

   CRW 3310   

(sect. 08B3)

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Tuesday 9-11 (4:05-7:05 pm)
CBD 210

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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 Donald Justice, *Collected Poems*; W. H. Auden, *Selected Poems*; Robert Lowell, *Life Studies and For the Union Dead*; Louise Glück, *The First Four Books of Poems*; and the

Library of America anthology *American Poetry: The Twentieth Century, Volume 1: Henry Adams to Dorothy Parker*, ed. Hass et al. **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 19** (the Friday 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.

⇒ *Grades*

I'll give you **eleven** poetry assignments, the last due **April 9**. 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 technical dexterity or ingenuity, and, in addition, the quality of the revision. Class participation will be awarded 0 to 10 additional points. I'm not able to reward mere chatter, but I'm sure that you'll always respond to the poems and the opinions of others in a deft and polite and witty manner.

⇒ *Absences*

You may have two absences for any reason, especially whimsical; but you must

notify me *in advance*. Email me or call me at home to do so. Each unnotified absence and each absence beyond those permitted will result in loss of half a letter grade for the term. Lateness over ten minutes is equivalent to half an absence. *If you miss a class, your assignment is due by email, sent to me by noon the following day (.pdf or .docx format, please). Otherwise it will be treated as late. Poems late because of absence do not have to be rescued by sweets.* When you're absent, you may pick up your packet from my mailbox in 4301 Turlington. I'm available for conferences Monday afternoons, 2-3:45 pm—or by appointment if the normal time is impossible due to a scheduled class (not a job or a hot hook-up). Take advantage of office hours—the jokes may be funnier then.

Rules of presentation

- 1) Title your poems.
- 2) **Single space** with at least a 12-point font (**13 if Times Roman**) and don't use a clever font.
- 3) Don't center justify. (It makes the poor poems look like embroidery.)
- 4) Put your name, class, my name, and the assignment number in the upper-left corner of the page.
- 5) You must use correct grammar and punctuation.

Rules of composition

- 1) Stay away from abstraction until you can handle detail.
- 2) Stay away from passive voice and sentence fragments until you can handle sentences.
- 3) Stay away from dialogue until you can handle exposition.
- 4) Learn the rules of punctuation. Learn verb tenses. Learn how to use a participle.
- 5) Learn the difference between "like" and "as."
- 6) Write only in complete sentences, on pain of defenestration and rustication. No sentence fragments.

On First Looking into Chapman's Homer

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
 And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
 Round many western islands have I been
 Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
 Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
 That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne;
 Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
 Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
 Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
 When a new planet swims into his ken;
 Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
 He star'd at the Pacific—and all his men
 Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—
 Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

—John Keats

Henry James by the Pacific

In a hotel room by the sea, the Master
Sits brooding on the continent he has crossed.
Not that he foresees immediate disaster,
Only a sort of freshness being lost—
Or should he go on calling it Innocence?
The sad-faced monsters of the plains are gone;
Wall Street controls the wilderness. There's an immense
Novel in all this waiting to be done.
But not, not—sadly enough—by him. His talents,
Such as they may be, want an older theme,
One rather more civilized than this, on balance.
For him now always the consoling dream
Is just the mild, dear light of Lamb House falling
Beautifully down the pages of his calling.

—Donald Justice

Florida Twilight, 1905

(St. Augustine)

Returning late, the flushed West to the right,
One saw, aligned against the golden sky
(The very throne-robe of the star-crowned night),
Black palms, a frieze of chiseled ebony.
And even at the moment one resolved
Not to come back, the scent of fruit and flowers
Brought on a sadness as the past dissolved:
Arcades, courts, arches, fountains, lordly towers. . . .

The shore of sunset and the palms, meanwhile—
Late shade giving over to greater shade—
What were they? With what did they have to do?
It was like a myriad pictures of the Nile,
But with a History yet to be made,
A world already lost that was still new.

—Joe Bolton

TEXTS:

*American Poetry: The Twentieth Century. Volume 1:
Henry Adams to Dorothy Parker.* Hass, ed.
Donald Justice, *New and Selected Poems*
W. H. Auden, *Selected Poems*

Robert Lowell, *Life Studies and For the Union Dead*
Louise Glück, *The First Four Books of Poems*
James McAuley, *Versification*

week

- 1 (January 8) Introduction and Baptism by Fire
- 2 (January 15) Donald Justice, *Departures*
Masters, Robinson
- 3 (January 22) Donald Justice, *Departures / from Selected Poems*
Robinson
- 4 (January 29) Donald Justice, *The Sunset Maker / from New & Selected Poems*
Frost
- 5 (February 5) W. H. Auden, *Selected Poems*
James Weldon Johnson, W. C. Handy
- 6 (February 12) ***MOVIE NIGHT***
- 7 (February 19) W. H. Auden, *Selected Poems*
Lindsay, Stevens
- 8 (February 26) W. H. Auden, *Selected Poems*
Williams, Pound
- (March 2-10) ***SPRING BREAK***
- 9 (March 12) Louise Glück, *Firstborn*
H.D.
- 10 (March 19) Louise Glück, *The House on Marshland*
Moore
- 11 (March 26) Louise Glück, *Descending Figure / The Triumph of Achilles*
Berlin, Eliot
- 12 (April 2) Robert Lowell, *Life Studies*
Millay
- 13 (April 9) Robert Lowell, *For the Union Dead*
Ransom, McKay
- 14 (April 16) Robert Lowell, *For the Union Dead*
- *****(PORTFOLIOS DUE, Friday, April 19)*****
- 15 (April 23) 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>.