

# Poetry Writing Workshop

**Bard High School Early College - English Department**

**Spring 2009 Three Credit Hours Monday 12:40-1:30**

**Instructor: Elizabeth Howort**

**Office: 230 by appointment**

## **Course Description:**

In this course students will experiment with different poetic forms from the sestina to the haibun. Exploring a variety of forms will encourage students to consider their own creations within the scope of traditional and contemporary literature. Students will reflect on their own work as they come to view themselves as poets; they will explore authentic and structured rhythms, movement and sounds. The workshop will include collaborative writing and the analysis of students' original poems. To conclude the course students will complete a final chapbook featuring the poems they have produced over the semester.

## **Readings:**

Koch, Kenneth & Farrell, Kate Eds. *Sleeping on the Wing: An Anthology of Modern Poetry with Essays on Reading and Writing*. New York: Vintage Books, 1981.

Ferguson, Margaret & Salter, Mary Jo & Stallworthy, Jon Eds. *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. New York: Norton, 1996.

## **Course Expectations**

### **Attendance**

Lateness to class and absences will hamper your ability to succeed in this course.

### **Participation and Kind Critique**

There will be original student poems critiqued each week. You are expected to participate actively in the workshop by making observations about the poem before rushing to judgment. This technique will allow you to get closer to the poem and each writer will receive the gift of hearing what his/her readers have remembered. You will also consider questions and nuances that the poems raise. Similarly, students will be expected to lead short discussions on published poems.

### **Written assignments**

All assignments must be typed, doubled-spaced, Times New Roman with 12-point font. Standard margins apply. All work must be submitted on time, no excuses. Citations must be in MLA format. Please note the format for handing in poems: insert a header (under "view" in Microsoft Word) on the upper right hand corner of the document. On the first line of the header include your name. On the second line include the name of the exercise or form. (E.g. "Dictionary Explosion Poem" or "Ode"). On the third line include the date. Text in the header may be in 10-point font.

### **Academic Honesty**

All work submitted must be your own. Plagiarized work results in an *F* for the assignment. A second offense results in an *F* for the entire course. If you are in doubt

about submitting original work, please take the time to ask me. Please consult the BHSEC student handbook for concerns you may have about academic honesty.

## **Assignments**

### **Annotated Bibliography**

An annotated entry will be due every Monday; you will choose which poem/poet to discuss from the assigned reading. Each entry should be one paragraph which provides a context for the work (When was this poet writing? Where was s/he from? What writers was s/he influenced by?) as well as a synthesis (What strikes you about this poem? What do you notice about the imagery? Structure? Sounds? Etc). You will use the annotated bibliography to produce each of your observation reports.

### **Observation Reports**

You will be responsible for a midterm and final observation report. You will choose one poem from a selection of assigned readings which will be the subject of your report (an abstract will be due first). You will rely on the same skills (observation, analysis, asking authentic questions which the work produces) that we are sharpening in workshop to complete your observation reports.

### **Original Poems**

Original poems are due every Monday; bring five copies of your poem. We will workshop poems that are distributed the previous week; all poems should be notated before class.

### **Final Chapbook**

Your final project will be a chapbook consisting of the poems you have written during the semester. You will be responsible for revisiting each poem and revising it in some way. You will consider your colleagues' feedback from workshop as you make a multitude of choices.

### **Presenting Original Poem in Workshop**

You will present your own poems throughout the semester. You will read the poem aloud and take notes on your colleagues' feedback. At the end of the critique you will have an opportunity to ask questions and voice concerns about the direction or movement of the poem.

### **Grade Breakdown**

Attendance and participation	30%
Annotated Bibliography & Observation reports	25%
Original Poems	20%
Final Chapbook	25%