

 CRW 2300 

(sect. 1645)

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Monday 9-11 (4:05-7:05 pm)
CBD 220

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4211-H Turlington (Monday, 2-3:45 pm)

Poetry requires the manipulation of words—it’s the words, even more than the feelings within them, that make poetry memorable. Yet to treat poetry as merely a collection of words is too austere; it would be like treating a dog as just a bundle of DNA (not that some dogs shouldn’t be so treated). We’ll look closely at words and the way that altering even a single one may change the effect of a poem, without ever forgetting that a poem must proceed simultaneously through what those words evoke.

Eliot said of Milton that a “man may be a great artist, and yet have a bad influence.” We will be looking at poets who are by and large good artists and trying to see what might make them good influences as well.

⇒ *Logistics*

At the end of each class I’ll give you a writing assignment. Assignments vary from the straightforward to the perverse. I’ll ask you to write a poem to a form of my devising, with three or four additional requirements meant to obstruct your conscious mind and give access to your imagination. I hope to entangle your censoring conscious so completely that you’ll concentrate on fulfilling the form and not worry overmuch about what is being said. The poem is due the following week at the end of class (bring copies for all). Poems must be printed in black ink on regular white paper. I’m immune to excuses for late assignments, however ingenious. You may obtain grace until noon the next day (no longer) by bringing lashings of cookies to class the following week. Late assignments will otherwise be marked down severely, one point per day (one-tenth of a grade). These penalties are cumulative and cannot be remitted.

From the poems submitted, I’ll choose five as the worksheet for our discussion (emailing you the names of the lucky poets), to which the first half of class will be devoted. Over the course of the semester, each poet’s work will be workshopped about the same number of times. ***Late assignments should be sent to me as attachments in .pdf (preferred) or .docx.*** This also applies to assignments where you didn’t print out enough copies. Do not leave assignments in my school mailbox. ***All assignments must have with your name, number of the assignment, class, and my name in the upper righthand corner. Don’t make me your secretary.***

In the second half of each class, we’ll discuss assigned readings. This term we’ll read Seamus Heaney, *Field Work*; Elizabeth Bishop, *Complete Poems*; Gjertrud Schnackenberg, *Supernatural Love: Poems 1976-1992*; Ishion Hutchinson, *House of Lords*

and Commons; Anthony Hecht, *Collected Earlier Poems*; and Jay Parini, ed., *Columbia Anthology of American Poetry*. **It's a prerequisite of the course that you buy the books.** Failure to complete the readings or engage in discussion is a sign of lack of interest in a decent grade. You can buy the books at the campus book-store or on the web. If you don't have a particular book one evening, it's a cookie penalty; if you don't have it a second evening, it's two points off your grade. **Ebooks are not permitted.**

I won't set the direction of our discussions, but I like to look intensely at the collusive uses of language and the habits and craft of revision. My complaint about many contemporary poets is that they have no concern for the richness of words, the complication of expression, and rarely use what might be called the subsidies of sense (as opposed to plain bread-and-butter prose meaning). These subsidies include ambiguity, nuance, the right wrong word, music of various sorts (alliterative, consonantal), patterns of adherence (meter, set form), thematic tangles, sensitivity to verb tense, timing, and delay—in short, the ways that poets have traditionally put English on English.

⇒ *Discussions*

You're responsible for reading the worksheet each week *in advance of class*, making notes upon it, and bringing it with you. Copious notes. The quick wit, intelligence, and charm of your analysis will be appreciated by all. Use of laptops or cell phones during class is forbidden. If your cell phone rings, you owe everyone cake or cookies.

⇒ *Notebooks*

The week after I receive your assignment, I'll hand it back with suggestions. **Keep these copies!** These annotated assignments should be collected in a file folder, due **April 16** (the Thursday before the final week of class), accompanied by new revisions of all poems. **Put the folder in my mailbox in Turlington 4301.** There is no midterm, no final, just the hard work of poems. I may on occasion ask to see your notes, which will be marked from 0-5 and count in your final grade.

⇒ *Papers*

You will also be responsible for four 1500-word papers on topics I shall set (6000 words in all). These papers must be literate and fascinating. Papers will be marked on a 1-10 scale and do not need to be revised; though, as with the poems, you must write a paragraph explaining the telling point of grammar or usage when you make an error.

⇒ *Grades*

I'll give you **nine** poetry assignments, the last due **April 6**. After reading your brilliantly revised portfolios (due the Friday before the last class), I'll give each poem a mark of 1 to 10 (these are chili-pepper grades, from ultra mild to red hot). The mark will reflect the courage and imagination shown in the assignment, as well as the

Freebird

“One forms not the faintest inward attachment, especially here in America.”

D. H. Lawrence

Six girls round the pool in Stranglers' weather,
tanning; then three; then one (my favourite!),
every so often misting herself
or taking a drink of ice water from a plastic beaker.

Only the pool shark ever swam,
humming, vacuuming debris, cleverly avoiding its tail.
The white undersides of the mockingbirds
flashed green when they flew over.

The setting was a blue by pink downtown development,
Southern hurricane architecture in matchwood:
live-oaks and love-seats, handymen and squirrels,
an electric grille and a siege mentality.

The soil was cedar chips, sprinkler heads and ants.
A few transplanted azaleas with difficulty flowered.
On watering days,
the air stank of artesian sulphur.

I was cuntstruck and fat. My tight chinos
came from a Second Avenue surplus store
that had an RPG dangling from the ceiling.
Grenada had been; the campus killings came later.

I lived in three bare rooms and a walk-in refrigerator.
The telephone kept ringing for Furniture World.
I looked at the dirty waves
breaking on the blue carpet and said not exactly.

A con-artist called Washington showed me Greek letters
carved in his huge upper arm, and the pest control man,
his cry of a soul in pain, switched
the clicking roach boxes under the sink.

The frat boy overhead gave it to his sorority girl steamhammer-style.
Someone turned up the Lynyrd Skynyrd,
the number with the seven-minute instrumental coda.
Her little screams petered out, *inachevée*.

TEXTS:

Jay Parini, ed., *Columbia Anthology of American Poetry*

Seamus Heaney, *Field Work*

Elizabeth Bishop, *Complete Poems*

Gjertrud Schnackenberg, *Supernatural Love: Poems 1976-1992*

Anthony Hecht, *Collected Earlier Poems*

Ishion Hutchinson, *House of Lords and Commons*

week

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|-----------------|--|----------------|
| 1 (January 6) | Introduction and Baptism by Fire | |
| 2 (January 13) | Seamus Heaney, <i>Field Work</i>
Whitman, Bryant, Dickinson | |
| 3 (January 20) | ***MLK BIRTHDAY***
NO CLASS | |
| 4 (January 27) | Seamus Heaney, <i>Field Work</i>
Frost, Emerson, Poe | [paper #1 due] |
| 5 (February 3) | Elizabeth Bishop, <i>Complete Poems</i>
Stephen Crane, Stevens, Williams | |
| 6 (February 10) | ***MOVIE NIGHT*** | [paper #2 due] |
| 7 (February 17) | Elizabeth Bishop, <i>Complete Poems</i>
H.D., Moore | |
| 8 (February 24) | Gjertrud Schnackenberg, <i>Supernatural Love</i>
Ransom, Eliot, Pound | [paper #3 due] |
| (March 1-8) | ***SPRING BREAK*** | |
| 9 (March 9) | Gjertrud Schnackenberg, <i>Supernatural Love</i>
Roethke, Jarrell | |
| 10 (March 16) | Ishion Hutchinson, <i>House of Lords and Commons</i>
James Tate, Herman Melville | |
| 11 (March 23) | Ishion Hutchinson, <i>House of Lords and Commons</i>
Gwendolyn Brooks, Imamu Amiri Baraka | [paper #4 due] |
| 12 (March 30) | ***INSTRUCTOR ABSENT IN IDAHO*** | |
| 13 (April 6) | Anthony Hecht, <i>Collected Earlier Poems</i>
Berryman, Lowell, Clampitt | |
| 14 (April 13) | Anthony Hecht, <i>Collected Earlier Poems</i>
Wilbur, Justice, Plath | |
| | *** (PORTFOLIOS DUE, Thursday, April 16) *** | |
| 15 (April 20) | Fireworks and final pronouncements | |

It may be necessary for the instructor to be absent one evening. Warning shall be given!

All the Other Things

Classroom Behavior:

Every student in this class is expected to participate in a responsible and mature manner that enhances education. Any conduct that disrupts the learning process may lead to disciplinary action. Because this course requires much contact, collaboration, and dialogue among students, it is essential that each student work to create an environment of respect and tolerance. Please keep in mind that students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the readings we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions. Diversified student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own. Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal, and accordingly absence, from the class.

Important Tip: *You should never copy and paste something from the Internet without providing the exact location.*

Final Grade Appeals: Students should consult the Vice Chair of the English Department.

Turn off your cell phone before class.

Grading

A few reminders: (1) This is a studio course, so grading is even more subjective than usual; (2) You are graded on your final assignments and your class participation; (3) There are penalties for late assignments that may affect your final grade; (4) There are penalties for lateness to class, or for missing more than two classes.

A

Assignments **almost always show** remarkable ingenuity or imagination, as well as a **complete** understanding of the formal or informal demands of the poem, and **might often pass** for graduate-level work. Class participation is **almost always** adept, insightful, and surprising in its perceptions.

A-

Assignments **often show** remarkable ingenuity or imagination, as well as an **almost complete** understanding of the formal or informal demands of the poem, and **might reasonably often** pass for graduate-level work. Class participation is **usually** adept, insightful, and surprising in its perceptions.

B+

Assignments **reasonably often show** remarkable ingenuity or imagination, as well as an **excellent** understanding of the formal or informal demands of the poem, and **might fairly often** pass for graduate-level work. Class participation is **frequently** adept, insightful, and surprising in its perceptions.

B

Assignments **more often than not show** remarkable ingenuity or imagination, as well as a **very good** understanding of the formal or informal demands of the poem, and **might sometimes** pass for graduate-level work. Class participation is **sometimes** adept, insightful, and surprising in its perceptions.

B-

Assignments **sometimes show** remarkable ingenuity or imagination, as well as a **very good** understanding of the formal or informal demands of the poem, and **might very occasionally** pass for graduate-level work. Class participation is **on occasion** adept, insightful, and surprising in its perceptions.

C+

Assignments **rarely show** remarkable ingenuity or imagination, as well as a **fair** understanding of the formal or informal demands of the poem, and **might once or twice** pass for graduate-level work. Class

participation is **usually not** adept, insightful, and surprising in its perceptions.

C

Assignments **almost never show** remarkable ingenuity or imagination, have a **not so good** understanding of the formal or informal demands of the poem, and **might once or twice** pass for graduate-level work. Class participation is **almost never** adept, insightful, and surprising in its perceptions. In addition, there may be frequent problems with grammar and syntax.

C-

Assignments **virtually never show** remarkable ingenuity or imagination, have a **poor** understanding of the formal or informal demands of the poem, and **would probably never** pass for graduate-level work. Class participation is **virtually never** adept, insightful, and surprising in its perceptions. In addition, there may be very frequent problems with grammar and syntax.

D+

C- work further marred by **problems** of insight and understanding, as well as **persistent difficulties** with grammar and syntax.

D

D+ work further marred by **very great problems** of insight and understanding, as well as **extraordinary difficulties** with grammar and syntax.

D-

D work further marred by **inexplicable and apparently ineradicable problems** of insight and understanding, as well as **even more extraordinary difficulties** with grammar and syntax.

E

D- work further marred by **nearly incomprehensible** insights and understanding, as well as difficulties with grammar and syntax **far beyond the norm for someone who cares about the language**.

Remember that these are the rubrics only for the assignments and class participation. Your grade may move down with penalties for late attendance or late assignments.

UF Stuff

This course can satisfy the UF General Education requirement for Composition (**not Humanities**). For more info, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-educationrequirement.aspx>

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more info, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/sexual/>

All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more info about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcode.php>

This is a General Education course providing student learning outcomes listed in the Undergraduate Catalog. For more information, see <http://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-educationrequirement.aspx#learning>.