Course Title: Tuning Our Poetic Ears: A Poetry Workshop
Course Code: 11W
Instructor: Esther Lin

Course Summary:

As 2021 continues to bring change welcome and otherwise, this course stands as a bulwark of what stays the same: our shared desire for honesty, beauty, a connection within oneself, and connection to others. This course poses the questions: How do a few words scattered on a page evoke an entire experience? How does the appearance of white space between lines help create emotion? How is it that poems allow the poet to speak to strangers—and make friends among them? We seek to demystify the poem by focusing on the nuts and bolts that make it up—imagery, the line and line break, diction, mood, the process, and the voice. And by writing alone and reading together, we learn how to develop our own poetic identity, which includes our voice and our sensibility, in the first step of our aesthetic journey. We will read the graceful poems of Joseph O. Legaspi, the dreamlike childhood poems of Pulitzer Prize-winning Yusef Komunyakaa, the nightmarish work of Brigit Pegeen Kelly, and close out our quarter on the troubled, rigorous poems of the great Anne Sexton.

We will also form a community of likeminded people who can maturely share what may be deeply intimate, private thoughts in the form of poems; who are willing to struggle with the honesty that art demands of us; and who are enthusiastic to better each other. This course is intended for sophisticated lovers of books who are new to reading and/or writing poems. It is also appropriate for more experienced writers who wish to renew their practice of poetry.

*Please see course page for full description and additional details.

Grade Options and Requirements:

- **No Grade Requested (NGR)**
  - This is the default option. No work will be required; no credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided.
- **Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)**
  - Students must participate in at least 70% of weekly discussions and/or Zoom sessions.
- **Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)**
  - Students must participate in at least 70% of weekly discussion questions, check-ins, and responses to other students’ responses, and complete 4 of the 6 poem-writing assignments (to be discussed further in class).
*Please Note: If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose either the Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.*

**Tentative Zoom Schedule***:

We will meet on Zoom for one hour a week on Thursdays, 12pm PST.

**Tentative Weekly Outline:**

*Listed Reading assignments will be supplemented by poems that can be found online. Links will be provided. Students will also be expected to read each other’s work and provide feedback in written posts and Zoom meetings. Lectures will take the form of written posts.*

Week 1: Introductions, and What Is Art?  
Reading: Selection from Addonizio/Laux; selection of individual poems  
Writing poem 1

Week 2: Workshop expectations; The Elements of a Poem  
Reading: Selection from Addonizio/Laux; Selection of Joseph O. Legaspi  
Writing descriptive workshop comments

Week 3: And Now I Write: Description, Metaphor and the Objective Correlative  
Reading: Selection from Addonizio/Laux; Selection of Joseph O. Legaspi  
Writing poem 2

Week 4: Description and the Metaphor  
Reading: Selection from Addonizio/Laux; Selection of Yusef Komunyakaa  
Writing workshop

Reading: Selection from Addonizio/Laux; Selection of Yusef Komunyakaa  
Writing poem 3

Week 6: Feeling Entitled  
Reading: Selection of individual poems (according to the tastes and needs of the class)  
Writing workshop

Week 7: What Is Diction? Diction and Mood  
Reading: Selection from Addonizio/Laux; Selection of Brigit Pegeen Kelly  
Writing poem 4
Week 8: The Sleeping World
Reading: Selection from Addonizio/Laux; Selection of Brigit Pegeen Kelly
Writing workshop

Week 9: Eros, the Volta, and Their Troubles
Reading: Selection from Addonizio/Laux; Selection of Anne Sexton
Writing poem 5

Week 10: Who Am I? Voice and the Poetic Identity
Reading: Prose by Louise Glück; Selection of Anne Sexton
Writing workshop