structure Characterization in the Folk Narrative	Veronique Tadjo, <i>Queen Pokou</i> Funso Aiyejina: <i>The Legend of the Rols & other stories</i> ckhil	A Story in the Style and Mode of a Folk Narrative
Week 14, Nov 28	Back to the Short Story	Ama Ata Aidoo: <i>Diplomatic Pounds & other stories</i>	A Short Story
Week 15, Dec 05	Writing the Future A focus on the possibilities & limitations of the Imagination. The challenge of creating a Future so unlike the Past and the Present and yet so Familiar or Believable	David Lodge: <i>The Art of Fiction</i> ("Imagining the Future") Ama Ata Aidoo: "She Who Would Be King" R.E.G. Armattoo: "Letter to an African Poet in the Year 5000AD"	A Future Piece
Week 16, Dec 12	EXAMS		

Tests and Quizzes

- [Insert test name and date]

Course Materials

Required Textbooks & Materials

- See Course Outline Above

Resources

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

Course Policies

Attendance and Tardiness

Study abroad at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive experience in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centers is mandatory, and unexcused absences will be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student's final course grade for every week's worth of classes missed. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. Repeated absences in a course may result in harsher penalties including failure.

Note: If for any reason you are unable to attend class, you are **FIRST** required to contact and inform the NYU Accra Manager of Student Services directly at the Academic Centre or email mao9@nyu.edu

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism

Study abroad at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive experience in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centers is mandatory, and unexcused absences will be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student's final course grade for every week's worth of classes missed. Students are

responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. Repeated absences in a course may result in harsher penalties including failure.

Plagiarism: presenting others' work without adequate acknowledgement of its source, as though it were one's own. Plagiarism is a form of fraud. We all stand on the shoulders of others, and we must give credit to the creators of the works that we incorporate into products that we call our own. Some examples of plagiarism:

- a sequence of words incorporated without quotation marks
- an unacknowledged passage paraphrased from another's work
- the use of ideas, sound recordings, computer data or images created by others as though it were one's own
- submitting evaluations of group members' work for an assigned group project which misrepresent the work that was performed by another group member
- Altering or forging academic documents, including but not limited to admissions materials, academic records, grade reports, add/drop forms, course registration forms, etc.

Disability Disclosure Statement

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or mosecsd@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.

Note: Aspects of this syllabus could change in the course of the semester