

Ars Longa

St. Jerome's University
Department of English
Creative Writing 1
ENGL 335-001
Morteza Dehghani

Like an abstract: in short
we will have three modules but before
that: copyright; the picture at the end of
this outline shows a cricket singing and writing
under piles of snow. Please cite **him** if you wish to quote **her**.

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Weekly meetings: Wednesday 6:30:00PM, SJ2 2001

online office hour: TBD

(Bongo or Teams)

This butterfly is ready to fly

Winter 2023.

Please read this outline carefully.

1. **Poetry** including one class on **aphorism** (5 classes). **Aphorism** as an independent form [it's OK to be slightly abstract. Poets do that but do it well], and aphorism as one-liners or short pithy, yet lyrical writings incorporated into the **poems** you have written or want to write.
2. **(iterative) translation.** (2 classes).
3. **Flash fiction:** 5 classes.

(I value process more than product in this workshop)

We will meet on Mondays, in class, and you have an entire week to read, write, comment, discuss, submit

at your own
pace.

I encourage you to attend
the Tuesday meetings.

If you have any
questions, post to the

Learn Discussion Forum,
Ask me!

If it's a personal Q,
email me please.

We can also always meet
online via Teams.

Instead of an intro:

“The lyf is so short, the craft so long to lerne...” (Chaucer, *The Parliament of Foules*)

Hello, how are you? My name's Morteza.

If you want to know where I'm from: I'm an earthling, maybe my background is China, or Siberia, but I opened my eyes to date palm trees and marshlands and rivers and rolling hills. Then I grew up by mountains because one night a monster attacked my hometown, when people were fast asleep; in human language that monster is a species called war and it is still alive and at work.

And this is my story plot.

But I'd like to know your story and I'm excited to read yours. We are all story-tellers whether we write poetry, make a painting, take a photo, or speak with friends, mom, dad.

We also write stories through walking and as we walk, as we live.

Any movement from point a to point b is a story.

A line is a Nile; a story.

A few introductory notes:

we are in this course to write, honestly, courageously, passionately. Don't keep the creative energy inside you restrained; let it flow and roar; I'm here to shape and guide it with your help and with the support of your fellow classmates. We produce our own work while we read the work written by other writers/poets (from different geographies and eras, from poets old and new). We come to class prepared to discuss them, online of course because of the ongoing situation—I hope you're all well and safe.

Throughout the term, **we read as writers and not as critics.**

This course is as much about reading as it is about writing.

We become familiar with a set of formal elements and get immersed in the rudiments of composing poetry, that is, we become familiar with such elements as imagery and sound, verse forms, lineation and punctuation, rhyme and rhythm, yes! Poems can rhyme even today without sounding old-fashioned. We will also read each other's work.

We offer written feedback (only written) to the works produced by our peers. We will begin with writing poems and then will focus on writing pithy aphoristic lyrical lines which you can incorporate into your poems. This will in turn be followed by a little work on (iterative) translations. We will look at translation from a broad perspective, as re-iteration of another poem or work of art. The main focus will be how a text can be recreated

differently at different iterations. I'll introduce the concepts of "decreation," and "transcreation," as we work on this module.

We will finally write short stories in the last few weeks of the term, getting inspiration from both craft readings and the short stories we read.

Every week we experiment with form and with language in **Weekly Reflections**.

Literary production is as much about form as it is about subject matter and content.

I'd like all of us to see afresh, to see "the dearest freshness deep down things" as G. M. Hopkins says. Discover yourselves in your writing, your unique voice! I'd like all of us to think about capturing this freshness in our works of art.

These weekly posts are a good practice towards the writing of creative nonfiction.

We also have **weekly exercises in creativity**. I'll give you prompts on these weekly writings.

And then **weekly discussions** and in-person class participation.

One central premise in this course is experimentation with different forms.

I cherish the existing forms (of poetry, drama, fiction, etc.) but I think we all need to be wary of how these forms may be limiting to our creativity.

Please note

while we stick to this outline, things are not set in stone; there is always a degree of spontaneity in courses like this.

Texts we'll be working with

Include

- Oliver, Mary. *A Poetry Handbook*. Any edition. This is a useful book on the craft of poetry. If you do not have access to this handbook, please read the alternative texts on craft – Stephen Minot's *Three Genres* -- that I will be posting to Learn under Content.
- Excerpts from *The Basho Variations* by Steve McCaffery. On Learn.
- Excerpts from *Exercises in Style* by Raymond Queneau. On Learn.
- All creative works and the critical/technique/craft writings can be found on the **Learn site**.
- Most of these are in public domain or on free Websites. All New Yorker stories were retrieved from the New Yorker website on September 7, 2020.

Useful websites for this course:

Poetry Foundation, Poets.org, Academy of American Poets, The New Yorker Fiction Podcasts.

Please be ready to read poetry and prose not listed here but posted to Learn later throughout the term as I see them helpful.

And please read with pleasure.

And please share your own outside-this-course readings with us all as well. There's a "Recordings" section under Discussions where you can record and post your own poems and/or poems by others. You are a **StudentWriter** in this course. (no, no space is needed there! I admit I get the idea from Marguerite Porete's *FarNear: an exercise in the art of acknowledgement.*)

(An aside) Here's some useful journals and magazines that you may want to read, browse through, subscribe to, submit to (all are Canadian but you can also identify and submit to any magazine in any English-speaking country. Finding a magazine is part of your literary/publishing quest.)

The New Quarterly- Contemporary Verse2- Antigonish Review- Prism International-
Brick- Grain- The Fiddlehead- Malahat Review- Geist- Prairie Fire Exile
The Puritan Arc Room etc. etc. .

Assignments (if this is the right word)

Please keep in mind, you want to produce your creative work with passion, so this is as a way of giving structure to our efforts to write creatively and share with excitement.

Poems 20%>>>> 10% for drafts>>>> 10% for the final portfolio

Stories 20%>>>> 10% for drafts>>>> 10% for the final portfolio

Iterative translations or transcreations– dropbox submission 8%

Weekly class discussions 17%

Peer critiques 10% >>> poem 5%>>>> story – 5% discussion forum submission

Weekly creativity exercises - dropbox submission 10%

Weekly experimental reflections – dropbox submission 15%

I. Poems (20%)

5 poems as part of your portfolio, in any style, on any subject matter. One poem per week in the first five weeks of the term. No particular length but keep short please; and keep in mind that this is not a directive, only a guide. (20% for writing the poems, posting them to Learn, and finally submitting them as part of your portfolio, at the end of the term. 10% for writing and posting the first drafts to Learn and 10% for revising them and submitting them as part of your portfolio.) Please, no fancy fonts, unless it's part of the style, and unless you are doing something with font.

Use a clear, legible, font. Font size? This is poetry; you may want to use different font sizes in a single poem. Again, it's part of your style.

Please submit to the Learn Dropbox. Linked to Learn gradebook.

II. iterative Translation/transcreation: (8%)

Eight iterations
of a haiku; and perhaps
from another tongue.

these are not haikus,
although a 5.7.5
pattern can be seen

We will discuss the craft of iterative translation –briefly—and read adaptations or re-created versions of other works, asking if translation of poetry is governed by the same set of rules that dominates poetry writing. Submit as part of your portfolio. For this assignment, I'll give you prompts; a poem or two to re-create or re-make your poems. Submit 8 iterations. You will receive marks for this component of the course when you submit.

Please submit to the Learn Dropbox. Linked to Learn gradebook. Completion grade.

III. Flash fiction (20%)

Good writers are always learning -- from other writers, and also from their own writing, from their mistakes and failures, and from their own experiences of the world. Short fiction is an exciting genre, and rather new. The short short is even newer. In this course we try to write flash stories. The brevity of the course only allows for short genres, I believe, and learning how to start writing short stories, with all the elements of the craft, requires at least a full term. We will read classic and contemporary short stories as well as flash stories. Through reading both shorts and short shorts, we will be able, I hope, to see the differences between the two although sometimes -- even in a few of the stories I have selected as part of the weekly readings -- the boundary between the two is blurry; not clear. You will receive 10% for submitting these stories on time and to the right dropbox. The other 10% will be given to you at the end of the term.

Please submit to the Learn Dropbox. Linked to Learn gradebook.

IV. Weekly reflections (15%)

Every week we write our reflections on weekly creative readings listed below in the schedule; please write as a poet/writer; this should be written as a piece of creative nonfiction. Engage in a personal conversation with the work, focus on any aspect of the

piece you want and be creative. Instead of writing what the text means, you can focus on how it says what it says. Don't critique, respond to the text, in experimental ways. Again, this is an exercise in creative nonfiction writing. Just to emphasize: these weekly posts should incorporate the assigned poems and prose, and **should not** be written as an academic essay.

Experiment with form in these reflections, allow your imagination to do what it wants with these. These are reflections and can be written as a rough drafts, as your quick notes, your scribbles, they can be idiosyncratic, they can be sober and serious, they can be lighthearted and funny.

If you take some time thinking about it, you will find a way about doing it. I have no prescription but I have these pointers which, I hope, can guide you through that. I'll also share with you some samples, posted under Content as "Sample Weekly Reflections." The writers of these sample reflections -- my former students/fellow writers -- have given me permission to share their work with you. Read all the works on the list but **YOU DON'T NEED TO INCLUDE ALL OF THEM IN YOUR REFLECTION**. You can also get ideas for these reflective, prose writings from the readings posted to Week 1.

(15% for writing and posting 10 reflections.)

Please submit to the Learn Dropbox. Linked to the gradebook.

V. Workshop discussions, contributions (17%)

We are here because we love reading and producing literature; don't squander your time. I do my best to create a comfortable atmosphere so you can speak even if you are a bit shy. I'm shy too, sometimes. But please do your best to comment, critique, agree, disagree, and care! Come to class prepared for these discussions. The life of the workshop depends on you and your excitement about, your engagement with the course. Please be kind and gracious as you comment and criticize (in the technical sense of the word. You put on your critic's hat as you read your classmates' work). We are entitled to artistic expression and we are allowed to express our opinions honestly. We may also speak and write about sensitive topics. Please be tolerant if you don't like an idea. Try to offer your own opinions rather than quote (from) others. Go beyond "I like" or "I didn't like." Of course, you can always praise or dismiss a work but they should be followed by your critical words; comments which are made to help us improve our work. Having no comment means you haven't read the materials.

Peer Critiques (10%)

You will be critiquing a poem and a story written by one of your classmates/fellow writers. The first peer feedback will be given on a poem any time within week 4. The second is done on a flash story any time within week 10. You should **write** a full page (at least 300 words) on your peer's creative work and ideally **annotate** the work you critique. If you don't respect your peers by spending time on their writings, how can you expect your work to be read well and critically and thoroughly? This assignment will be done in pairs and is part of class participation. A Learn scheduler will assign you to a pair, randomly. Go to Connect>>>Groups>>>Members to see a schedule. Please post your critiques along with a copy of the annotated poem and the story that you have critiqued. Submit to Peer Critique discussion forum. **(5% for the poetry, 5% for the story)**. Linked to Learn gradebook.

VI. Weekly creativity exercises: 10 exercises. (10%)

Every week throughout the term, we will also respond to writing prompts that allow us to practise creativity. These exercises in creativity are a replacement for in-person, in-class writings. These exercises start right from week 1. No exercise in the last two weeks. Please write these exercises as works in progress, as a scribbling really. Some of these prompts include: [please note **this list is not in the order they should be done; please go to the schedule of the course below to see what exercise to do in each week.**]

- a. Make a list of the nouns, only nouns: bodies of water, geological features, gemstones, plants, animals, anything really, just name nouns. As a poet you develop your own vocabulary. Is it easy to do? Let's try! Feel free to use a thesaurus. How many can you write?
- b. Write twenty similes and twenty metaphors, using the vocabulary from last week's creativity exercise.
- c. Identify ten one-liners, or aphorisms, in the poems of the week. Write ten others of your own.
- d. (Copyright: George Elliott Clarke) The walk: Outdoors, walk with a notebook and pen, recording impressions of everything noticed, while also letting various memories and insights come to mind. The purpose is to encourage spontaneous composition.
- e. (Copyright: George Elliott Clarke) The translation: Take an English translation of a foreign-language poem and rewrite it in your own words. the purpose is to develop an acquaintance with structure (form) and to think afresh about the syntax and grammatical order.
- f. (Copyright: George Elliott Clarke). The collage: Write lines and images as they come up in your consciousness, partly observations, partly impressions, partly memories, partly

rhetorical or political statements. Foreign phrases and even “anti-poetic” asides are welcomes. The purpose here is write meditatively, letting whatever happens happen.

- g. Imagine a character you are developing for a story you are writing. What’s the character like? What does he look like? Describe in detail.
- h. Change the point of view of a story that I will to post to Learn.
- i. Write a page of dialogue between two characters. You can use the conversation you hear in daily life around you. The purpose is learning to turn every conversation, even mundane, into a story with a punch.

Please submit to the Learn Dropbox. Linked to Learn grades notebook.

I.

Poetry

T. S. Eliot: "I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter... Shantih"

Week 1.

Read, write and submit all assignments and discussions any time between Jan 9-15.

Reading pleasures:

Craft readings:

Oliver 1-18, Oliver (Sound, More Devices on Sound) 19-34.

Minot (The Source of a Poem)14-24, (The Sound of Words) 25-37.

Poems: readings: Tom Wayman's "Did I Miss Anything?," "The Poet," "Billy Collins's "Introduction to Poetry," three poems by Susan Holbrook, Anne Michaels: excerpts from *Infinite Gradation*, Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," Dylan Thomas's "One Craft," "The force that though the green fuse drives the flower," W. H. Auden's "Stop all the clocks," W. C. Williams's "Landscape with the Fall of Icarus," "This Is Just To Say," Carolyn Forché's "The Colonel," Louise Glück's "Faithfull and Virtuous Night," W. S. Merwin's "Separation", Mary Oliver's Percy poems (available on free websites), Agha Shahid Ali "Stationary," Meghan O'Rourke's "Navesink," Annie Dillard's excerpts from *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (we hear lots of sounds there), G. M. Hopkins, "Windhover," "Spring and Fall," "Binsey Poplars." Also: (English Alphabet with Seamus Heaney, Mark Strand's "Notes on the Craft of Poetry," bpNichol), Sample reading reflections.

In-class activities:

Billy Collins's "Introduction to Poetry." Introduce yourself! Why I write. Pay attention to sound patterns and sound devices. Workshopping your poems.

Home activities:

The joy of writing: write a poem. Post to Learn.

Creativity exercise 1: Make a list of the nouns, only nouns: bodies of water, geological features, gemstones, plants, animals, anything really, just name nouns. As a poet you develop your own vocabulary. Is it easy to do? Let's try! how many can you write in one sitting? Feel free to use a thesaurus. Your list will tell a story, something like Solmaz Sharif's "Learning Persian."

Alternatively: Play a game with the English alphabet. See Strand, Heaney and Nichol as samples.

And don't forget your weekly reflection.

Week 2.

Read, write and submit all assignments and discussions any time between Jan 16-22.

Reading Pleasures:

Craft readings:

Oliver: Diction, Tone, Voice, Imagery (76-108).

Minot: Images (56-72), Diction (73-82).

Poems: Lucille Clifton's "I am accused of tending to the past..." , "Linda Hogan's "Workday," Stanley Kunitz's "The Round," Bukowski "The Man with Beautiful Eyes," very short excerpts from Allen Ginsberg's "Howl," Robert Hass's "A Story about the Body," "Privilege of Being," "Human Wishes," "The Beginning of September," "The Yellow Bicycle," "Poem with a Cucumber in It," "Cymbeline," "The Poet at Nine," "Faint Music," Louise Gluck's "Wild Iris," "Averno," Sylvia Plath's "Daddy," Anne Carson's "Triple Sonnet of the Plush Pony," T. S. Eliot "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," Elizabeth Bishop "The Fish," Theodore Roethke's "The Bat," Eavan Boland's "This Moment," Ilya Kaminsky's "We Lived Happily During the War," Wislawa Szymborska's "The End and the Beginning," Anne Michaels "The Weight of Oranges."

In-class activities

Discuss metaphor and imagery. You can identify these tropes in the poems of the week.
Workshopping your poems.

Creativity exercise 2: Write 10 similes and 10 metaphors, or more, using the vocabulary from last week creativity exercise. Also, can you write a paragraph, just a piece of lyrical (poetic) prose, in which one or more senses (visual, olfactory, etc) are evoked? The purpose: sensualizing through sensory experience, to create a visceral experience.

home activities

The joy of Writing: write a poem. Post to Learn.

And don't forget your weekly reflection.

Week 3.

Read, write and submit all assignments and discussions any time between Jan 23-29

Reading Pleasures:

Craft readings:

Oliver, The Line (35-57), Some Given Forms (58-66), Verse That Is Free (67-75).

Minot: Rhythm of Stress (38-46), Rhythm of Free verse (47-55)

Poems: Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass (a short excerpt), William Carlos Williams's "The Red Wheelbarrow," Robert Hass's "Meditation at Lagunitas" (again), "English, an Ode," "Picking Blackberries with a friend who has been reading Jacques Lacan," Louise Gluck, "Landscape," "Violets,"

Jan Zwicky “Small Songs,” Bp Nichol’s “Love,” Anne Michaels, “Women on a Beach,” “Flowers,” “Depth of Field,” F. J. Bergman’s “An Apology,” Etel Adnan: from *The Arab Apocalypse*, Adonis: from *Selected Poems* **And to the other side of the Atlantic:** Don Paterson: “Two Trees,” “Poetry,” Seamus Heaney: “A Kite for Aibhin,” “Digging,” “Mid-Term Break,” “Gifts of Rain,” Alice Oswald: “A Short Story of Falling,” “Snowdrop,” “Full Moon,” “Fox,” Andrew Motion: “Laying the Fire,” “Passing on,” “Losses,” “A Moment of Reflection,” “Simon Armitage: “You’re Beautiful,” “Camera Obscura,” “Homework,” “The Unthinkable,” *The Stanza Stone Walk* (a few poems), Kathleen Jamie: “Moon,” “The Stags,” “Before the Wind,” “The Dipper,” Paul Muldoon: “Milkweed and Monarch,” Derek Walcott “Oddjob: A Bull Terrier.”

In-class activities

Also, or alternatively, you can discuss lineation: for me it’s completely instinctive or rather intuitive, in fact, I’ve found that lines define themselves in my work. I mean; lineation relies more on intuition than deliberation for me. I’d like to hear how you come up with your line forms or lineation. Are you, for example, like the American poet, Nathaniel Mackey, who (sometimes) writes a poem as one block paragraph and then decides how to order, or rearrange the lines? Also, Workshopping your poems.

Creativity exercise 3: (Copyright: George Elliott Clarke) The walk: Outdoors, walk with a notebook and pen, recording impressions of everything noticed, while also letting various memories and insights come to mind. The purpose is to encourage spontaneous composition.

Alternatively, record your impressions of everything you notice and then write a haiku which captures the moment. John Berger (in *And Our Faces, My Heart, Brief as Photos*) is a good model; I’ll post an excerpt from his work.

home activities

The joy of writing: write a poem. Post to Learn.

And don’t forget your weekly reflection.

Check Learn for a peer critique schedule. Share your poem with your peers by May 30.

Week 4.

Read, write and submit all assignments and discussions any time between Jan 30-Feb5.

Reading Pleasures:

Craft readings:

Oliver: Revision, Workshop and Solitude, Conclusion (109-122)

Minot: From Units to Unity (95-104), Revising a Poem (105-109)

Poems: contemporary American poetry. Poems by Robert Hass, Louise Glück, Jorie Graham, Frank Bidart, Jane Hirshfield, Forrest Gander, Charles Wright, Ocean Vuong, and a few established contemporary Canadian poets including but not limited to Anne Michaels, Jan Zwicky, the list is to be completed. (I love these poems and I think there's a lot in them to learn from, and I return to these poets every now and then.)

In-class activities

Focus on the ways in which poets move between the concrete/particular and the general/abstract, and from the inner/internal to the outer/external, or do they? You can question this observation. I think these negotiations are key to your creativity. I think the poems of the week can show the negotiation between the outside world and the inside, between the general and the particular. Is this the only poetic style? Absolutely not! Also, Workshopping your poems.

Creativity exercise: (Copyright: George Elliott Clarke) The collage: Write lines and images as they come up in your consciousness, partly observations, partly impressions, partly memories, partly rhetorical or political statements. Foreign phrases and even "anti-poetic" asides are welcome. The purpose here is write meditatively, letting whatever happens happen.

Alternatively, Identify where the speaker in the week's poems moves between abstract and concrete. Focus on the ways in which poet moves between the concrete/particular and the general/abstract.

home activities

The joy of writing: write a poem. Post to Learn.

And don't forget your weekly reflection.

Also due this week: Poetry Critiques. Submit to Learn discussion forum.

Aphorism

Kafka: "the cage went in search of the bird"

Week 5.

Read, write and submit all assignments and discussions any time between Feb 6-12.

Reading Pleasures:

Craft readings and aphorisms: from New Yorker "Yes, I wrote a Book of Aphorism," Excerpts from Don Paterson's book of aphorisms *The Fall at Home*, readings by Andrew Hui, "The Thinker as Poet"

Poems: Robert Hass’s Meditation at Lagunitas (for the last time), Louise Gluck’s “Faithful and Virtuous Night,” (for the last time), Jorie Graham, Charles Wright, Anne Michaels, Jane Hirshfield (these poets again, I know) and very short excerpts from T. S. Eliot’s *Four Quartets*, and excerpts from Khalil Gibran’s *The Prophet*, Charles Simic’s excerpts. From Heidegger’s *Poetry, Language, Thought*, and William Stafford’s book of aphorisms, *Sound of the Ax*.

In-class activities

Louise Gluck’s “Faithful and Virtuous Night” and discuss how the lyric voice, the speaker, moves between the aphoristic and the personal, how short pithy statements/observations in the poem sit comfortably next to or in between her personal narrative. You can, and indeed should, I’d argue, draw on your personal experiences in writing poetry. Workshopping your poems/aphorisms.

Creativity exercise:

Find aphoristic lines in the assigned poems by Hass, Graham, Michaels; a list of lyrical, gnomic and maxim-like statements in the assigned poems, they are mostly abstract, general, philosophical interspersed between the concrete and the particular. These statements can, probably always, be used as one-liners as well. **Write ten others of your own.**

home activities

The joy of writing: Write a poem. Post to Learn.

And don’t forget your weekly reflection.

II.

Iterative translation/decreation/transcreation

“ ”

Commentary: in between the quotation marks: the frog that never jumped into the pool that never was and this is the source of all creations.

Week 6.

Read, write and submit all assignments and discussions any time between Feb 13-18.

Reading Pleasures:

Poems: *The Basho Variations* by Steve McCaffery, sections from *Exercises in Style* by Raymond Queneau, Mark Strand’s “Translation,” Adonis (from Arabic), Rilke (from German), Haiku by three Japanese masters as translated by Robert Hass, Bei Dao, (from Chinese), Cavafy (from Greek), Sappho (also Greek as translated by Anne Carson), Rumi’s Ghazals as translated by Coleman Barks (from Persian), Pablo Neruda (from Spanish), excerpts from Basho’s *Narrow Road to Deep North*, Erin Moure’s *Sheep’s*

Vigil by a Fervent Person from Portuguese. Also Ono no Komachi as translated by Jane Hirshfield, and Anne Carson's "Decreation (an Opera in Three Parts)" in *Decreation*.

In-class activities

Iterative translation; discuss *The Basbo Variations* and/or Erin Moure's *Sheep's Vigil*. Moure calls her own translation, trans-e-lation and also transcreation. Also, Workshopping your poems/translations.

Creativity exercise: Re-create excerpts from Moure's *Sheep's Vigil* with a different setting; try Kitchener-Waterloo or any other locale! Change the poem as you see fit and include your own lines here and there.

home activities

The joy of writing: write 4 iterations of a poem I'll give you. Post to Learn.

And don't forget your weekly reflection.

Week 7.

Read, write and submit all assignments and discussions any time between Feb 27--Mar 5.

Reading Pleasures:

Craft readings:

Poems: (some are the same readings as previous week's in case you didn't read them then) *The Basbo Variations* by Steve McCaffery, sections from *Exercises in Style* by Raymond Queneau, Strand's "Translation," excerpts from Basho's *Narrow Road to Deep North*, Erin Moure's *Sheep's Vigil by a Fervent Person* from Portuguese. Hass's "Czeslaw Milosz: In Memoriam," "Horace: Three Imitations," Anne Carson's "Decreation," (An Opera in Three Parts), and Frank Bidart's "The Third Hours of the Night" (on the autobiography of the Italian Benvenuto Cellini, *Vita*).

In-class activities

Decreation as employed and practised by Anne Carson and Frank Bidart. Also, Workshopping your poems/translations.

Creativity exercise:

(Copyright: George Elliott Clarke) The translation: Take an English translation of a foreign-language poem and rewrite it in your own words. the purpose is to develop an acquaintance with structure (form) and to think afresh about the syntax and grammatical order.

Alternatively; take a work or art, a painting, a film, a novel maybe or a myth and re-write it in your own way.

home activities

The joy of writing: write 4 iterations of poem I'll give you. Post to Learn.

And don't forget your weekly reflection.

III.

Flash Fiction

Week 8.

Read, write and submit all assignments and discussions any time between Mar 6-12

Reading Pleasures:

Craft readings: Anne Michaels: excerpts from *Infinite Gradation* (a poetic meditation on the poetry and fiction). Minot: "The Scope of Fiction," Nathan Leslie: "That 'V' Word"; Steve Almond: "Getting the Lead Out"; Robert Olen Butler: "A Short Short Theory," readings from Lydia Davis.

Stories: Hemingway: "Old Man at the Bridge," Hass, "Museum," "Novella," and "Human Wishes," Etkar Keret, "Director's Cut," Jamaica Kincaid, "Girl." Other short shorts to be added. Please check the week's readings under Content.

In-class activities

What is flash fiction? Think about "Director's Cut," "Girl," and "Museum" as examples. What is the scope of flash fiction? Workshopping your work.

Creativity exercise:

Imagine a character you are developing for a story you are writing. What's the character like? What does he look like? Describe in detail. Be creative. A flash story can be a story of character, that is, the entire story can be nothing but this character development.

home activities

The joy of crafting: write a flash story, post to Learn dropbox, between 300-700 words. You can but don't have to use the prompts at the end of the craft readings.

And don't forget your weekly reflection.

Week 9.

Read, write and submit all assignments and discussions any time between Mar 13-19.

Reading Pleasures:

Craft readings: Martone: “Titled: The Title: A Short Short Story’s Own Short Short Story,” Gebbie, “Fireworks and Burnt Toast: The Process of Opening Up Your Writing,” Casto: “The Myth-ing Link,” Budman: “Expose Yourself to Flash,” Qi: “Old Wine in New Bottles.”

Stories: Hemingway: “Cat in the Rain,” Margaret Atwood: “Happy Endings,” and other stores, Peter Taylor: “The Walled Garden,” Aimee Bender: “Origin Lessons,” T. C. Boyle: “The Hit Man”; Sheila Hett: “Grayness,” Joyce Carol Oates: “Hospice/Honeymoon.” Other short short stories may be added.

In-class activities

Sheila Hett: “Grayness,” Joyce Carol Oates: “Hospice/Honeymoon.” Also, Workshopping your stories.

Creativity exercise:

Change the point of view of Hemingway’s “Old Man at the Bridge.” Re-tell the story from the POV of any of the characters in this story. This can be a piece of flash fiction.

home activities

The joy of crafting: write a flash story, post to Learn dropbox, between 300-500 words. You can but don’t have to use the prompts at the end of the craft readings.

And don’t forget your weekly reflection.

Check Learn for peer critique schedule. Share your story with your peers by July 10.

Week 10.

Read, write and submit all assignments and discussions any time between Mar 20-26.

Reading Pleasures:

Craft readings: Philips: “Cheers,” Dybek: “Great Thoughts” Williford: “Forty Stories in the Desert,” Shapard: “Staying True to the Image.”

Stories: Hemingway: “Hills Like White Elephants,” Vonnegut: “Harrison Bergeron,” Marquez: “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings.” Woolf: “A Haunted House,” Brautigan: “Lint,” László Krasznahorkai: “I Don’t Need Anything from here,” Lore Segal: “Ruth, Franks and Dario.” Other short short stories may be added.

In-class activities

László Krasznahorkai: “I Don’t Need Anything from here,” Lore Segal: “Ruth, Franks and Dario.” Also, Workshopping your stories.

Creativity exercise:

Write a page of dialogue between two characters. Only lines of dialogue. You can use the conversation you hear in daily life around you. The purpose is learning to turn every conversation, even mundane, into a story with a punch. Partly fiction, partly reality (documentary). Or first reality turned into fiction. You can write a flash in which there’s only and only dialogue; no description at all.

home activities

The joy of crafting: write a flash story, post to Learn dropbox, between 300-500 words. You can but don’t have to use the prompts at the end of the craft readings.

And don’t forget your weekly reflection.

Also due this week: the flash fiction Critiques. Submit to Learn discussion forum.

Week 11.

Read, write and submit all assignments and discussions any time between Mar 27-Apr 2.

Readings Pleasures:

Craft readings: Barnes: “Editing and Revising Flash Fiction,” Carlson: “On Writing Flash Fiction,” Ehrhardt: “Plaster Dust and Sleeping Jockeys,” Julio Ortega: “A Flash Before the Bang.”

Stories: Hemingway: “A Clean, Well-lighted Place,” David Lehman: “Tales Told to Tevye,” Haruki Murakami: “The Kingdom That Failed,” Other short short stories to be added.

In-class activities

David Lehman: “Tales Told to Tevye,” Haruki Murakami: “The Kingdom That Failed.” Also, Workshopping your stories.

Creativity exercise:

Scribble down an interior monologue; a couple of paragraphs or any number of words. The purpose: to practice how to turn an interior monologue into a story.

Alternatively; re-tell a famous myth in a new light, using a contemporary idiom, setting, etc.

home activities

The joy of writing: write a flash story, post to Learn dropbox, between 300-500 words

And don't forget your weekly reflection.

Week 12.

Read, write and submit all assignments and discussions any time between Apr 3-9.

Reading Pleasures:

We end with a few classic short stories by Lydia Davis, Margaret Atwood, and a few others.

Hemingway: "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," Junot Diaz: "Fiesta 1980," Raymond Carver: "Errand," Katherine Mansfield: "Miss Brill," Borges: "The Library of Babel," A few short short stories will be added.

home activities

The joy of writing: **write a flash story, post to Learn dropbo, between 300-700 words**

Final reflection: reflect back on the term, readings, poems, stories, discussions, your writings etc. Tell your story of this term, you may want to write a short story or a poem to complete this activity.

Submit the final portfolio to the dropbox -- tentatively-- by Apr 14, in PDF only.