

C RW 1301 Section 1652 : Poetry Writing

Instructor: Sean McQuinney

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Class Location: BLK 0315

Class Time: M 3-5 (9:35-12:35)

Office: TUR 4315

Office Hours: W-5 (and by appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this class is to make you a better poet. You will:

Write: Every week you will submit a new poem for critique (for the first half of the semester these will be critiqued only by me, for the second half of the semester these will be reviewed by the entire class). These will follow the prompts that are given as closely as possible.

Edit: You will edit both your work and the work of your peers. The weekly readings that you will be performing of each other's work during the second half of the semester will help you to see similar issues in your own drafts.

Read: You will read your own work to the group during any week when you are asked to workshop, and you will be asked to read assigned poems in class. Good poets read other good poets.

Accept Criticism: Every poet who shares their work is subjected to criticism. *This is not a bad thing!* Whether it is criticism from an audience as friendly as this classroom will be or from a literary critic down the line, good criticism should only function to improve your writing. Embrace the suggestions of your peers even if you do not make the changes that they suggest. Those recommendations represent the work that your peers have done reading your work.

Respect: Perhaps the most important rule of a workshop is that you must conduct yourself with respect towards your peers. Because we will be sharing our thoughts and poetry with one another throughout this semester an environment of mutual respect is necessary at all times. Any disrespectful behavior on your part will result in you being asked to leave the classroom. Should this happen you will be marked absent for the day (regardless of what point in our meeting you were dismissed).

Unless specifically asked to use an electronic device as support for an in-class activity, you will leave all laptops, cell phones, and any other portal to infinite knowledge and distractions put away for the duration of our class meetings. By put away I mean out of sight (in a backpack, under a desk, in your pocket and silenced). If I have to ask you more than once to put your device away I will ask you to leave the class and mark you absent for the day.

Outcomes

By the end of this semester you will be able to

- Write better poems.
- More clearly understand and criticize poetry.
- Revise your own work more efficiently.

General Education Objectives:

- 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

The Triggering Town (Hugo)

To Read a Poem (Hall)

These two books will act as guides for writing. Hall's essays are insightful and often inspirational. Hugo uses accessible poetry to define critical terms.

A Book of Luminous Things (Milosz)

The Vintage Book of Contemporary World Poetry (McClatchey)

The Open Door: One Hundred Poems, One Hundred Years of Poetry Magazine (Wiman/Share)

These anthologies will form the backbone of (but will not fully encompass) the poetry you will read this semester. The selections for this course are an eclectic mix of domestic and international poets poetry. You will also be expected to read from weekly handouts and links to online sources both in class and in preparation for class.

These books were chosen because they are strong collections and useful guides. Buy a physical copy rather than an electronic version. Make notes on the page. Bookmark your favorite passages. Underline sections you have questions about. Any class during which you do not have the text that will be discussed will be counted as an absence without notice.

Recommended Text

The Elements of Style: Updated and Annotated for Present-Day Use (Strunk/Pritchard)

Another note on supplies: You will be printing a good deal for this course. For each workshop day you must bring a copy of your new submission for each student. Please ensure that you have access to a reliable printer so that you do not lose points for these assignments.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Assignments	Words	Points Possible
Response Paper (12 total)	375 (EACH) 4500(total)	500
Memorized Recitation/Analysis Paper	500	80
Critical Analysis	1000	100

Weekly Poem Submission (12 total)	-	120
Peer Workshop Participation (10 per workshop day)	-	70
Final Portfolio	-	130
Total	6000	1000

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

Assignments:

As you can see from the point distribution/word requirement table above, this class meets the 6000 word writing requirement in addition to the poems that you will produce this semester. Writing assignments are found on the class Canvas page, but Poems will be handled in class and on paper. All critical assignments (everything but your poems and your Portfolio) will be submitted through Canvas. All poetry (including your Final Portfolio) will be submitted as a hard copy in class.

Response Papers (375 words each):

These are responses to weekly writing prompts that examine the style or critical component (or components) that are the focus of the week's lecture. These assignments will require you to examine specific elements of style found in the weekly readings or will ask you to apply a specific critical lens to a single poem. Response Papers are not fluff pieces designed to satisfy the word count for this class. In order to receive full credit for these assignments you will provide concise and clearly revised responses to your prompts. These assignments will be turned in through the class Canvas page.

Memorized Recitation (500 words):

You will choose and recite a poem that is no shorter than 15 lines from the readings this semester from memory. Your recitation should be without error, well paced, and practiced enough to be natural.

You will also write a short critical response describing the literary importance of this poem. What poetic devices are employed? What subtext is necessary to understand in order to appreciate the poem? All poems selected for this assignment *must be approved prior* to beginning the assignment. The written component of this assignment will be submitted through Canvas.

Critical Analysis (1000 words):

For the Critical Analysis you will choose from these options:

- Select a long poem from the readings this semester and examine the different poetic elements found in that poem. The bulk of this paper will focus on these elements, but should also include a close reading of the poem that explains the poet's intent.

or

- Choose up to four poems from a specific historical context (WWII, The Great Depression, The Harlem Renaissance) and examine those poems with a critical lens. Discuss poetic elements that run concurrent between different authors within this historical context and compare important works from the time.

or

- Choose an author from this semester's reading list. Examine their collected works (this will require you to purchase an additional text) and choose four poems that best chronicle the scope of that author's work. Discuss poetic devices, content, and themes that are repeated through that author's work. As you are examining these poems, describe the change over time in the work included in the anthology and attempt to explain these reasons for these changes (if possible).

Before you begin working on your Anthology assignment, you must get approval on your subject. To do so, provide a list of poems that you will be examining, or (for the first prompt) a list of the poetic elements you will be evaluating within the long poem.

Weekly Poem Submissions:

In order to ensure an increase in the quality of your writing, this class is formatted to establish a base of critical understanding of poetry. As such poems will not be workshopped until the seventh week of instruction (October 9th). That being said, **a poem will be due every Monday that this class meets with the exception of the final week.** During the first six weeks (when we will not be workshopping poems) you will turn in four poems which will only receive instructor feedback. Being absent does not excuse a student from their obligation of turning in a poem.

Poems are to be turned in at the end of the class and will follow the assigned prompts. You are to bring a copy for each of your peers and for yourself for each poem preceding a workshop (consult the schedule at the bottom of the syllabus for workshop dates). You will make notes on all other student poems before workshop and will return your copy (with notes) to the author after we discuss their poem. If you are absent, you have until the end of the day to email me your poem. I will then email your poem to your peers so that they may print a copy.

To receive credit on a poem it must:

- be submitted with 1 " margins,
- be left justified (indentations are allowed)
- be written in Times New Roman, 14pt font
- be titled
- have your name and assignment number
- adhere to the assignment. Only use rhyme schemes if required by the assignment.
- be written in complete sentences. No fragments allowed.

If your poem is lacking any of these requirements you may be asked to resubmit after a revision.

Weekly Workshop Participation:

Be prepared for workshop! There are few things as worthless to a writer as comments like "that was nice." **Come to class with two positive and two critical comments/questions for each poem** (preferably more). You will turn in a word document with these comments/questions to the Canvas page.

In order to get credit for workshop participation the questions that you turn in must be open ended and specific to the poems of each of your peers. You must also speak up in the classroom. If your peers don't hear your questions or your specified positive feedback then workshop has far less benefit to them.

Portfolio:

By the end of the semester you will have a collection of a dozen poems. You will revise and submit these poems in a portfolio along with the original copy (on which I made notes) and the original handout. Staple them with the handout on top, the original in the middle, and the final draft third. Each poem will be graded on a scale of 1-10.

You will also write a revision letter (minimum two pages) that details the changes that you have made in your approach as you progressed through this semester. Include specific details from both your poetry and, if applicable, your readings. What did you refine based on workshop? What poems inspired you through the semester? What work by your peers inspired changes in your work?

All of this is to be included with a self addressed envelope. I will seal the portfolios after they are graded and post them (if they include postage) or seal the envelopes and leave them in my mailbox in the English Department mailroom on the fourth floor of Turlington (just across from the elevator that is accessed within the building). I will leave them for the duration of the winter break for you to pick up. After the break they will be recycled.

Course Policies:

1. You must complete *all assignments* to receive credit for this course.

Attendance and Tardiness:

Since this class only meets once a week, you are allowed **only one** unexcused absence. A second absence will result in the drop of a letter grade. If you accumulate three 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.

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. You are also responsible for getting in touch with a classmate to find out what you missed in class. Save your absences for when you're really ill. It is your responsibility to keep track of your absences. UF Statement on Attendance and Make-up Work:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

2. *Paper Format & Submission:*

All poems will be submitted by paper copy at the end of class. All other written assignments are to be turned in through Canvas.

3. *Late Papers/Assignments:*

I do not accept late papers/assignments. Failure of technology is not an adequate reason for missing a deadline.

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/secr/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/), which will provide appropriate documentation to give the instructor.

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. *Behavior and netiquette:*

This class may well be different than any other that you will take part in here at the University of Florida. We will spend our time together reading poetry, talking about the work of famous poets, and in workshop so that we can collectively improve as writers together. In order to foster that environment cell phones will be prohibited during class. If you have a cell phone out during class you will be marked absent without warning.

Computers may be used during lecture but not during workshop and only conditionally during class activities.

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/>

Grading Rubric:

"A"- A paper at this level is truly high quality. It demonstrates a clear understanding of critical concepts, creatively addresses the subject matter, and exceeds the expectations of critical analysis. A paper with this grade will be free of grammatical errors.

"B"- A paper with this grade has met the standards of the assignment at a high quality level. This assignment may need revision but is organized in a logical way and avoids fallacies or mistakes in critical analysis. A paper with this grade may contain grammatical errors but will be readable.

"C"- A paper that earns a "C" has done everything that was required, but no more. This assignment may require significant revision to more thoroughly examine critical elements, or it may need reorganization. A paper with this grade will generally contain a few grammatical errors, but will still be readable.

"D"- This paper does not adequately fulfill the assignment to a satisfactory degree. One portion of an assignment may not have been touched upon or there may be a misused critical element. Papers with this grade tend to be disorganized and contain many grammatical errors.

"E"- This paper does not address the assignment prompt or is unreadable/incomplete.

If you are expecting to be absent on a class day email me your work by the end of the day. I allow one extension if you email me in advance.

Weekly Schedule:

(Please be aware that this is a tentative schedule and is subject to change)

For each day you are expected to have finished (and be able to talk about) the readings that are listed. A good deal of this course will be spent in group discussions of your readings. I will ask questions and expect answers from the group. If you are obviously unprepared for the day you may be asked to leave for the day and marked absent.

General outline of the days are italicized,

Readings are in bold text

Assignments are underlined

August 21st

Introduction to the course, the reading of the syllabus, and my expectations of you.

In class readings from printouts

Hugo, Chapter 1 (from printout)

August 28th

Introduction to reading and writing poetry, basic critical terms, and a brief discussion about 'voice.'

Hall, Chapter 1

Wiman's Introduction to *The Open Door*

McClatchey's Introduction and the works of Czeslaw Milosz included in the Vintage Book

Poem #1

Response Paper #1

September 4th (No Class, Labor Day)

September 11th

Communication, language, and images in poetry

Hugo, Essay 2

Hall, Chapters 2 and 3

Milosz, Epiphany

Poem #2

Response Paper #2

September 18th

Metaphor, assumptions, and tone

Hugo, Essay 3

Hall, Chapters 4 and 5

Milosz, Situations

Poem #3

Response Paper #3

You **must** have your recitation poem approved by this date!

September 25th*Symbols, sounds, rhythm, and context***Hugo, Essay 4****Hall, Chapters 6 and 7****McClatchy: Selections from Middle East Poets****Milosz, History**Poem #4Response Paper #4**October 2nd***Poetic forms and the importance of objects***Hugo, Essay 5****Hall, Chapter 9****Milosz, The Secret of a Thing**Poem #5 (This will be the first poem that we workshop! Bring copies for the class and for me.)Memorized RecitationsAnalysis of Memorized Poem Due (Submit Through Canvas)**October 9th***Workshop #1, revision, revision, revision, and addressing in-betweens***Poem #5 Packet (This is a reminder that part of your required reading is your fellow students' work)****Hugo, Essay 6****Hall, Chapter 10****Milosz, Travel**Poem #6Response Paper #5**October 16th***Workshop #2, Domestic poets you read in high school, and nonattachment***Poem #6 Packet****Hugo, Essay 7****Hall, Chapter 11: Dickenson & Frost****Milosz, Nonattachment**Poem #7Response Paper #6**October 23rd***Workshop #3, Writing about nature, and surprising your reader***Poem #7 Packet****Hugo, Essay 8****Milosz, Nature****McClatchy, Selections from Asia**Poem #8

Response Paper #7**October 30th***Workshop #4, writing about others, and picking at scars***Poem #8 Packet****Hall, Essay 9****Milosz, People Amongst People****McClatchy, Selections from Europe**Poem #9Response Paper #8**November 6th***Workshop #5, level of detail to include in poems, and handling transitions***Poem #9 Packet****Selections from *The Open Door*****Milosz, The Moment**Poem #10Response Paper #9You **must** have selected the subject for your Critical Analysis by this time**November 13th***Workshop #6, talking about bodies, and writing about love (and lovemaking)***Poem #10 Packet****Selections from *The Open Door*****Milosz, Woman's Skin****McClatchy, Selections from Africa**Poem #11Response Paper #10**November 20th***Workshop #7, writing about home, and the author vs. their work***Poem #11 Packet****Selections from *The Open Door*****Milosz, Places****McClatchy, Selections from The Caribbean**Poem #12Response Paper #11**November 27th***Final Workshop! Revision revisited, selecting poems for the final read, and peer review of the Anthology assignment.***Poem #12 Packet****Hall, Chapter 8****Selections from *The Open Door*****McClatchy, Selections from Latin America**Response Paper #12

December 4th

Final Portfolio

Readings From Final Portfolios and Anthology Assignments

Anthology