

**Beginning Poetry Writing: Fearlessness**  
CRW 1301 - Beginning Poetry Writing (sec. 1651), Fall 2017  
*C + WR credit*

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**Instructor Name:** Sonnet Graham

**Course meeting times & locations:** Wednesdays, 4:05-7:05 (Periods 9-11) Rinker Hall, rm 230

**Office Location and Hours:** TBA

**Course website:** Canvas

**Instructor Email:** [srgraham@ufl.edu](mailto:srgraham@ufl.edu)

**Course Description:**

"If you are afraid to write it, that's a good sign. I suppose you know when you're writing the truth when you're terrified." — Yrsa Daley-Ward

This course will offer a survey of American poetry as an introduction to the genre. Each week we will read the works of several established authors as well as produce our own original work. I am primarily interested in creating a culture of fearlessness in your writing practice. If we aim in poetry to accomplish something uniquely our own, we must engage in examining the depths of what it means to be uniquely ourselves—sometimes a daunting process that doesn't always appear graceful on the page. This course will celebrate such efforts as the foundation of future triumphs. Since excellent writing almost always is founded and improved upon by excellent reading, our class readings will span the entirety of America's poetic tradition with a focus on sound, image, and form. Students do not need prior experience in poetry to succeed in this course but must be willing to read and write both creatively and critically. This course is intended to provide you with adequate resources to graduate to a higher level of creative writing classes at UF if you so choose.

**General Education Objectives:**

- This course confers General Education credit for Composition (C). This course also fulfills 6,000 of the university's 24,000-word writing requirement (WR).
- This course confers General Education credit for Composition (C), and also fulfills 6,000 of the university's 24,000-word writing requirement (WR).
- *Composition courses* provide instruction in the methods and conventions of standard written English (grammar, punctuation, usage), as well as the techniques that produce effective texts. Composition courses are writing intensive. They require multiple drafts submitted to your instructor for feedback before final submission.
- Course content should include multiple forms of effective writing, different writing styles, approaches and formats, and methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes and contexts. Students should learn to organize complex arguments in writing using thesis statements, claims and evidence, and to analyze writing for errors in logic.
- The University *Writing Requirement (WR)* ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. This means that written assignments must meet minimum word requirements totaling 6000 words.

**General Education Learning Outcomes:**

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication and critical thinking:

- **Content:** Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the academic discipline.
- **Communication:** Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline. Students will participate in class discussions throughout the semester to reflect on assigned readings.
- **Critical Thinking:** Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

**Required Texts:** Michelle Boisseau, Hadara Bar-Nadav, Robert Wallace, *Writing Poems*

**Recommended Texts:** Classes will be taught from selections of work that will be made available to you on Canvas throughout the semester. Each week, expect to read 1-3 poems per author assigned. This means you will be reading at least 9 poems per week, likely more. You are welcome to purchase full books of authors' works, but this is not required.

**Assignments:**

**PARTICIPATION**

The quality of this class will primarily be driven by the quality of your discussions and responses. Therefore, thoughtful participation is crucial to the success of our course.

**11 POEM DRAFTS**

Poems are graded on a check, check minus, and check plus participation grade. You do not receive a final score on your poems until the end of the semester.

**POEM SUBMISSION TO A LITERARY MAGAZINE**

You'll submit one of your final poems for consideration at a literary magazine, and e-mail me your confirmation e-mail as evidence. I will teach you how to do this. You may submit to UF's Tea if you prefer.

**LITERARY REFLECTION RESPONSES**

We will have weekly responses that correspond to that week's chapter in the textbook along with affiliated works. These will be critical and creative responses posted to Canvas.

**POEM-A-DAY JOURNAL**

To develop a consistent writing practice that embraces both fruition and failure, you'll produce a poem a day for one week.

**WORKSHOP**

In order to get full credit, you must be there & be prepared. You are responsible for bringing enough copies of your poem for the class.

**DEAD POET SLAM**

Memorizing poems is one of the best way to learn the rhythm and meter of a poem, and poems are frequently meant to be spoken. Each of you will perform a poem from an established (dead) poet before the class. Friends are welcome to join.

**FOUR FORMAL PAPERS**

1. A close reading of a poem (min. 1,000 words)

2. Review of an attended reading or slam (min. 1,000 words) - Note this requires you to attend a non-class poetry event. You may attend a UF MFA reading, the UF Writers Festival, or a local town event (if the latter, you must give me details on the event in advance).
3. Poetry in Dialogue (min. 1,500 words)
4. Final Paper (approx. 2,500 words) - book analysis

### FINAL CHAPBOOK

This will include all 18 original drafts of the poems you'll be writing throughout the semester, as well as 10 revised, "finished" poems. Your chapbook will also include a cover, introduction written by a classmate, interview of the author by a classmate, and a letter to a current (living) poet whose work you admire.

### Course Policies:

1. You must complete all *assignments* to receive credit for this course.
2. **Attendance:** Attendance is required. The policy of the university is that if a student misses **more than six** 50-minute periods during a semester, he or she will fail the entire course. If a student accumulates **more than three** 50-minute absences, their grade will be lowered. Exemptions from this policy include **only** those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays. Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with the instructor **prior** to the date that will be missed. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this class are consistent with university policies that can be found at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>
  - a. *Please note:* If students are absent, it is their responsibility to make themselves aware of all due dates and missed work. If absent due to a scheduled event, students are still responsible for turning assignments in on time.
  - b. **An absence for the full duration of the double period will be counted as TWO absences** - one for each period missed.
  - c. *Tardiness:* If students enter class after roll has been taken, they are late, which disrupts the entire class. **Two instances of tardiness count as one absence.**
3. **Paper Format & Submission:** I require printed copies **and** Canvas submissions unless otherwise instructed for individual assignments. Poems and response papers should be in 12 pt. Times New Roman font, with 1" margins, left-aligned (unless your chosen form calls for variation). All poems and papers must be titled. Your name, this class number, and the title of the prompt (if given) should appear in the upper right-hand corner. Papers must be stapled.
3. **Late Papers/Assignments:** I do not accept late work. If necessary, students may seek deadline extensions **prior** to the due date. Extensions will be granted on a case-by-base basis and are not guaranteed.
4. **Paper Maintenance Responsibilities:** Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.
5. **Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism:** Plagiarism violates the Student Honor Code and requires reporting to the Dean of Students. All students must abide by the Student Honor Code: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>.
6. Students with *disabilities* who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)), which will provide appropriate documentation to give the instructor. **Please provide accommodation requests at the beginning of the semester.**

7. For information on UF Grading policies, see:  
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>
8. **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, in the Department office (4008 TUR). Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.
9. **Course Evaluations:** Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages asking you to go online and evaluate this course:  
<https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/Default.aspx>
10. Students who face difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help may call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352) 392-1575, or contact them online: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>
11. **Classroom behavior and etiquette:**
  - 9 This classroom is a safe space, free of judgment, where we will discuss issues that are sensitive in nature. When your peers speak, you are expected to listen and respond thoughtfully. Any disrespectful behavior grants me the right to ask you to leave the classroom and count you absent for the day.
  - 9 Cell phones, laptops, and other electronic devices are not permitted to be used during class unless otherwise instructed. If I have to ask you more than once to put a device away, I will ask you to leave the classroom and count you absent for the day.
  - 9 If you fall asleep in class, I will count you absent for the class period.
12. **UF's policy on Harassment:** UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty:  
<http://hr.ufl.edu/manager-resources/recruitment-staffing/institutional-equity-diversity/resources/harassment/>
13. **Email Communication:** Students are encouraged to communicate! All communication should be sent to [srgraham\(5\)ufl.edu](mailto:srgraham(5)ufl.edu). Email communication should maintain a professional and respectful tone. I will respond to emails **within 24 hours on business days**. Emails received after 5PM on Friday will be addressed the following Monday.
14. **Writing Studio:** The UF Writing Studio offers free tutoring in Tigert Hall 302. Make an appointment!

## SYLLABUS

Wk	Date	Material	Due Today	HW
1	8/23	Introduction & Syllabus Review Writing Exercises & Discussion	—	prompt #1 W.W. & E.D. P.L.'s "Reading Poems"
2	8/30	Reading Discussion- W.W. & E.D. Exercises Introduction - image	prompt #1	prompt #2 prompt #3 WP Ch. 1&2 Bishop, Rich, Plath, Doty (listen: Lady L]
3	9/6	Field Work (at the Harn/NHM): Observations in Poetry	prompt #2 (email]	Eliot, Moore, Millay (listen: Childhood is] WP Ch 3&4
4	9/13	Reading Discussion - psychology Workshop	field notes prompt #3	prompt #4 Start 7-day literary reflection journal

				O'Hara, Cummings, Hughes (listen: Hughes)
5	9/20	Reading Discussion - love Workshop	prompt #4 LR journal	prompt #5 WP Ch 5& 6 Gluck, Sexton, Rankine (listen: the truth the dead know)
6	9/27	Reading Discussion - voice Workshop	prompt #5	prompt #6 WP Ch 7&8 Knight, Howe, Hoagland, Addonizio (listen: Idea of Ancestry)
7	10/4	Reading Discussion - autobiography Workshop	prompt #6	prompt #7 Merwin, Wright, Gay, Oliver
8	10/11	Reading Discussion - gratitude (as ode) Workshop	prompt #7	prompt #8 Conference prep
9	10/18	Conferences	prompt #8	prompt #9 start poem-a-day journal (7 days) Olds, Lawrence, Kunitz
10	10/25	Reading Discussion - appetite Workshop	prompt #9	prompt #10 Levine, Gilbert, Carson
11	11/1	Reading Discussion - grief	prompt #10	prompt #11 Listen: Brown, Baraka, Lerner, youth slam
12	11/8	Discussion - slam Workshop	prompt #11	Poetry Date/Prepare for DPS
13	11/15	Dead Poet Slam	prepared pieces	Poetry Date/work on your chapbook!
14	11/22	NO CLASS, Thanksgiving	.....	Chapbook
15	11/29	Workshop	Chapbook by Friday	prepare for reading
16	12/6	Class Reading, Chapbook Feedback	Final Paper	Live it up!

**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 0-590-599

**GRADING CRITERIA:**

Grade	Essays	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>

E	<p>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."</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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## READING LIST

Week	Author	Poems	Audio
1	Walt Whitman	Song of Myself	-
1	Emily Dickinson	Success is counted sweetest, This is my letter to the world, My life closed twice before its close,	