

## SU408 CREATIVE WRITING: POETRY AND FICTION (3 Credits)

### COURSE OBJECTIVE:

Through various reading and writing exercises this course will explore several aspects of fiction and poetry writing from first steps to final polish. It will road-test some experimental compositional techniques which can be used to spark new work and ideas and how to sustain a piece of work through to completion. Students work will be read and discussed in class with an eye to development and eventual completion. The course will also feature talks and readings from distinguished writers.

### COURSE OUTLINE:

#### Week 1

How do we begin a work of fiction or poem...what sources or prompts can we use...voices, images, objects – how do we use these to take our first steps...the uses of autobiography...

#### Week 2

The developing voice and character of a poem or a piece of fiction – how do we follow and develop it...to what extent should the author impose themselves on the piece...

#### Week 3

The emerging shape and structure of the work...what shaping principal is at work in the piece...how do we recognise the emergent structure

#### Week 4

The sense of an ending...the final polish...what do we hope to achieve with our endings...how do we recognise our endings...how not to overwork a piece of work...at what point do we leave well

### COURSE TEXTS:

#### Short Story

Mike McCormack *Getting it in the Head*

*Forensic Songs*

Shirley Jackson *The Lottery*

Joyce Carol Oates *Where is Here?*

Siri Hustvedt *Mr Morning*

Amy Hempel *In the Cemetery where Al Jolson is Buried*

AM Homes *A Real Doll*

Alfred Jarry *The Crucifixion Considered as an Uphill Bicycle Race*

Claire Keegan *Men and Women*

Maeve Brennan *The Lie, The Devil in Us*

Donald Barthelme *A City of Churches, Some of Us Had Been Threatening Our Friend*

*Colby*

JG Ballard *The Dead Astronaut, Answers to a Questionnaire, The Drowned Giant,*

Samuel Beckett *The Lost Ones, First Love,*

#### Novels

Donal Ryan *The Spinning Heart*

Claire Kilroy *The Devil I Know*

Mike McCormack *Notes from a Coma*

#### Poetry

Neil Astley *Staying Alive – Real Poems for Unreal Times*

Billy Collins *Poetry 180: A Turning Back to Poetry*

Seamus Heaney/Ted Hughes *The Rattle Bag*

Patrick Crotty *Penguin Book of Irish Poetry*

#### Criticism

Sven Birkerts *Readings*

James Woods *How Fiction Works*

Thomas Pynchon *Introduction to Slow Learner*

### Requirements for Credits

1. Attendance and participation at all the scheduled talks, workshops, field trips and readings.
2. A finished piece of fiction of roughly 5000 words and/or a small collection of poems.

### ASSESSMENT WEIGHTING

ASSESSMENT WEIGHTING	
Assessment type	% weighting
Portfolio	100%