

CRTW 422 Fall 2013  
Writer's Workshop:  
Transgenre, Transgender, and Cultural Identity

**Instructor:** Jill Darling

**CRN:** 12970 Sec. 03

**Meeting Time:** Mon/Wed 3:30-4:45

**Location:** 609 Pray-Harrold

**Office Hours:** M/W 3-3:30 and T/TH By Appt.

**Office:**

**Email:** jdarlin3@emich.edu

**English Department (mailbox):** 612 Pray-Harold

**Required Texts:**

(available at the University Bookstore in the Student Center)

- Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (Aunt Lute Press)
- Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictee* (University of California Press)

Other Required Text not in the Bookstore:

- Gertrude Stein, *The Geographical History of America* (buy a used copy online via Amazon.com or half.com/ebay: PAJ Books, Vintage Books, Random House; or buy a photocopy from me \$12)

Recommended but not Required:

*Somatic Engagement*, Ed. Petra Kuppers (Chain Links)

Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider* (Crossing Press)

Watten and Hejinian, *A Guide to Poetics Journal: Writing in the Expanded Field* (Wesleyan Press)

Amiri Baraka, *The LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka Reader* (Thunder's Mouth Press)

Tisa Bryant, *Unexplained Presence*

Douglas Kearney, *The Black Automaton*

\*You will also be responsible to print, read, and bring copies of pdfs posted online as additional reading assignments from **emuonline.edu** including but not limited to:

Reader/ essays/theory (pdfs on EMU Online)

Essay on *Ava* from Maso's *Break Every Rule*

Selection/beginning pages of *Ava*

Cixous, "The Last Painting or the Portrait of God" from *Coming to Writing*

Brossard, "Poetics Politics" from *Nicole Brossard Selections*

Lorde, selected essays from *Sister Outsider*

Butler "Imitation and Gender Insubordination"

DuPlessis, "f-words: An Essay on the Essay" from *Blue Studios*

Halberstam from *Gaga Feminism*

Spahr, from *The Transformation*

Butler, "Against Ethical Violence," from *Giving an Account of Oneself*

Watten and Hejinian, from *A Guide to Poetics Journal*

**CRTW Mission Statement:** The Creative Writing Program offers students experience in interdisciplinary and innovative approaches to writing. The curriculum emphasizes both creative process and critical reading practices, preparing writers to participate in contemporary writing culture and for a range of language and media-centered careers.

### **CRTW 422 Transgenre, Transgender, and Cultural Identity Course Description:**

Trans: across, beyond, through, changing thoroughly. As gender (performance, identity, understanding) cuts across and goes beyond categories we see greater possibilities for identification, choice, and formal practice. We also expand our vocabulary and capabilities for using language to think about gender in less defined and in more fluid ways. Gender is often more about process than product. Genre is often more about process than product. To consider genre is to consider possibility, variety, perspectives that come from outside of category and definition. In this class we will look at the relationship between form and content in work that does not fit easily into, that expands, and/or transcends, specific genre categories (poetry and fiction as well as essay and film); we will utilize creative and theoretical tools to examine the idea of genre in its various manifestations and write in response to creative assignments that explore and explode genre categories. We will confuse and combine theoretical and creative texts and think about how a variety of works interrogate textual and cultural constructions of identity through both their form and content. We will see how the construction of the text and the construction of identity can be read as active, non-linear processes and talk about how to expand possibilities for writing and identification in the world.

### **Course Policies:**

**Attendance: Regular attendance is required.** Credit will be given for in-class work and activities. A crucial element of the course includes participation, discussion, and in-class work. Coming late to class or leaving early on a regular basis will also accumulate and affect your grade. **You will lose 10 points from your attendance grade for EVERY ABSENCE.**

**YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL ASSIGNMENTS.** You are also responsible for getting class notes and handouts from your classmates or from me when necessary. **If you miss class when we have an in-class quiz or other assignment that I collect, you will not be able to make up those points. I do not accept assignments via email.** In the event that you cannot turn something in during class time you may leave it in my mailbox in the English Department.

**Cell Phones and electronics:** Turn them off; put them away; no text-messaging or etc. cell phone use during class. Put away all electronic devices for the duration of the class. No cell phone will be used for reading assignments in class.

**Class Cancellation Policy:** Should an emergency arise that will prevent me from teaching a class, please continue with regularly scheduled assignments and check the email for further instruction.

**Plagiarism and Academic Honesty:** Plagiarism is defined as the intentional and deliberate use of someone else's work or ideas and claiming them as your own. If you use another's words or ideas without citing them you may be in danger of plagiarizing. The use of an outside source, including electronic sources, in any assignment without appropriate acknowledgement is plagiarism. It is unethical to present as one's own work the ideas, words or representations of another without properly identifying the source. It is the student's responsibility to give credit for any quotation, idea, or information borrowed from an outside source. Any instance of plagiarism may result in a failing grade on the assignment or in the course.

### **Students with Disabilities:**

The EMU Students With Disabilities Office (SWD) provides accommodations for students with disabilities and assists faculty and staff with the implementation of those accommodations.

SWD also provides technical assistance, consultation, and training to departments on campus and organizations in the community regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Disability Awareness, Inclusion and Accessibility. Web: <http://www.emich.edu/disabilities/>

## Counseling Services

*Our mission is to help students resolve personal difficulties, acquire skills to cope with life problems and grow in ways that will allow them to take full advantage of their educational experience at Eastern Michigan University.*

313 Snow Health Center; Telephone: 734.487.1118 Email: [Counseling.Services@emich.edu](mailto:Counseling.Services@emich.edu)

Web: <http://www.emich.edu/uhs/counseling.html>

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday

**The University Writing Center** (115 Halle Library; 487-0694) offers one-to-one writing consulting for both undergraduate and graduate students. Students can make appointments or drop in during regular hours. For more information about hours and services, and days (e.g., holidays) we will not be open, visit the UWC web site: <http://www.emich.edu/english/writing-center>.

## Course Work, Scheduling, Grades:

**Please attend class prepared to discuss the reading and homework assigned for EVERY class meeting.**

**Discussion and participation are important elements of this course and your grade will be affected if you are not doing the reading and homework. Late assignments will not be accepted. In the case of an emergency or with prior notification, projects may be turned in late for a reduced grade.**

### Assignments:

*Weekly Blog Posts (10 points each)	100
*Homework, quizzes, participation	50
*Project 1	50
*Project 2	50
*Presentation	50
*Project 3	100
*Attendance	100
Total	500 points

\*I will post an assignment sheet for each project with more detail. This will also include the workshop groups for each project.

**\*Late work will not be accepted; assignments are due on the dates listed on the syllabus**

**\*Weekly Blog Responses: due by class time on Wednesdays, every week;** late posts may not receive credit

### **Weekly Homework/Reading/Classroom discussion**

Reading assignments are required and class participation in discussion of readings contributes to your final grade. For each reading/text assigned as homework bring two questions to class to ask the whole group (not 'yes' or 'no' but questions that will provoke thought and discussion). We will go around and ask the questions, seeking answers, responses, quotes and examples and passages from the text as a means of discussion, exploration, reflection, sharing of ideas about each of the assigned readings.

### **In-class Workshop + Projects**

Email the draft of the project you are working on to your workshop group. We will have one in-class workshop day before projects 1 and 2 are due and different groups will be assigned for each project. You can brainstorm and share ideas about the projects but each project should be done individually. You can cite or acknowledge ideas, words, work of others who may directly or indirectly contribute to the project. Project 3 workshop groups should meet at least two times outside of class before the final version is due.

**Weekly Blog Response Assignment:**

Blog responses should be 3-5 comprehensive, thoughtful paragraphs that incorporate and respond to the readings for that week. You should include quotes and specific discussion/explanation of your points (be specific, don't generalize). Otherwise, what you write about and how you respond are up to you. You are welcome to be creative in your responses. Blog responses will receive 10 points if they are complete and meet the requirements, 5 points if they are incomplete but are fulfilling some of the requirements, or 0 points if they don't meet the requirements at all.

You should assume that you have to post a reading response on your blog every week, whether or not I give you a specific assignment for that week. Generally you should respond to whatever we are reading and talking about each week. If there are no specific readings, write a post about the discussion, the presentations, or how you are incorporating the class material into your own writing and thinking.

Bibliography of additional texts for Outside Text Presentation and/or thinking about your projects

Juliana Spahr, *The Transformation*

Claudia Rankine, *Don't Let Me Be Lonely*

M. Norbese Philip, *Zong*

Carole Maso, *Ava* or *The American Woman in the Chinese Hat*

Gertrude Stein

Renee Gladman

Lyn Hejinian, *My Life* or *The Border Comedy*

Carla Harryman, *Adorno's Noise* or *Gardener of Stars*

Thalia Field

Kristen Prevallet, *I, Afterlife*

Mary Burger, *Sonny*

Kathy Acker

Marshall McLuhan, *The Medium is the Massage: an Inventory of Effects*

Rachel Blau DuPlessis, *The Pink Guitar*

William Carlos Williams, *Patterson*

John D'Agata, *The Next American Essay* (collection)

Albert Goldbarth, *Griffin*

Laura Mullen, *Murmur* or *Tales of Horror*

George Oppen, *Selected Prose, Daybooks, and Papers*

Bhanu Kapil, *Incubation: A Space for Monsters*

Amiri Baraka, *The LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka Reader*

Film/Video/Other Media:

Claudia Rankine film/essay on [ClaudiaRankine.com](http://ClaudiaRankine.com)

Essays from: [http://www.blackbird.vcu.edu/v9n1/gallery/ve-intro/intro\\_page.shtml](http://www.blackbird.vcu.edu/v9n1/gallery/ve-intro/intro_page.shtml)

or John Bresland's site: [bresland.com](http://bresland.com)

## Schedule

The following schedule is subject to additions and changes. **All readings on the schedule are required; please read the assignments at least twice, mark passages, and make margin comments in order to more fully participate in class discussion.** Additional reading assignments will be handed out or posted electronically for you to download and print. You are responsible to print, read, and bring any electronically posted readings with you to class. **Using cell phones to view reading assignments in class is not acceptable.** Unannounced quizzes on readings will be given periodically during the semester.

**\*PDFs must be brought to class as hard copies, printed, read, highlighted...**

### September

**4:** Introductions and course policies

**9:** Essay on *Ava* from Maso's *Break Every Rule*  
Selection/beginning pages of *Ava* (PDF)

**11:** Cixous, "The Last Painting or the Portrait of God" from *Coming to Writing* (PDF)

**16:** Brossard, "Poetic Politics" from *Nicole Brossard Selections* (PDF)  
Lorde, selected essays from *Sister Outsider* (PDF)

**18:** Anzaldúa, *Borderlands La Frontera: The New Mestiza*

**23:** Anzaldúa, *Borderlands La Frontera: The New Mestiza*

**25:** Workshop

**30:** Project 1 Due  
Butler "Imitation and Gender Insubordination" (PDF)

### October

**2:** Cha, *Dictee*

**7:** Cha, *Dictee*  
DuPlessis, "f-words: An Essay on the Essay" from *Blue Studios* (PDF)

**9:** Outside Text Presentations

**14:** Halberstam from *Gaga Feminism* (PDF)

**16:** Outside Text Presentations

**21:** Workshop

**23:** Outside Text Presentations

**28:** Project 2 Due; Spahr, from *The Transformation* (PDF)

**30:** No Class

## **November**

**4:** Selections from BathHouse Readers: Tisa Bryant (author of *Unexplained Presence*) and Douglas Kearney (author of *The Black Automaton*) (PDF)

**5:** BathHouse Reading: Tuesday November 5, 4-6 PM, EMU Student Center Auditorium

**6:** BathHouse Talks/Presentations: Wednesday November 6, 3-5 PM, EMU Student Center Auditorium

**11:** Cha, *Dictee*; Butler, "Against Ethical Violence," from *Giving an Account of Oneself* (PDF)

**13:** Stein, *The Geographical History of America*

**18:** Stein, *The Geographical History of America*

**21:** Stein, *The Geographical History of America*

**25:** Stein, *The Geographical History of America*

**27:** No Class – meet with your workshop group

## **December**

**2:** video essays

**4:** No class – meet with your workshop group

**9:** Project 3 Presentations

**11:** Project 3 Presentations

Last Day of Class

## Bathhouse Events

Writers Tisa Bryant (author of *Unexplained Presence*) and Douglas Kearney (author of *The Black Automaton*) will be visiting us for two events (see below for details and book plugs). On Tuesday (11/5), our guests will read from their creative work, and this will be followed on Wednesday (11/6) with each writer presenting a talk/presentation on some aspect of their creative practice.

BathHouse events are an integral part of our Creative Program curriculum, so we ask that students attend at least one of the two events. Both events will take place at the EMU Student Center Auditorium. Please take note of the different time slots:

BathHouse Reading: Tuesday November 5, 4-6 PM, EMU Campus Center

BathHouse Talks/Presentations: Wednesday November 6, 3-5 PM, EMU Campus Center

### *Unexplained Presence*

Tisa Bryant.

Fiction. Essays. African-American Studies. By remixing stories from novels and films to zoom in on the black presences within them, Tisa Bryant's UNEXPLAINED PRESENCE ruminates on the sublime power of history to shape culture in the subconscious of both the artist and the reader/viewer. Moving from interrogations of Francois Ozon's "8 Femmes" and Virginia Woolf's "Orlando" to the machinations of the "Regency House Party" reality TV show, UNEXPLAINED PRESENCE weaves threads of myth, fact and fiction into previously unexplored narratives lurking in our collective imagination. "This is truly a bold book, one that combines scenes of rich technicolor with the light of truth, at once invoking and dissolving cultural myths and faux histories" -Brenda Coultas.

### *The Black Automaton*

Douglas Kearney

Poetry. African American Studies. Winner of the National Poetry Series, selected by Catherine Wagner. From ambivalent animals thriving after Katrina to party chants echoing in a burning city, THE BLACK AUTOMATON troubles rubble, cobbling a kind of life. In this collection bodies at risk seek renewal through violence and fertility, history and myth, flesh and radios. "First, you have to see Douglas Kearney's visual poems, which cheekily diagram cultural memes as if they were parts of speech (as they are). THE BLACK AUTOMATON has its share of sharp, tender lyrics, too...these exploit the political possibilities of puns and the way meanings hinge on inexact resemblance. Kearney's poems tweak and skewer pop culture and literary sources from Paul Laurence Dunbar to T. S. Eliot to traditional ballads and blues...Kearney's work turns poetic and cultural conventions disquietingly inside out."—Catherine Wagner

<http://douglaskearney.com/news-free-downloads/>

## **TERMS FOR CRTW**

AMBIGUITY

AMBIVALENCE

CONNOTATIVE

SUBJECTIVE

OBJECTIVE

HYPERBOLE

IRONY

SYNTAX

SIGNIFIED and SIGNIFIER

METAPHOR

SIMILE

OBJECTIVE CORRELATIVE

METONOMY

MIMESIS

PERFORMATIVE

PARADOX

JUXTAPOSITION

COLLAGE

MONTAGE

FRAGMENTATION

ASSOCIATIVE LOGIC

SATIRE

PARODY

FARCE

CONSTRAINT

FORM

GENRE (new genre(s), sub-genre, hybrid genre)

STYLE

AVANT-GARDE

POSTMODERNISM

SURREALISM

REALISM

METAFICTION

PLOT

FREYTAG'S PYRAMID

NARRATIVE and STORY

NONNARRATIVE and ANTI-NARRATIVE

POINT OF VIEW (first person, second person, third person objective, third person subjective, omniscient, limited)

PERSONA

LYRIC

RHYTHM

FOOT (iamb, trochee, dactyl, anapest)

METER (dimeter, trimeter, tetrameter, pentameter)

RHYME (assonance, alliteration, consonance, slant)

STANZA

**Other Related Terms you may wish to include (OPTIONAL)**

APORIA

ARS POETICA

BILDUNGSROMAN

CONCEPTUAL ART

CONCEPTUAL WRITING

DISCOURSE

DEFAMILIARIZATION

FORMALISM

IMPROVISATION/STRUCTURED IMPROVISATION

INTERTEXTUALITY

MODERNISM

REFERENT

REPRESENTATION

RHETORIC

SIMULTANEITY

SYNECDOCHE

## Keeping a Personal Blog for CRTW 422

### 1. Setting Up Your Own Blog

You are required to maintain a blog that is used exclusively for the purposes of writing weekly responses (and possibly other assignments) for this class. You may set up a new blog via Blogger.com or another provider that you prefer. If you have a blog of your own already, please create a new and separate blog for use in this class.

1. Go to Blogger.com or wordpress.com and follow the instructions to create a new blog. Select your page style from the options listed and spend some time playing around to see how it works, how to post entries, how to change the formatting, etc. Create a new post that is a brief introduction of yourself to me and to the class; this is your first blog-post assignment.
2. Make sure to designate the **blog title** (for example: **Jill's Creative Writing Blog**) as any title that you like and that seems appropriate for this class (others in the class will have access to read your posts, and I will read them on a weekly basis). And, make sure to note that the **blog address** is/can be a separate title. I would prefer if you use either your name or the blog title in the address (address, ex.: **http://201Darling.blogspot.com**) so that I can easily identify you and your blog.
3. When you have the blog set up, bring the URL to class (the URL is the **blog address (http://.....)**)
4. If you have problems with the set up, send me an email or plan to come to class early next week so that we can fix any problems together.