

# AML4242 Modern American Poetry: Cities

Professor M. Bryant (1.10.23)

Class # 23844

(Spring 2023)

*Class meets* on Tuesdays per. 4 and Thursdays per. 4-5 in MAT 115

\*If unforeseen circumstances require a remote meeting, use the Zoom Link on Canvas.

## *Office Hours:*

TUR 4221: Tuesdays from 3:15-4:15 pm

Zoom: Wednesdays from (11:00-11:45, links in Canvas)

Consultation also available by appointment.

*E-mail:* [mbryant@ufl.edu](mailto:mbryant@ufl.edu) (Canvas messages are forwarded to my email)

*Web:* <http://people.clas.ufl.edu/mbryant/>

## **DESCRIPTION**

This survey course offers a close look at six American poets (plus a sampling of others) whose work builds, reflects, and reconstructs cityscapes within and beyond the United States. A continuing influence on American poetry since Walt Whitman, *cities* have inspired new modes of thinking and making. City poems can be fantastic or realistic, experimental or traditional, dynamic or static, utopic or dystopic. We'll read poems by Walt Whitman, Edna St. Vincent Millay, William Carlos Williams, T. S. Eliot, Langston Hughes, Gwendolyn Brooks, Allen Ginsberg, Adrienne Rich, Philip Levine, Marge Piercy, Lawrence Joseph, Ange Mlinko, and Harryette Mullen. We'll view films by Paul Strand & Charles Sheeler, Man Ray, Helen Levitt, Stan Brakhage, Marie Menken, Radiohead, and Sabine Gruffat. And we'll read some essays on city poetics, architecture, and spatiality. Students are encouraged to employ critical thinking and to rely on verifiable sources to interrogate the texts that we study and discuss. Formulating your own take on our texts will help you design and build your papers. This course neither promotes nor compels a particular feeling, perception, viewpoint, or belief.

Course assignments: a brainstorming exercise in collaboration with The Repurpose Project, a short and a longish paper, a panel presentation, 7 Perusall Annotations, 1 Discussion Post, a parody, and engaged participation in class discussions. Our work together will sharpen your skills in literary analysis and argumentative writing as well as tap your creativity. I look forward to discussing the poetry, films, and essays with you.

## **COURSE GOALS**

1. Students will be able to identify key poets and cultural contexts for post-1900 American poems that engage with cities.
2. Students will hone their close reading strategies for interpreting and talking about poems and films.
3. Students will write convincing interpretations and arguments about course texts, improving their writing in response to instructor feedback.
4. Students will practice public speaking and professional exchange through panel discussions.
5. Students will have an opportunity to do creative brainstorming and writing.
6. Students will connect to the Gainesville community by visiting The Repurpose Project.

## ASSIGNMENTS

Class Participation (15%)

Short Paper on Poetry & Trash (15%)

Final Paper on 2 Syllabus Poets (25%)

Panel Presentation (15%)

Brainstorming Exercise for Poetry & Trash Paper (5%)

Digital Participation - 7 Perusall annotations + 1 Discussion Post (15%)

Parody (10%)

## TEXTBOOKS

T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land and Other Poems* (Vintage)

Langston Hughes, *Selected Poems* (Vintage)

Gwendolyn Brooks, *Selected Poems* (Harper)

Allen Ginsberg, *Howl and Other Poems* (City Lights)

Harryette Mullen, *Urban Tumbleweed: Notes from a Tanka Diary* (Graywolf)

\*Any edition with the complete text should work; I posted good editions I found on UF's Text Adoption site. Some textbooks are available electronically through UF Libraries. Selections from other poets are linked to our Canvas modules.

## FILMS

Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler, *Manhatta* (1921)

Fernand Léger & Dudley Murphy, *Ballet mécanique* (1924)

May Ray, *Emak Bakia* (1926)

Helen Levitt, *In the Street* (1949)

Marie Menken, *Go! Go! Go!* (1964)

Stan Brakhage, *The Wonder Ring* (1955)

Sabine Gruffat, *I Have Always Been a Dreamer* (2012)

## POLICIES

1. You must *complete all assignments* to receive credit for this course.
2. *Attendance*: Like all lecture-discussion courses, this one needs you. Life happens, so you have **1** allotted absence this semester without penalty. Use this allotted absence wisely (for emergencies, illness). You will earn a lowered course grade if you accrue **2** absences, and you will fail the course if you accrue **3** absences (which is 3 weeks of our 15-week course). If you have a medical condition/emergency that will use up more than your allotted absence, you should contact me to see if we can work out an accommodation. Providing *documentation* will protect you should you need a long extension, a medical withdrawal or equivalent. (Note that I have an ADA accommodation for no hybrid teaching.)
3. *If you are absent*, you are still responsible for knowing the material and for turning in any assignments due that day. (See above about contacting me if you have extenuating circumstances.)
4. *Latecomers* receive partial absences.
5. *Class Participation*: Learning to participate effectively and to move our conversation forward will help you understand the material and develop professional communication skills. If you're shy about offering opinions, try asking questions. Remember that if you are confused about a text, others are, too. (Note that our course also includes credit for *Digital Participation*.)
6. *Netiquette*. While our course communications needn't be formal, *they must always be professional*. This includes respecting diversity in race, ethnicity, class, gender, region, sexuality, and ability. Inappropriate communications in class, office hours, on email or in digital assignments (Annotations, Discussion Posts). violate this rule. Remember: your emails and other communications through UF are public records.

7. *Paper Format for Canvas submissions:* Please put your name & email address on the front page of your paper and number your pages. Please use a 12 point font, 1-inch margins, and double spacing. Grammatical errors will cost you, so proofread (good practice for preparing job market materials).
8. *Late Paper Submission.* Late papers and other assignments earn grade reductions. Work submitted a week late will earn an E unless you have my consent for an extension. (Note Canvas will be Canvas and late-stamp submissions even if I've given you an extension. Just ignore that.)
9. *Save That Assignment!* Always make backup copies of your work for your records. Save copies of your graded assignment in case you request a letter of recommendation and Canvas malfunctions.
10. Requests for *Letters of Recommendation* require three weeks' notice before the first Due date. (There's link to my Recommendation Guidelines in the Overview module.)
11. *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. Read the policy [here](#).
12. *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](#).
13. Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. [Click here to get started with the Disability Resource Center](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester. (DRC phone # is 352-392-8565.)
14. 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.
15. For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>
16. *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>
17. *Policy on environmental sustainability.* If you do not elect to keep your print texts, consider sharing them with others after the semester ends. (For example, you could donate them to the Alachua County [Friends of the Library](#) annual book sale.)

## UF COVID STATEMENT

In response to COVID-19, the following recommendations are in place to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, and our loved ones.

- If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit [one.ufl](#) for screening / testing and vaccination opportunities.
- If you are sick, stay home. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 to be evaluated.
- As with any excused absence, you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up missed work.

**About UF Course Recordings:** *This course format includes discussion and student presentations; it is not a lecture course. Student participation in discussion counts toward the course grade.*

UF students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. *A class lecture does not include academic exercises involving student participation.* Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section such as uploading or posting, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written

consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

### ABOUT PANELS

Panel discussions have been a highlight of this course since I started teaching at UF. The idea is to simulate the format of a professional conference panel without all the formality. Each of you will participate in one Panel with 2-3 peers. This requires preparing a one-page, double-spaced statement in response to your topic (see Canvas Modules). While the page limit constrains the full development of your ideas, you will have the opportunity to clarify your opinion during Panel discussion. Follow this procedure so your Panel runs smoothly:

1. Panelists distribute their statements to me and to one another on their designated Panel Discussion Assignment in Canvas; *submit by Noon the day before your panel* so everyone has time to prepare.
2. *Do not get together before class*, but do be ready to comment on each other's statements.
3. In class, the panel will begin with each of you reading your statement.
4. Next, panelists will ask each other questions and may amplify their own views.
5. Finally, the rest of the class will pose questions and comments. One panelist will call on the audience members. If I raise my hand, call on me in turn.

### OUR SCHEDULE (details in Canvas Modules)

Dates	Wk	Canvas Module	DUE
1.10 & 1.12	1	<b>Beginnings: Walt Whitman &amp; the American City Poem</b> Course Introduction Poems by Walt Whitman Film by Paul Strand & Charles Sheeler Sign Up for Panels Review Brainstorming and Paper 1 assignments	
1.17 & 1.19	2	<b>The Modern City</b> Poems by Edna St. Vincent Millay and William Carlos Williams Film by Man Ray	Annotation 1 (Millay)  Panel 1 (Williams)
1.24 & 1.26	3	<b>Detritus: Poetry &amp; Trash</b> Poems by Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams, Philip Levine, A. R. Ammons, Ange Mlinko, and Kamilah Aisha Moon Essays by Christian Wessels and Alison Cobb Corporate-sponsored film about community garbage	Personal Trashpile Brainstorming Exercise
1.31 & 2.2	4	<b>Unreal Cities: Eliot &amp; Modernist Metropolis</b> Poems by T. S. Eliot Film by Fernand Léger & Dudley Murphy	Annotation 2 (Eliot)
2.7 & 2.9	5	<b>Walking in the City</b> Poems by T. S. Eliot Essays by Michel de Certeau and Lauren Elkin Video by Radiohead	Panel 2 (Eliot)  Annotation 3 (de Certeau)

2.14 & 2.16	6	<b>Harlem Montage: Hughes &amp; Jazz Poetics</b> Poems by Langston Hughes Film by Helen Levitt	Panel 3 (Hughes)
2.23 & 2.23	7	<b>Urban Spaces: Streets, Structures, Interiors</b> Poems by Langston Hughes Essays by Gaston Bachelard and Louis I. Kahn	Paper 1 – Trash Poem Analysis
2.28 & 3.2	8	<b>Black Metropolis: Brooks &amp; Postwar Chicago</b> Poems by Gwendolyn Brooks	Annotation 4 (Brooks)  Panel 4 (Brooks)
3.7 & 3.9	9	<b>Cities of Women</b> Poems by Gwendolyn Brooks Essay by Anne Friedberg Film by Marie Menken	Annotation 5 (Friedberg)
3.16 & 3.16	10	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
3.21 & 3.23	11	<b>Visionary Cities: Ginsberg &amp; Beat Poetics</b> Poems by Allen Ginsberg Film by Stan Brakhage	Panel 5 (Ginsberg)
3.28 & 3.31	12	<b>Urban Love Poems: Rich &amp; New York</b> Poems by Adrienne Rich	Annotation 6 (Rich) Panel 6 (Rich)
4.4 & 4.6	13	<b>Urban Tumbleweed: Mullen Walks in LA</b> Poems by Harryette Mullen	Panel 7 (Mullen)
4.11 & 4.13	14	<b>Global Cities + Library Visit</b> Film by Sabine Gruffat Library session with Dr. Neil Weijer	Paper 2 Brainstorming Post
4.18 & 4.20	15	<b>Motor City Poets</b> Poems by Philip Levine, Marge Piercy, and Lawrence Joseph	Annotation 7
4.25	16	<b>Parody Performances</b> Hear classmates read their parodies & enjoy cookies	
5.1		<b>Exam Week</b>	Paper 2 – City Poets