

Kresge 65W: Creative Writing
Syllabus 2023
Roz Spafford

Welcome to the course! This summer we will work on fiction, poetry and creative non-fiction, in ways that will help you jump-start your writing, experiment with genres that are newer to you, and/or continue projects you have begun.

Everyone will be expected to write and turn in one story (at least 1,200 words), a poem, and a short (1,500 words or so) piece of creative non-fiction, along with related exercises. For a final project, students may either revise one of the pieces they have submitted or turn in part of a bigger project they have been working on (a collection of poems, a chunk of a novel, a standup script, etc.).

In addition, students will write comments on other students' work and do writing exercises in and out of class. Please have something handy to write with during class—preferably a notebook and pen, but your keyboard is fine. Please do not text or engage in non-class activities on your computer during class time; we will take a break mid-class so you can catch up with the world.

The class meets for five evenings; all classes are online and synchronous, that is, during the actual class hours, Tuesdays from 5:30 - 8:30 PM, PST. (Because the class depends on synchronous workshops, you need to access it in real time—the class cannot be taken asynchronously.) You will do some asynchronous work--participating in on-line discussions and writing comments on other students' work--but otherwise, we will function much as we would have in person.

The course lectures (but not the peer workshops) will be recorded; if you do not wish to be recorded when you speak, please send me a note in chat and I will stop the recording while you are talking. PowerPoint slides will be posted but recordings will not be; they are intended for students who have a documented illness.

General Information

The course is hosted on [Canvas](#). You do not need to sign up for an account; just login with your CruzID and Gold Password at canvas.ucsc.edu. See the Resources section in the first module for more information on using Canvas and for details about summer session enrollment.

You will find the class material organized in modules on Canvas. The modules will open week-by-week. You can also see the whole syllabus on Canvas; a somewhat better formatted copy is in your email—you might print it if that would help you stay organized. Please have the links to the assigned reading open (or print them) before you come to class.

Textbook: *Naming the World and Other Exercises for the Creative Writer*, edited by Bret Anthony Johnston. Pages as assigned. Note that the first week's reading assignments are on Canvas. If you are using a Kindle, look at the Announcement to get the section titles. I recommend against the e-textbook, as it is hard to use.

Additional Reading: Various handouts plus on-line texts—the links follow. Please print or have the tabs open when we are scheduled to discuss the reading in class (If you hit a paywall at any of the links, please let me know right away and I will email you a PDF.) Note: I have provided audio links where available.

Contact information: Instructor: rozl@ucsc.edu. Backup email: rozspafford@gmail.com.

Grades: Grading will be based on attendance, responsiveness to other students' work, and commitment to your own work, as evidenced by the degree to which your pieces successfully carry out their intentions, and by your investment in the writing process. Note that we only have five meetings, so if you miss class once, you miss 20% of the course. That said, emergencies do happen. Please email me as soon as possible if something very urgent will keep you out of class.

Grading breakdown:

- Each major assignment (fiction, poetry, creative non-fiction, rewrite or project) turned in on time is worth 15% of your grade (or 15 points). To get full credit, turn in the exercises relevant to that assignment, developing the ideas in them fully. Late work reduces your grade by 1 point/day. Note the deadlines—on Sundays!
- Participation in each of the three workshops (writing useful comments, offering helpful suggestions aloud) is worth 8% per workshop.
- Participation in class discussion is worth 7%. You may participate in the chat or aloud.
- Reading a piece of your work aloud on the last day of class counts for 5%.
- Each discussion post of at least 100 words (up to 4) is worth 1% (per post or reply).

Check your deadlines: Credit/no credit, add/drop etc. procedures are different in the summer so you'll need to be tuned in.

Please fill out the survey on the Canvas course site. It is under "quizzes" and is listed as an unnamed quiz under "surveys." I know this is an awkward framing of it, but if you answer it, it will help me find you if the UCSC email or Canvas or Zoom go down and will also help me provide the best class experience that I can for you.

Schedule

Week 1: Fiction. August 1, 2023

Agenda for August 1:

Writing: Processes, practices and purposes

Introductions

Fiction: Structure and strategies (Swirsky)

Colliding stories (Koja)

Constructing a scene (Ortiz)

Congruence of craft elements (Ortiz)

World-building, character and structure exercises

Reading for structure:

“If You Were a Dinosaur, My Love,” Rachel Swirsky.

<http://www.apex-magazine.com/if-you-were-a-dinosaur-my-love/>

(Audio is at the same link.)

“The Future is a Silver Lake,” by Lisa Ortiz.

<http://www.bookshopsantacruz.com/the-future-is-a-silver-lake>

(The copy posted on Canvas is a little more readable.)

Both stories are used with permission of the authors.

Preparing for Week 2—Fiction and Poetry

Write a (new) story and email it to Roz by **Sunday, August 6** (rozl@ucsc.edu).

Your story should be three-four pages long (1200 words, double-spaced in 12 point type), though you are welcome to write a half-page longer or shorter.

Please email your story in Word or in Google docs, not in Pages or PDF. Please include only your first name on the story, not your last name or your student number.

Also write: The world-building and character plot exercises from class (posted on Canvas) and at least four of the exercises suggested in the assigned pages from *Naming the World*. They can evolve into your story (or not). **Post to Canvas.**

Read and engage (required):

Your group members' stories

From *Naming the World*: pp. 17, 63-64, 67-70, 75-77, 89-93, 113-115, 119-131, 174-176, 221-227, 243-247.

The riff on “The Future is a Silver Lake” (will be on Canvas)

“The Tower and the Net,” Janet Burroway

<http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/static/f/1445195/19761579/1344403218290/Burroway++The+Tower+and+the+Net.pdf?token=WqoMaza9QmivrDpcwiYWVzqSZtI%3D>

“Waking the Prince,” by Kathe Koja. Posted on Canvas.

“Woman Hollering Creek,” by Sandra Cisneros.

<https://iaisp.uj.edu.pl/documents/1479490/29437798/Cisneros-Woman-HC-02-V-Popescu.pdf>

“La Llorona, Legend and Protector, in the Streets of San Francisco”:

<https://www.kqed.org/news/11894939/la-llorona-legend-and-protector-in-the-streets-of-san-francisco>

Recommended:

Pages 5-7 of “Sample passages for comparison,” by William L. Stull and Maureen P. Carroll. *The New York Times*. August 16, 2007.

<http://www.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/Carver.pdf>

“What We Talk About When We Talk About Love,” by Raymond Carver.

<https://www.northernhighlands.org/cms/lib5/NJO1000179/Centricity/Domain/115/What%20We%20Talk%20About%20When%20We%20Talk%20About%20Love.pdf>

“Newton’s Sleep,” by Ursula K. LeGuin

Hadley, blog post.

<https://www.bridportprize.org.uk/blog/special-guest-blog-short-story-judge-tessa-hadley-explains-how-fiction-writing-form-exploration>

“Beginnings,” by Raymond Carver. Unedited. *The New Yorker*, December 24, 2007. <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2007/12/24/beginners>

“The Two Raymond Carvers,” by Giles Harvey. *New York Review of Books*, May 27, 2010. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2010/05/27/two-raymond-carvers/>

Background on La Llorona:

<https://blogs.loc.gov/folklife/2021/10/la-llorona-roots-branches-and-the-missing-link-from-spain/>

Interview with Rachel Swirsky:

<https://www.lightspeedmagazine.com/nonfiction/author-spotlight-rachel-swirsky-5/?fbclid=IwAR3dz1j10b62TaZN-h35ZYYvoAJ1FDttOngcuP1xSWuMOvbg3JrCOOax9c>

Week 2: Fiction & Poetry. August 8, 2023.

“Every story is two stories. The one on the surface and the one bubbling beneath. The climax is when they collide.” Grace Paley.

Agenda for August 8:

Spare vs Expansive: discussion

Workshop on stories

Launching poetry—

“The Poetics of Rap”—visitor, Max Lopez (UC Berkeley)

Elegies, prayers, poems from music, prose poems

Preparing for Week 3

Write: five exercises and one poem. See the assignment under the poetry module.

Due Sunday, August 13, 11:59 PM.

Email the poem for the workshop without your last name or student number to rozl@ucsc.edu.

Post the five exercises in Canvas.

Read before Week 3: Poetry

Your group members poems

From *Naming the World*, pp. 41-48, 75-77 (again).

Mayda del Valle, “A Faith Like Yours”

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/chi-poem-htmlstory.html> (print)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WCZTlXb4w3Y> (video)

Gloria Anzaldua, “To Live in the Borderlands.”

<https://powerpoetry.org/content/live-borderlands>

Read first, then listen: “A Hymn to Childhood,” Li-Young Lee

<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/52209>

“This Haunting,” by Michelle Porter

<http://www.malahatreview.ca/issues/197.html>

"The Sadness of Clothes," Emily Fragos

<https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/sadness-clothes>

"Nocturne," Li-Young Lee

<http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poems-and-performance/poems/detail/43014>

"Kaddish," Leon Wieseltier's translation (on Canvas)

If you want to hear the actual Kaddish in Aramaic & Hebrew, try:

<https://www.sollevinson.com/kaddish.php>

Read and listen: Allen Ginsberg, Kaddish (Part 1)

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/49313/kaddish>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTl6mlCoNyA>

"Spring Runoff Prayer," D.A. Lockhart

<http://www.malahatreview.ca/issues/197.html>

"Wade in the Water," Tracy K. Smith

<https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/wade-water>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8bMiPEznQA>

Here is a link to the song that Smith references in the poem:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRpzEnq14Hs>

If you want to hear the Geechee Gullah Ring Shouters that Tracy K. Smith references, here's a youtube video of them performing at a school:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1HaSJsoNqUY>

"Ancianos," Yasmeen Najmi

<https://www.facebook.com/notes/poets-responding/ancianos-by-yasmeen-najmi/159171737453038/>

A Small Needful Fact," Ross Gay

<https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/small-needful-fact>

Read the news story about Eric Garner. (CNN)

<https://www.cnn.com/2014/07/20/justice/ny-chokehold-death/index.html>

"Summer, Somewhere," Danez Smith

Listen to it: <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/detail/58645>

Another version—video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivNWzr-Zue8>

"Three Seconds," Spencer Sharp & Prince Ea

https://vimeo.com/208145716?fbclid=IwARoNM_lZo7UW3Ndb_ILIKJD3yudCwCgf8EZmpBJAPo-kIFdVYcRkz9XtreE

“Sister Tongue,” Farnaz Fatemi. On Canvas.

Also from *Sister Tongue*, Farnaz Fatemi. Optional.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rs3To3YyzIg>

Other poems as assigned

Recommended:

“The Revolution will not be Televised,” Gil-Scott Heron. (Required if you are spoken word poet!)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGaoXAwl9kw>

“Tattered Kaddish,” Adrienne Rich

<http://uwspoeetry.blogspot.ca/2007/05/three-poems-by-adrienne-rich.html>

“It is As One Body,” Mary Carroll-Hackett

<http://www.anomalouspress.org/3/8.carroll.body.php>

“A Mother’s Kiss,” Persis Karim

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P6-tOhJMT7w>

"All The Names We Will Not Know," Naomi Shihab Nye

<https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/all-names-we-will-not-know>

“Insomnia,” by Randy Lundy

<http://www.malahatreview.ca/issues/197.html>

"Patsy Cline," Jennifer Chang

<https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/patsy-cline>

"Only as the Day is Long," Dorianne Laux

<https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/only-day-long>

“Off-Island Chamorros,” Craig Santos Perez

<https://craigsantosperez.wordpress.com/2017/07/25/off-island-chamorros/>

If you want to hear more from Adrienne Rich, start at 1:20 of this video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2CnJbUns94>

Listen to Li-Young Lee at this site at 31.19 and stopping at 36.33.

<https://beyondtherobot.com/meet-li-young-lee-national-poetry-month-featured-poet-f-or-april-16th-86da46689b7b>

"Her Garden," Donald Hall

http://poems.com/poem_print.php?date=16771

Listen to Donald Hall read the poem and talk about poems as memorials:
<http://www.wnyc.org/story/116635-special-guest-donald-hall>

"Reading to my Father," Jorie Graham
<https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/reading-my-father>
Note this project: <http://www.loc.gov/poetry/casadecolores/>

Interview with Li-Young Lee:
<https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/a-conversation-with-li-young-lee/>

Mourning poems from Arabic, David Sullivan, translator.
On Canvas.

Week 3: Poetry & Creative Non-fiction. August 15, 2023.

Agenda for August 15:

Workshops on poems
Introduction to creative non-fiction

To do for Week Four:

Write: Creative non-fiction exercises (see the assignment) and a piece of creative non-fiction, 1500 words (+/- 200). **Due Sunday, August 20, 11:59 PM.**

Email the piece with only your first name on it. Post the exercises on Canvas at the Assignment link.

- Read: Your group members' pieces
- Read: Anika Fajardo, "What Didn't Happen." Do a freewrite of a page or so, telling a story by way of recounting what didn't happen.
<http://www.reduxlitjournal.com/2014/05/128-what-didnt-happen-by-anika-fajardo.html>
- Read: the first three pages of Geoffrey Dunn's, "Male Notte: The Untold Story." Do a freewrite of a page or so, incorporating a personal story with some historical material. The version on Canvas is easier to read, but here is a link to it:
<https://history.santacruzpl.org/omeka/items/show/134390#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0>
- Tessa Fontaine, "How the Coney Island Sideshow Saved Thousands of Babies." Be sure to read the end.
<https://lithub.com/how-the-coney-island-sideshow-saved-thousands-of-babies/>

- Reyna Grande, “A Migrant’s Story.”
<https://reynagrande.com/a-migrants-story/>
- Lishani Ramanayake, “The Things We Could Not Say.”
<http://gulfoastmag.org/journal/30.2-summer/fall-2018/2017-barthelme-prize-honorable-mention-the-things-we-could-not-say/>
- Anandi Mishra, “Leaving Home Meant Losing my Mother Tongue.”
<https://electricliterature.com/leaving-home-meant-losing-my-mother-tongue/>
- Georgia Johnson, “Pesticides Putting Pajaro Valley Schools at Risk, Teachers Say.” <https://www.goodtimes.sc/pesticides-pajaro-valley-schools-risk/>
- Read: from *Naming the World*: pp. 12-14, 31-37, 41-45, 51-54, 78-81
Bottom of page 11-14 (non-fiction – fiction exercise)

Read pages 31-37. (The exercise is close to the assignment, so just see whether it has any advice you can use.)

Read pages 51-54 (Do the exercise if it makes sense for your piece of creative non-fiction.)

Recommended:

- Matt Skenazy, “The Last Days of Marc-André Leclerc.”
<https://www.outsideonline.com/2306776/last-days-marc-andre-leclerc>
- Sasha Chapman, “Laying Waste”
<https://thewalrus.ca/laying-waste/>
- Laurel Flores Fantauzzo, “How to Survive a Super Typhoon.”
<https://www.buzzfeed.com/laurelfantauzzo/how-to-survive-a-super-typhoon>
- Jonathan Franzen, “Carbon Capture.”
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/04/06/carbon-capture>
- Ben Quick, “Agent Orange: A Chapter from History that Just Won’t End.”
<https://bsigurdsonenglish2010.files.wordpress.com/2010/11/agent-orange.pdf>
- “Scenes from an Emergency Clinic in the Sonoran Desert,” Lee Sandusky
<https://lithub.com/scenes-from-an-emergency-clinic-in-the-sonoran-desert/>

Week 4: Creative Non-Fiction. August 22, 2023.

Due Sunday, August 20, 11:59 PM—a piece of creative non-fiction, 1,500 words (+/- 200).

Email the piece (again, in Word or Google docs, with just your first name on it).

Put a note on your piece if you think you'll revise it for your last assignment so I can get responses to you right away.

Post the exercises on Canvas.

Agenda for August 22:

Discovering the “creative” in creative non-fiction
Workshops on creative non-fiction
Discussion of revision

To do for Week 5: Revision & moving forward

Prepare: Decide on a short (under 5 minutes) piece to read to the class.

Check: Make sure your mic is working. Borrow a web cam if you don't have one.

Read: “Getting your Poems into the World,” Steve Kowit. Handout.
From *Naming the World*, 305-312, 320-323, 333-350.

Week 5: Reading, revising, moving on. August 29, 2022.

Read: Student publications—links to come

Agenda for August 29

Readings of your work
Moving on from here

Email: A revision of one of your pieces (include the original) or sections of the big project you want me to read. If the latter, please consult with me about how many pages I can respond to and by when. **Due: between Sunday, August 27 and Saturday, September 2, 2023, 11:59 PM.**

Please keep track of the Summer Session Deadlines: See below.

Session 2

- **July 31 - September 1, 2023**

Deadlines

- **Add/Swap** - Thursday, August 3
- **Drop** - Monday, August 7 (tuition reversed)
- **Request "W" Grade** - Sunday, August 20 (no tuition reversal)
- **Change Grade Option** - Sunday, August 27
- **Grades Due** - Thursday, September 7