

CREATIVE WRITING 1301: Beginning Poetry Writing

CRW 1301 Section

Fall 2016

Time: W 9-11 4:05 p.m. – 7:05 p.m. (15 min. break built in)

Room:

Instructor: Marie McGrath

Office Hours: 2:00-4:00 or by appointment, location TBD.

E-mail: mmcgrath@ufl.edu

Required Texts

- *Writing Poems* [8th Ed.]

by Michelle Boisseau, Hadara Bar-Nadav, Robert Wallace

ISBN: 0205176054

NOTE: This textbook will be our guiding compass for the class. Response papers will be to particular chapters in the book (noted in the schedule).

- *Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth*

by Warshan Shire

ISBN: 9781905233298

Course Description & Objectives

CRW 1300 is a beginning poetry course that emphasizes reading, writing, and criticizing poetry. This seminar/workshop operates on the philosophy that you must become a skilled, critical reader of poetry in order to become a better writer of it. Our discussions will employ the types of vocabulary and considerations specific to poetry. These discussions should help you to articulate your impressions and criticisms, a facility you'll need in the second half of the course, where, in addition to studying published poems, you'll be workshopping the poems of your peers and writing original poetry yourself.

During the first part of the semester, students will read and discuss poetry while becoming familiar with literary devices and sensitive to the sounds and rhythms of poetry. Students will be expected to annotate the assigned poems and come to class prepared to discuss them. Developing these skills will be important for the second part of the course, where, in addition to reading assigned poems, students will submit their own poetry and workshop their peers' poems.

This course fulfills the University's 6000 word requirement in addition to the 10 poems you'll write throughout the semester. A revision of 6 poems is required for the final portfolio, as well as my original copies of all 10 of your poems (the first draft).

This is a General Education course providing student-learning outcomes listed in the Undergraduate Catalog. For more information, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general.education.requirement.aspx>

Course Policies and Procedures

RESPECT:

I don't tolerate disrespect. This means that when I, or one of your peers, are speaking, you are expected to listen. Talking with another peer is not acceptable if someone is presenting a poem or making a point. Any disrespectful behavior grants me the right to ask you to leave the classroom, and count you absent for the day.

Cell phones, laptops, and other electronic devices are not permitted to be used during class. This means they should stay in your bag, and are not allowed on your desk. If I have to ask you more than once to put a device away, I have the right to ask you to leave the classroom and count you absent for the day.

If you fall asleep in my class, I have the right to count you absent for the class period.

Hats are not permitted, except for religious purposes.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS:

I don't accept them.

Things happen, life gets stressful, assignments pile up, social events tempt us away from our work. This semester may be an important lesson for you in time management, and in knowing yourself and your own capabilities. Although I don't accept late assignments, you may ask for an assignment extension up to 24 hours before the assignment is due. This is generous, and you may **not** ask for an extension after an assignment's due date is past. This extension will grant you five extra days to complete the assignment at no penalty. You may only have two extensions this semester.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

Assignments will be turned in to me via e-mail **AND** hard copy on the day they are due. I should receive e-mailed assignments **before class begins**. You should bring a hard copy of an assignment to class. If I receive one of these forms, and not the other, you'll automatically be penalized 5%.

Assignments should be e-mailed in .pdf, .doc or .docx format.

If I receive neither on the day they are due, you will receive no credit, unless you have arranged for an extension. As I said previously, I don't accept late assignments – no excuses or exceptions.

As covered below, poems should be in 12-point Times New Roman font, single spaced, including your name, the date, and the assignment's title. Papers should adhere to the above and be double-spaced. MLA formatting is not required.

If assignments do not meet the minimum word count requirement, they will be penalized.

ATTENDANCE:

You are allowed one absence this semester without explanation, but **do not miss the class period where your poem is workshopped**. If you do, this will result in zero points for that poem.

Remember, this class meets once a week. If you miss one class, that is equivalent to missing an entire week. After the third absence, you will fail the entire course. If you are absent it is still your responsibility to make yourself aware of all due dates and to submit next week's assignment on time.

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 and Humanities (H) Credit:

This course can satisfy the UF General Education requirement for Composition. This course can satisfy the General Education requirement for Composition or Humanities. For more information, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-requirement.aspx>

LIST OF ASSIGNMENTS

8 Poems (20 points/poem)	160	[300 words]
Practice Workshop #1:	20	
Practice Workshop #2:	20	
Anthology Curation (Mid-Term):	60	[500 words]
Poem Presentation 1:	40	[250 words]
Poem Presentation 2:	40	[250 words]
“Poetry Is _____”	40	[600 words]
Workshop Participation: (15 x 5 workshops)	75	
Response Paper #1	25	[500 words]
Response Paper #2	25	[500 words]
Response Paper #3	25	[500 words]
Response Paper #4	25	[500 words]
Response Paper #5	25	[500 words]
Portfolio:		
Cover	15	
Artist’s Statement	70	[600 words]
Final Poems + Revisions	200	
Book Review	100	[1,000 words]
Total points:	1,000	[6,000 words]

Grading Scale

A 4.0 93-100 930-1000	C 2.0 73-76 730-769
A- 3.67 90-92 900-929	C- 1.67 70-72 700-729
B+ 3.33 87-89 870-899	D+ 1.33 67-69 670-699
B 3.0 83-86 830-869	D 1.0 63-66 630-669
B- 2.67 80-82 800-829	D- 0.67 60-62 600-629
C+ 2.33 77-79 770-799	E 0.00 0-59 0-599

Grading Criteria

Grade	Essays	Poems
A	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.	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.
B	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.	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.
C	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.	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.
D	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.	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.
E	An “E” paper fails to respond to the assignment prompt (including papers that do not meet the minimum word requirement). Papers that are late or plagiarized will also receive an “E.”	An “E” poem fails to respond to the assignment prompt. Poems that are late or plagiarized will also receive an “E.”

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

POEMS:

Points: 8 poems at 20 points each

You will turn in eight poems that respond to the assigned prompts. The first 2 poems you turn in will NOT be workshopped.

Workshop Procedure: Bring a hard copy of your poem to class to turn into me. I will e-mail the poems to be workshopped a week before the workshop; it will be your responsibility to print one copy of each of the poems to be workshopped, plus copies of your own poem to turn in to me. Please read each poem carefully (at least two times), and mark up the copies with feedback. Prepare at least TWO POSITIVE and TWO CRITICAL comments for each poem, and be prepared to share them during workshop. Bring the copies to class on the day of workshop.

Rules:

To receive credit, poems must:

- a. have 1" margins and be single spaced
 - b. be left-justified (not center- or right-, although indentation and other variations in form are allowed depending on the prompt for the week)
 - c. be written in Times New Roman font, size 12
 - d. have a title
 - e. have your name, the date, and the assignment number at the top of the page
2. Poems must fulfill the prompt given. No end-rhyming unless the prompt calls for it.
 3. Poems must be written in complete sentences (if you eliminated the line breaks, the text would read coherently and be grammatically correct). No fragments are allowed.

WORKSHOP:

Points: 15 points x 5 workshops = 75 pts total

Students are responsible for printing and reading the poems to be workshopped (these will be sent via e-mail the week before workshop), writing comments on them, and bringing printed copies to class. Furthermore, students should be a vocal, but respectful, participant in workshops. Be specific with your comments, written and verbal, since greater detail will help the poet in question. Workshopping other poems is a great way to learn. Take this seriously.

Before we start workshopping, we'll do a "dress rehearsal" version where we discuss what comments are helpful, and what comments are not, in class.

PRACTICE WORKSHOPS

Points: 20 total (2 x 10)

We'll have two practice workshops before we begin workshopping each other's poems. The first practice workshop will be an in-class activity with a "cold" reading of a poem (meaning, we'll look at a poem you have never seen before.)

The second practice workshop will be an in-class discussion of a take-home poem. You'll come to class with prepared comments, and we'll run through our second "dress rehearsal" for workshop.

Points are based on attendance, participation, and on the workshopped poem that you will turn in to me in class.

POEM PRESENTATIONS

Points: 40/presentation

Word Count: 200 words

See the "Poem Presentations Handout" for guidelines and assigned poems.

ANTHOLOGY CURATION

Points: 60

Word Count: 500

Think of this as your "mid-term." You must write a 300 word introduction to your anthology. You will sequence 6 poems by 6 different authors. You should create a compelling title for your anthology (NOT "Poems About ____" or "____ Poems", though this can be a secondary component of your title.) Likewise, the topic you choose must be as specific as it can be. These should be poems from the last 100 years. I encourage you to broaden your reach and look at poets from outside the United States.

PORTFOLIO

Points: 285 total

At the end of the semester, this will be the culmination of your work. See below for the components of this assignment.

Cover

Points: 15

You will create an original design for the cover of your portfolio. Collage, paint, photoshop, doodle – I don't mind how you do it, but give me a visual preface for your work. Spend time with some books of poetry, examining what succeeds and what fails in book covers. What draws your attention? What repels you? Make a cover that suits your taste. Whatever the work ends up like, it must be your own creation – even if you aren't inclined towards visual art, you should be able to create a textual design that is clean and inviting.

Artist's Statement

Points: 70

Word Count: 600

One thing we'll learn (again and again if we have to) in this class is that it's OK to have obsessions. It's OK to have things that drive you, images or stories that you're called to, or even the simple recurrence of something significant to you. Monet painted 30 haystack paintings. You're allowed to write 30 poems about the ocean, as long as you can justify that choice to yourself and to others – and as long as you interrogate your own ideas to determine if there's merit in them.

Reflect on your own process in writing, and how that's changed. Reflect on how your own ideas have changed throughout this semester (or how they've stayed the same). Tell me the story of your writing, whether that began at an early age, or began only this semester.

By nature, this is a failed project, but it also may be one of the most enjoyable things you do this semester. It is sometimes impossible for a writer to describe what they are doing or what effect they may hope to have on their readers. The truth is, often we

have no control how our work is received – this is not the point. The point is to have control over what you are attempting, and to be able to justify that attempt through every word, every piece of punctuation, and every line in a poem. This skill will serve you well in the future, even if, after this class, you never write another poem again.

We will have the option, later in the semester, of examining some traditional artist statements from the world of visual or performance art – or perhaps some poems that speak to these efforts. Or, as a class, you may vote to eschew these examples and go your own way.

Either way, this will be a place to examine your own purpose, your obsessions, your interests, your influences and your goals. I believe each of you can rise to this challenge.

Poems (Final Version, Revisions & Originals)

Points: 200

The final portfolio will include **eight poems**, which have been revised from the original and take into account my feedback and the feedback of your peers. Learning to edit your own work is an important component in this class, and vital skill for any writing you do in the future.

You should also include the original poem you turned in with my comments (yes, this means you'll need to save these papers throughout the semester).

RESPONSE PAPERS

Word Count: 500 each

In order to actively engage with the readings, you will write five response papers (due every other week) each paper responding to two week's corresponding chapters in the textbook.

Close readings train students in the active reading of poems in order to better recognize effective writing practices that students can use in their own poetry, to practice constructing an argument and supporting it with literary evidence, and to grapple with a poem's ambiguities in order to arrive at a personal and unique interpretation of the work.

BOOK REVIEW

Word Count: 1,000

You are responsible for reading a book of poetry of your choosing and writing a review about it. You will need to approve this book with me on the date noted on the syllabus. Leading up to this assignment, we will have practiced reading poems closely and engaging our own critical opinions and examinations of the way poems work together to form a complete volume. You are allowed to quote lines or short passages of this work, but the total number of quotations should not be more than 5% of this review.

EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES

Students may earn extra credit by attending the MFA@FLA reading series—readings of original poetry and fiction by students in UF's Masters in Fine Arts in creative writing program, or any on campus literary reading. These readings take place roughly Thursdays at 8 p.m. at The Bull (a bar, however you are allowed in even if you are under 21. You just can't drink) downtown and last approximately 1 hour. I will e-mail you the schedule for dates,

which you will be responsible for marking on your own calendar. Each reading attended (with a short paragraph, about 50 words, reviewing the experience) is worth 5 points of extra credit.

Tentative Schedule

Note: “R.A. TBD” means a reading had not been decided yet but will be assigned and due as listed..

Class 1: August 24

In class: introductions, syllabus, sign-up for workshops and poem presentations.

Homework:

- Read Ch. 1, “Starting Out” in *Writing Poems* (p. 1-19)
- Respond to this sentence in 600 words: “Poetry is ____.” Outline what you think poetry is, what you think poetry should be, and what you believe poetry is NOT. This reflection will be contrasted, later in the semester, with your Artist’s Statement later in the semester – it will be a guidepost of how your ideas have changed (or not changed). As a reminder, assignments must meet the minimum word count in order to receive credit.
- **Poem #1** (Not to be workshopped)

Class 2: August 31

Due:

- “Poetry is” essay
- Poem #1

In class: discussion of chapter 1, additional poems, **Poem Presentations 1 & 2**

Homework:

- Read Ch. 3 & 4, “Making the Line,” (p. 41-75)
- Reading response #1
- Poem #2

Class 3: September 7

Due:

- Reading response #1
- Poem #2

In class: discussion of chapters 3 & 4, additional poems, **Poem Presentations 3 & 4**

Homework:

- Read Ch. 2, 5 & 6, “Verse,” “Making the Line I & II” (pg. 23-39, 77-93)
- Poem #3

Class 4: September 14

Due:

- Poem #3

In class: discussion of chapters 2, 5 & 6, **Poem Presentations 5 & 6**

Homework:

- Read Ch. 6 & 7, “Subject Matter” & “Metaphor” (pg. 95-135)
- Reading response # 2
- Poem #4

Class 5: September 21

Due:

- Reading response #2
- Poem #4

In class: discussion of chapter 6 & 7, practice workshop 1, **Poem Presentations 7 & 8**

Homework:

- Read Ch. 8 & 9, "Teller & Tone," "The Mysteries of Language"
- Prep for practice workshop 2. I'll give you each a packet of poems to take home and mark up with a minimum of FOUR comments. You should bring this to class the following week, and we'll continue our workshop dress rehearsal.
- Poem #5

Class 6: September 28

Due:

- Poem #5
- Don't forget your annotated poems for practice workshop 2

In class: discussion of Ch. 8 & 9, practice workshop 2, **Poem Presentations 9 & 10**

Homework:

- Anthologies are due next week.
- Poem #6

Class 7: October 5 - FIRST WORKSHOP!

Due:

- Anthologies
- Poem #6

In class: workshop round 1 poets, **Poem Presentations 11, 12 & 13**

Homework:

- Read the first half of *Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth*
- Reading response #3
- Poem #7

Class 8: October 12 - Workshop #2

Due:

- Poem #7
- Don't forget to bring your copy of TMMHGB to class

In class: workshop round 2 poets, discussion of TMMHGB, **Poem Presentations 14, 15 & 16**

Homework:

- Read the 2nd half of TMMHGB
- Poem #8

Class 9: October 19 - Workshop #3

Due:

- Poem #8
- Don't forget to bring your copy of TMMHGB to class

In class: workshop round 3 poets, Lemonade viewing party & discussion, **Poem Presentations 17, 18 & 19**

Homework:

- Reading response #4
- R.A. TBD

- Poem #9
- Choose a book for your book review and come to class prepared to discuss why you chose it

Class 10: October 26 - Workshop #4

Due:

- Reading response #4
- Poem #9

In class: workshop round 4 poets, discussion of R.A., discuss choices for book reviews, **Poem Presentations 20, 21 & 22**

Homework:

- Read Ch. 11, "Devising and Revising"
- Poem #10
- Draft your book review and be prepared to discuss.

November 2 – NO CLASS

I'll be setting up individual conferences to talk about revision and book reviews.

Bring to conferences hard copies of:

- Poem #10
- Book Review Draft or notes

Class 11: November 9 – Workshop #5

Due:

In class: workshop round 5 poets, **Poem Presentations 23, 24 & 25**

Homework:

- R.A. TBD
- Revise no less than 3 poems.
- Book review due next week. You will present to the class.

Class 12: November 16 – Book Review due

Due:

- Revised poems.
- Book review!

In class: present book reviews, discussion of R.A., **Poem Presentations 26, 27 & 28**

Homework:

- R.A. TBD
- Work on final portfolio!

November 23 – NO CLASS! Happy Thanksgiving!

Class 13: November 30

In class: discussion of R.A., **Poem Presentations 29, 30 & 31**

Homework:

- Work on Final Portfolio

Class 14: December 7

Due: FINAL PORTFOLIO! Bring your final portfolios to class. Select one finished poem to read to the class during our very own "student reading."

In class: student reading and fiesta!