

Oddly, this process hasn't been helped by my just now having had to read 20 other syllabuses.... Still, I take it you basically know the ropes. We read poems in books or otherwise brought in by me, and we talk about them; you write poems, either 'free' or to certain assignments, and we talk about them; towards the end, you revise some of your poems, and present them, in a reading or portfolio - whichever you'd rather. Grading to be done, as I like to say, by 'artistic impression': put together from quality of writing, attendance, engagement in the class, and one called 'improvement' or 'development'.

I make little apology for offering a paper-based class. Please therefore print up a suitable number of 'hard' copies of your poems, one for everyone, and two for me, so that I can keep one. Please do each other the courtesy of coming to class having read and marked up each other's poems in advance. (Do as you would be done unto, as the Good Book says.) I have hopes of workshopping up to half the class each time (maybe 5-6?); so an individual's turn should come every other week, or just shy. I am particularly happy to have a number of repeat offenders in the class. (I am looking to you to interpret: I have fond memories of an experienced grad student once turning to a new grad student after some ineffectual speech of mine, and saying: "What he means is this:..." I look forward to this 'monitor effect'.)

From preparing/ working with MFA candidates last term, I learned - had it confirmed - that many feel 'under-read'. This is therefore to be almost as much of a reading class as a writing class. My rather facetious selection of poets beginning with 'S' shouldn't disguise the fact that our books are all completely wonderful. The *Selected* Schuyler, with which we will probably begin; *Nice Weather*, the newest book (in paperback!) by Frederick Seidel (the most alarming and provocative poet in America turns 80 in 2 years!); Charles Simic's *Selected/ best of* called *The Voice a 3 a.m.*; probably (if I can get hold of it) the Canadian Karen Solie's *Selected* called *The Living Option*. It will do you all good to read and begin to come to terms with these poets. Three or four weeks per book feels about right; we won't stall, and we won't rush either. I would like you all to present individual poems by these poets in the course of the semester; and I think - another first! - I'd like you each to offer a parody or homage of at least one of them as well.

I look forward to a lively and enjoyable semester. If I've forgotten anything, or any of you should have ideas or proposals, please bring them forward. (Attending the graduate readings at Volta some Thursdays at 8 p.m. is always a good idea.)

Here's an approximate chronology:

Jan. 6-welcome, introductions, beginnings

Jan. 13 - Schuyler, improvised workshop?

Jan. 20 - MLK Day, no class

Jan. 27 - Schuyler

Feb. 3 - Schuyler

Feb. 10 - Schuyler

Feb. 17 - Seidel

Feb. 24 - Seidel

March 3 - Spring Break

March 10 - Seidel/ Simic?

March 17 - Simic

March 24 - Simic

March 31 - Simic

April 7 - Solie?

April 14 - Solie?

April 21 - Solie

Michael Flofmann

Turlington 4211-D mhofmann@ufl.edu

Office Hours, Monday, 1-4 p.m., and by appointment