

# CRW 2300: Intermediate Poetry Writing

**Section:** 1658, Fall, 2015

**Meeting Time/Location:** R, Periods 9 – 11 (4:05pm – 7:05pm); Matherly Hall, Room 0002

**Instructor:** Gentris L. Jointe

**Email:** gjointe@ufl.edu

**Office:** Rolfs Hall, 5<sup>th</sup> floor

**Office Hours:** Thursday, Period 6 (12:50pm – 1:40pm) and by appointment.

## Course Description

CRW 2300 facilitates the development of the skills needed to read, write, and criticize poetry. This seminar/workshop posits that one must become a skilled, critical reader of poetry in order to become a better writer of it. As such, students will develop the critical vocabulary needed to accurately and confidently assess the work of their peers as well as the published poems the class examines. This will be the foundation for the original creative work students will produce. The course culminates in a small portfolio of revised work.

In addition, this section of the course will focus on the work of 20<sup>th</sup> century poets around the globe. Much (too much?) has been made of the alleged insularity of American literature. Thus, it is also the aim of this course to investigate the work of writers around the world. The hope is that in exploring foreign poetry in English and in translation, the class may find work that resonates with our own and develop new strategies for expressing, investigating, and complicating American ideas and idioms.

## Statement of Objectives

The student learning outcomes for this course are as detailed in the Undergraduate Catalog at <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/advisingened.html#requirements>.

## Textbooks

The following texts are required:

- *Learning Human: Selected Poems*, Les Murray:  
Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2001. ISBN: 0374527237
- *Selected Poems*, Derek Walcott:  
Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2007. ISBN: 0374531110
- *Selected Poems*, Eugenio Montale:  
Oberlin, 2004. ISBN: 0932440983
- *Open Ground: Selected Poems*, Seamus Heaney:  
Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1999. ISBN: 0374526788
- *View with a Grain of Sand: Selected Poems*, Wislawa Szymborska:  
Harcourt Brace, 1995. ISBN: 0156002167

The following texts are recommended, but **not** required:

- *The Elements of Style*, William Strunk, Jr. and E. B. White: Longman, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 1992. ISBN: 020530902X
- *The Triggering Town: Lectures and Essays on Poetry and Writing*, Richard Hugo: W.W. Norton & Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2010. ISBN: 039333872X

Notes:

*The Elements of Style* and *The Triggering Town: Lectures and Essays on Poetry and Writing* are not essential for the completion of this course, however, they are an incredibly helpful point of egress for the new writer. All of these books are widely available used on the internet. It is strongly recommended that you purchase them wherever you find the most savings.

Each week, students will need to bring copies of their poems for workshop. In addition, the instructor reserves the right to post supplemental readings that must be brought to class. Thus, please arrange to have consistent access to a printer and printing supplies.

## Course Requirements

### *Assignments*

<u>Points</u>		
<b>Creative Writing</b>		<b>Subtotal: 500 points</b>
8 Poem Drafts		50 points each = 400 points
Final Portfolio with Revised Poems		100 points
<b>Analytical Writing</b>	<b>Total: 6000 words</b>	<b>Subtotal: 400 points</b>
10 Close Readings (500 words each)	5,000 words	30 points each = 300 points
Introduction to Final Portfolio	1,000 words	100 points
<b>Participation</b>		<b>100 points</b>
		<b>TOTAL: 1000 points</b>

### Assignment Descriptions

Close Readings should concentrate on the decisions the poet makes in her/his work. There's always more than one way to close read a poem—poetry, intrinsically, is open to interpretation—but findings are convincing only when they are backed by concrete evidence. Close Readings should present a concise and concentrated analysis of the poem.

As you begin to brainstorm the way the poem's devices bear fruit, select a question, claim, or theory from the work that stands out to you as intriguing/though-provoking. This issue should develop into your thesis, your Close Reading's central argument. Do not try to account for everything happening in a poem; narrow your focus down to a particular aspect (violence, animal imagery, color diction, political allusion, disease, juvenilia, etc.).

Once you've stated your thesis, organize concrete evidence in a logical way so that your reader can understand, contextualize, and follow your argument. Fill in your argument with topic sentences, paraphrases, transitions, direct quotes, and summaries.

### Devices to consider for Close Readings:

- **Tone/voice/style:**  
What is the effect of the speaker's voice? Is the tone ironic, sardonic, mean, goofy, or difficult? What can the voice/tone tell us about the emotional world of the speaker?
- **Diction (word choice):**  
Why does the poet choose the words that he/she does? Are there words that have important connotations extending beyond their literal meanings? Does the diction reflect the speaker's tone?
- **Images:**  
What kinds of images are employed and how? Which senses are activated by the poem's imagery? Do the images work together to form a particular theme or motif, and how might this alter our interpretation of the poem?
- **Metaphors/similes:**  
Is the poem heavily metaphorical, or are images more literal? What comparisons are being made in the poem? Do the metaphors throughout the poem share a common theme or emotional tendency?
- **Sound/rhythm:**  
Does the poet use rhyme or other sonic techniques (alliteration, consonance, assonance, off-rhyme)? Does the sound of the words mimic the event/object/feeling being described? How is the sound contributing to the overall architecture of the work?
- **Line length/line breaks/word order:**  
On the page, how does the poet choose where to break lines? Are certain words emphasized by such line breaks? Is enjambment used in the poem and to what result?
- **Form:**  
Is the poem one of an accepted poetic form (sonnet, ode, sestina, epic, or elegy)? How are stanzas built? How many lines in each stanza, and why?
- **Verb forms:**  
Why does the poet choose the verb tense that he/she does? Is there a shift in tense at any point during the poem? If so, what is the effect produced?
- **Point of view (the speaker):**

Who is the speaker (remember, the speaker is not the same as the poet herself/himself)? Does the poet use the first person (“I”) point of view, the second person (“you”), or the third person (“he/she”), and why?

### Checklist for a Successful Close Reading

- \*is proofread and revised
- \*focuses on a specific argument laid out in a thesis
- \*does NOT simply give a summary off the work
- \*employs concrete evidence
- \*discusses specific poetic techniques
- \*privileges depth of argument over breadth
- \*provides enough context so that readers who are not familiar with the poem can follow the argument
- \*is logically organized; has an introduction, a conclusion, and reasonably divided paragraphs
- \*cites quotations correctly
- \*is grammatically and syntactically correct

### Resources for Close Reading:

You’ll need a dictionary. I recommend *The Oxford English Dictionary*, available here (but make sure you’re logged on to the university’s system to access UF’s subscription!):

- <http://www.oed.com/>

Other resources include:

- This overview of close reading, with an example, from the Purdue OWL website:  
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/751/01/>
- You can find short biographies of many poets, as well as poems and short critical responses here:
  - <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/>
  - <http://www.poets.org/>
  - <http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/index.htm>

### **Final Portfolio (100 points):**

Near the end of the term, you will revise at least five poems, taking into account my feedback and the feedback of your peers, as well as your own reexamination of each poem. The portfolio will be graded as a whole based on the quality of your revisions and the scope of your improvement throughout the semester.

### **Introduction to Final Portfolio (1000 words; 1000 points):**

For this assignment, you will reflect on your writing processes for the poems you’ve written throughout the term, you will discuss your revision tactics, and you will examine your own growth as a poet. You will also look at your poems as a collected body of work and examine any themes or questions that arise from them being put into proximity.

### **Participation (100 points):**

Because this is a discussion and workshop-based class, you are expected to be an active participant. This course demands serious engagement with literature, but I would also like each member of the class to be

seriously engaged with his or her own thoughts and impressions. I'm looking for poems of quiddity, poems that actively try to articulate the essence of someone or something.

Observation Journal

I would like each student simply to record at least one striking image or impression from their daily lives, with an emphasis on fidelity to the thing observed. The journal entry should attempt to describe something down to its minute details. Poetry is, after all, an art of attention. There are no length requirements for this exercise.

Class discussion:

To receive full participation points, you should speak up **at least once** during each discussion. Students are responsible for completing all assigned readings each week. If I feel that students are not consistently prepared for class, I will give unannounced reading quizzes. Quizzes and graded in-class activities **cannot** be made up in the case of absence.

Workshops:

To receive full participation points, you should be a vocal, but respectful, participant in workshops. Students are responsible for reading the poems to be workshopped and for writing comments on them. Be specific with your comments, written and verbal, since greater detail will help the poet in revision.

*Grading Scale*

A	4.0	93-100%	C	2.0	73-76%
A-	3.67	90-92%	C-	1.67	70-72%
B+	3.33	87-89%	D+	1.33	67-69%
B	3.0	83-86%	D	1.0	63-66%
B-	2.67	80-82%	D-	0.67	60-62%
C+	2.33	77-79%	E	0.00	0-59%

*Grading Criteria*

Grade	Close Reading Papers	Poems
A		

	<p>An “A” paper responds to the assignment prompt in full. It presents an original, specific, and clearly worded argument supported by sufficient evidence from authoritative sources. Writing style is engaging, clear, and concise, and the paper employs a logical organization. It is free from mechanical or formatting errors and cites sources using the proper citation format.</p>	<p>An “A” poem responds to the assignment prompt in full. It uses vivid and carefully considered language and follows an original and cohesive vision. It employs poetic techniques discussed in class to a constructive purpose. Its sentences make complete grammatical sense and it is free from mechanical or formatting errors.</p>
B	<p>A “B” paper responds to the assignment prompt. It presents an original argument, but ideas may need further development or clearer articulation. The argument is supported by evidence. Writing style is generally clear and organization is logical, but there is room for improvement. There are very few mechanical errors and sources are cited properly.</p>	<p>A “B” poem responds to the assignment prompt. It presents a unique vision, but ideas may need further development. It uses poetic techniques but could be doing more to bring craft and drama to the poem. Language used is effective but may need some refining. There are very few mechanical errors.</p>
C	<p>A “C” paper may not fully respond to the prompt. Argument is overly broad or in need of clarification and development. Some evidence is used to support the argument, but claims are not sufficiently defended. Writing style lacks clarity and organization is problematic. Several mechanical errors or incorrect citations.</p>	<p>A “C” poem may not fully respond to the prompt. Vision is disjointed or overly clichéd. Poetic techniques are not used to their fullest potential. Language seems hastily chosen or unoriginal. There are several mechanical errors.</p>
D	<p>A “D” paper does not fully respond to the assignment prompt. Argument is underdeveloped or nonexistent. Little or no evidence is used to support claims. Writing style and organization are unclear. Many mechanical errors or incorrect citations.</p>	<p>A “D” poem does not fully respond to the assignment prompt. Poem seems hastily written with little overall vision to hold it together, unoriginal word choices, and many mechanical errors. Poetic techniques are missing or misused.</p>

	<p>An “E” paper fails to respond to the assignment prompt (<u>including papers that do not meet the minimum word requirement</u>). Papers that are late or plagiarized will also receive an “E.”</p>	<p>An “E” poem fails to respond to the assignment prompt. Poems that are late or plagiarized will also receive an “E.”</p>
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# Course Policies and Procedures

## *Attendance and Tardiness*

You are allowed two unexcused absences. A third absence will lower your grade by an entire letter. If you accumulate four unexcused absences, you will fail the course.

An absence will count as excused only if the student is participating in a university-sponsored event (athletics, theater, music, field trip, religious holidays) and provides documentation from an appropriate authority. Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with me **PRIOR** to the date that will be missed.

If you enter class after roll has been taken, you are tardy. Two instances of tardiness count as one absence. Multiple instances will lower your participation grade.

PLEASE NOTE: If you are absent it is still your responsibility to make yourself aware of all due dates and to submit the next week's assignments on time.

## *Classroom Etiquette*

Keep your phones silent and off your desk. Laptops are to be used only for class-related pursuits—no chatting or surfing! If I notice you breaking these rules, I will mark you absent for the day without a warning.

## *Submission Requirements*

I do not accept late work. Failure of technology is not an excuse. Students are expected to factor in time for proofreading, revising, and printing/electronic submission. Assignments must be submitted by the correct time on the day assigned and in the specified format. **IMPORTANT: Submissions on the E-Learning site will close 10 minutes before class starts to give students time to make it to class. You will not be able to submit your assignment after 7:10 p.m.**

Mode of Submission: All papers and poems will be submitted as MS Word (.doc) or Rich Text Format (.rtf) documents to E-learning/Sakai. Final drafts should be polished and presented in a professional manner. All papers and poems must be in 12-point Times New Roman font. Poems should be single-spaced and include your name, the date, and the assignment number. Essays must be double-spaced with 1-inch margins. Please use correct MLA formatting and citation style for critical writing.

## *Paper Maintenance Responsibilities*

Students are responsible for maintaining duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course and retaining all returned, graded work until the semester is over. Should the need arise for a resubmission of papers or a review of graded papers, it is the student's responsibility to have and to make available this material. \*I recommend keeping a three-ring binder or expanding folder to organize handouts and workshop poems.

## *Conferences*



It is encouraged that you make an appointment with me—either during office hour or another, mutually convenient time—if you have questions or concerns about the work or your progress in the course. Conferences on assignments can improve the quality of your final draft.

### *Grade Appeals*

In 1000- and 2000- level courses, students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant. Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

### *Statement of Composition (C) Credit*

This course can satisfy the UF General Education requirement for Composition. For more information, see:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/advisingened.html>

### *Statement of Writing (formerly Gordon Rule) Requirement*

This course can satisfy the UF requirement for Writing. For more information, see:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/advisinggordon.html>

### *Statement of Student Disability Services*

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides students and faculty with information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities in the classroom. For more information, see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

### *Statement on Harassment*

UF provides an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentconductcode.php#s4041>

### *Statement on Academic Honesty*

All students are required to abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

### *Statement on Grade Point Equivalencies*

UF has recently instituted minus grades. As a result, letter grades now have different grade point equivalencies. For more information, see:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

### *Resources for Students*

The Reading and Writing Center

The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)

Teaching Center Mezzanine, SW Broward Hall

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

(352) 392-6420

<http://www.at.ufl.edu/rwcenter>

The Counseling and Wellness Center

Research and Documentation Online (Diana Hacker & Barbara Fister)

3190 Radio Road

<http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/index.htm>

(352) 392-1575

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>