

CRAFT OF POETRY

FALL 2008

EN 4303/6303

T Th 2-3:15

Dr. Catherine Pierce

Course Description:

This workshop is predicated on the idea that in order to become a truly accomplished poet, you must cultivate three levels of awareness: 1) An awareness of yourself as a writer. What are your goals? What are your aesthetic obsessions? Your thematic ones? 2) An awareness of the poetic tradition that has preceded you. What earlier writers do you count as influences? What can you learn from the masters of the 20th century? Whose work do you emulate? Whose do you reject, and why? 3) An awareness of current literary trends and voices. Where do you fit in? Or *don't* you fit in? And what do you admire about your contemporaries? Throughout the semester, in addition to working hard on writing your own poems and critiquing your peers', you will work on projects designed to help you increase these important levels of awareness.

Requirements:

Your **poems** are the central focus of our class. You will be asked to hone your current writing skills, and also to push outside of your writing “comfort zone” in order to explore new possibilities, both thematic and stylistic, for your work. To put it simply, we will write—and revise—a lot. At the end of the semester, you will turn in a portfolio consisting of the original and revised versions of all poems.

Other requirements include: a **poem presentation**, in which you'll present on two aesthetically very different poems from our anthology; a **literary magazine presentation** (just as it's important to be well-versed in literary history and poetic tradition, it's also vital to be engaged with the current literary scene); an **Artist's Statement** due at the end of the semester; an **anthology** of 10 published poems that are crucial to you, prefaced by a thoughtful critical introduction; and attendance at as many **readings** as possible.

Texts:

The Vintage Book of Contemporary American Poetry, ed. J.D. McClatchy

The Making of a Poem, Mark Strand and Eavan Boland

The Poetry Dictionary, John Drury

Subscription to a literary magazine (I'll provide an extensive list to choose from)

Other readings that I'll distribute

Questions? Email cp341@msstate.edu