

# CRW 1301-1325: BEGINNING POETRY WRITING

**Instructor:** Ezra Stewart-Silver

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**Meeting:** Monday, Periods E1-E3 (7:20 PM - 10:10 PM)

**Classroom:** Turlington B310

**Office:** 5th floor Rolfs Hall

**Office Hours:** Monday 11:00 AM- 12:30 PM, Thursday 2:00 PM-3:30 PM, and by appointment.

## Course Description

CRW 1300 is a poetry course that emphasizes reading, critiquing, and writing poetry. This seminar/workshop operates on the philosophy that improving one's critical reading of poetry is both a skill one can develop for its own rewards and a crucial step in improving one's own poetry.

Class 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.

## 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>.

## Required Texts

- *The Poet's Companion*, Kim Addonizio & Dorianne Laux  
1st Edition
- *Introduction to Poetry*, X.J. Kennedy & Dana Gioia  
13<sup>th</sup> Edition
- *The Vintage Book of Contemporary American Poetry*, J. D McClatchy  
2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.
- *The Elements of Style*, William Strunk Jr, E.B White  
4<sup>th</sup> Edition.

# Course Requirements

## Assignments

### Point Breakdown

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#### Creative Writing Component

**Subtotal: 100 points**

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8 Poem Drafts

10 points each = 80

Final Portfolio with Revised Poems

20 points

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#### Analytical Writing Component

**Total: 6000 words**

**Subtotal: 80 points**

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5 Close Readings @ 700 words each

3500 words

10 points each = 50

Anthology with Critical Introduction

1500-word intro

20 points

Introduction to Final Portfolio

1000 words

10 points

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#### Participation

workshops, presentations

**20 points**

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**TOTAL: 200 points**

### Assignment Descriptions

#### Poems (8 x 10 points each = 80 total points):

You will write a total of eight poems based on assignments I give you. The first two will be turned in only to me. Starting with Poem 3, we will workshop poems in class.

#### Requirements:

- To receive credit, poems must:
  - be single spaced with 1" margins
  - be left-justified (not center- or right-, although indentation and other variations in form are allowed)
  - be written in Times New Roman font, size 12
  - have a title
  - have your name and the assignment number at the top of the page
- Poems must respond to the assignment given. **No end-rhyming** unless the prompt says it's **OK**.
- Poems must be written in complete sentences (if you eliminated the line breaks, the text would read coherently and be grammatically correct).

Workshop Procedure: Turn your poem in to E-Learning as a .doc or .rtf attachment before class on the date that it is due. I will read all the poems and randomly select half of them to workshop the following week. (Each student's work will be workshopped three to four times throughout the semester.)

I will email all of the poems to be workshopped to the class listserv by the end of the day on Friday. Please PRINT OUT all poems to be workshopped, read each 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. At the end of class, you will return the poems to the poets who wrote them.

### **Close Reading Responses (5 @ 700 words each; 50 points total):**

In order to actively engage with the weekly readings, each week for the first five weeks you will write a response to one of the assigned poems. Your response will take the form of a close reading, analyzing the poem based on its formal, sonic, rhetorical, and figurative qualities. You will use concrete evidence from the poem to argue some specific and precisely articulated point, which you will lay out in your thesis statement.

The goals of the close reading are to get training in the active reading of poems in order to better recognize effective writing practices that you can use in your 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 (although not always uncomplicated) interpretation of the work.

### **Poetry Anthology with (1500 word) Critical Introduction (20 points):**

You will create your own anthology of contemporary poetry by selecting eight poems by current poets that we have not examined in class. You will choose a specific theme or issue to guide your selection process, and your introduction will explain the connective threads between the poems as well as your criteria in choosing them.

The goals of this assignment are to expand the breadth of voices in the poetry classroom, to give students the opportunity to investigate individual interests, to learn about criteria and evaluation arguments, and to promote critical thinking about the issue of what makes a poem "good" or worthy of inclusion in a certain category.

### **Final Portfolio (20 points):**

Near the end of the semester, you will revise at least five poems, taking into account my feedback and the feedback of your peers, as well as your own vigorous 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; 10 points):**

For this assignment, you will reflect on your writing processes for the poems you've written throughout the semester, 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 (20 points):**

Because this is a discussion- and workshop-based class, you are expected to be an active participant.

#### Class discussion:

To receive full participation points, you should speak up **at least once** during each discussion. Students are responsible for completing all assigned reading each week. Not participating in class is an indication to me that you have not done the readings. 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 the 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 question.

#### Presentations:

To receive the full participation points, each student will give a short (-10 minute) presentation on a chapter from our textbook. I'll provide a signup sheet and a document clarifying the expectations during our second class

## 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

Initially, both the close reading responses and the poem drafts will be graded on a check, check-plus, check-minus scale. At the midpoint of the semester, you will receive an overall grade for all close readings (out of 50 points), and at the end of the semester, you will receive an overall grade for all poem drafts (out of 80 points). If you'd like to discuss your progress at any point, please feel free to email me so that we can set up a time to meet. These overall grades are based on how well the assignments respond to the prompts, how well they show an understanding of poetic concepts learned in class, overall level of effort, and improvement over the course of the semester. Refer to the table below for an explanation of letter grades:

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	A "D" poem does not fully respond to the assignment prompt. Poem seems hastily written with little overall vision to hold it together,

	evidence is used to support claims. Writing style and organization are unclear. Many mechanical errors or incorrect citations.	unoriginal word choices, and many mechanical errors. Poetic techniques are missing or misused.
E	An “E” paper fails to respond to the assignment prompt ( <u>include papers that do not meet the minimum word requirement!</u> ). 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.”

## 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.

I take roll at the beginning of class. If you enter class after roll has been called, you are late. Every two instances of tardiness will count as one absence. If you are more than 15 minutes late, you will be marked as absent for the day. Tardiness will also 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*

No phones or laptops in class. Keep all electronic (or other) distractions in your bag. If I notice you using a cell phone or laptop during class, 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.**

Mode of Submission: All papers and poems will be submitted as MS Word (.doc) or Rich Text Format (.rtf) documents to E-learning/Sakai and as hard copies. 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*

I encourage you to stop by during my office hours if you have questions about your progress in the course, work we are doing, or if you have any other concerns. If my office hours do not work for you, please contact me and we can schedule a better time. Conferences on assignments can improve the quality of your final draft.

### *Extensions*

Each student may take one "free pass" during the semester. This means that you can turn in one poem or close reading late, as long as you get it to me within one week, no questions asked. This policy does not apply to the Poetry Anthology or Final Portfolio assignments. Please contact me via email BEFORE the assignment is due to request your free pass.

### *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. These readings take place certain Thursdays at 8 p.m. at Volta Coffee downtown and last approximately 1 hour.

### *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 (I) Credit*

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

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/advisinggened.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/honorcode/s/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>

## Schedule

This schedule is subject to change. Unless otherwise indicated, assignments and readings are **DUE THE DAY THEY ARE LISTED** on the syllabus, not the following week.

### Week 1: January 7

Introduction to Poetry Writing

### Week 2: January 14

*An Introduction to Poetry (IP)* Ch. 1, "Reading a Poem"

*The Vintage Book of Contemporary American Poetry (CAP)* reading TB A

**Close Reading 1 Due**

### Week 3: January 21 (no class)

### Week 4: January 28

IP Ch. 3 "Words" & Ch. 4 "Saving and Suggesting"

CAP reading TBA

*The Elements of Style*, sections T-TTT

**Close Reading 2 Due**

### Week 5: February 4

*The Poet's Companion (PC)* "A Grammatical Excursion" p. 171

*The Elements of Style*, sections IV, V, & Glossary

CAP reading TBA

In class: Quiz on *The Elements of Style*

**Close Reading 3 Due**

**Poem 1 due**

### Week 6: February 11

IP Ch. 5 "Imagery"

CAP reading TBA

Workshop poem 1

**Close Reading 4 Due**

**Poem 2 due**

### Week 7: February 18

PC "Writing and Knowing" p. 19

CAP reading TBA

Workshop poem 2

**Close Reading 5 Due**

**Poem 3 due**

### Week 8: February 25

IP Ch. 2, "Listening to a Voice"

PC "Voice and Style" p. 115

CAP reading TBA

Workshop poem 3

**Poem 4 Due**

Week 9: March 4 (Spring break)

Week 10: March 11

IP Ch. 6 "Figures of Speech"  
PC "Simile and Metaphor" p. 94  
CAP reading TBA  
Workshop poem 4  
**Poem 5 Due**

Week 11: March 18

IP "Sound"  
PC "The Music of the Line" p. 104  
CAP reading TBA  
Workshop poem 5  
**Poem 6 Due**

Week 12: March 25

PC "Stop Making Sense: Dreams and Experiments" p. 129 & "Witnessing" p. 64  
CAP reading TBA  
Workshop of Poem 6  
**Poem 7 Due**

Week 13: April 1

IP Ch. 17 "Recognizing Excellence"  
CAP reading TBA  
Workshop of Poem 7  
**Poem 8 Due**

Week 14: April 8

PC "Self Doubt" p. 195 & "Writer's Block" p. 199  
CAP reading TBA  
Workshop of Poem 8

Week 15: April 15

PC "The Energy of Revision" p. 186  
**Poetry Anthology Due**

Week 16: April 22

PC "Getting Published" p. 217  
Class Reading

**Final Portfolio & Portfolio Introduction Due Friday, May 3 at 5:00 p.m. through Sakai  
(no in-class exam)**