

# CRW 1301: Beginning Poetry Writing

## CRW 1301: Beginning Poetry Writing

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Office Hours: M 9am – 12pm, TUR 4407

Course Info: Time: W 9-11 (4:05pm – 7:05pm), Bldg./Room: FLI 0121

## Introduction

“I had to create an equivalent for what I felt about what I was looking at—not copy it.”

—Georgia O’Keeffe

Often, we come to poetry with very set ideas of what it is or should be, whether that be something more modern and contemporary or something very archaic and shrouded in mystery. I want us to encounter some poems you may be familiar with, whether you’ve seen them “in the wild” or read them in previous classes, and revisit them, trying to untangle them and see them from a new light. We also want to look at work taking place in contemporary spaces. We are, after all, here to craft work of our own, so it’s important that we not only learn from those come before us, but have an eye toward the now, a finger on the pulse, so to speak. We’ll have discussions about the craft and form of poetry as well as about why we write in the first place. My hope is that we can start to critique poetry in a way that allows the poem to speak to us, lets it tell us what it wants to be, not superimposing our own desires for what it could be if it were written or framed differently.

We will begin the course by reading poems together, dissecting them, writing analyses of them, then, after some exercises, we will launch into the second part of the semester where we will embark upon the poetry workshop. We’ll share poems, written by you, among the class and will have structured conversations around what you’re doing in your own work, how it learns from the work we’ve digested together, and how you’re trying to break new ground, avoiding cliches as best we can and using language in surprising, controlled ways. Thus, your original poems should strive to be reflections of yourself as you wrestle to match the craft techniques of poetry with content brought in by yourself or by assigned prompts. For this reason, we will hope to hear every voice in the room in order to be better readers, and advocates, of poetry and the craft of writing.

## Required Texts

*The Poet’s Companion: A Guide to the Pleasures of Writing Poetry*, Kim Addonizio and Dorianne Laux

*First Four Books of Poems*, Louise Glück

(Recommended) *The Norton Anthology of Poetry: Sixth Edition*.

Weekly PDFs of poems/essays/handouts will be made available by instructor

## Overview of Assignments

Close Readings: We will read from books of poetry throughout the semester. For each close reading, you must select and explore one poem discussed up to that point in class. You will discuss stylistic choices, craft techniques, and other elements you believe to be significant. These close readings will focus on literary analysis. Each initial post must be at least 350 words. You will also respond to a peer's post in at least 150 words. These will be due on Canvas on Tuesdays at 11:59pm.

Critical Analysis Essays: Part of being a poet is being a critic. For these assignments, you will select a poem to thoroughly analyze. The essay will respond to issues of poetic devices, contexts, and forms, and make an assertion about the effectiveness of those elements. These papers will allow you to consider personal taste and explore a poem in more depth than the weekly close readings. You will write two analyses, each 750 words in length.

Original Poems: Over the course of the semester, I will assign a series of writing prompts for which you will produce original poems. These will be evaluated on adherence to prompt, evidence of effort, and cleanliness (absence of typos/observance of assigned format). All prompts will have specific guidelines listed on the assignment page. These will be submitted on Canvas and on paper during class.

Portfolio: Your final project will have three parts. First, you will revise five poems, taking into consideration workshop comments and instructor feedback. (Note that you will submit the original versions of the poems alongside the revisions, so don't lose those copies.) You will also include a 300-word artist's statement explaining your poetic philosophy, visions, and intuitions. (Maybe even hallucinations?) Lastly, you will write a 200-word letter to your past writer self (the one who showed up on the first day of class) and contemplate the changes you've undergone. This portfolio should be formatted as a chapbook (with a title, table of contents, and third-person author bio). Be encouraged to use (or create) a cover image for your chapbook, and you may include a picture of yourself next to your bio, should you opt to.

Assignment	Word Count	Points
Close Readings (x8)	500 each	20 each
Critical Analysis Essays (x2)	750 each	100 each
Original Poems (x9)	-	10 each

Workshop Sessions (x2)	-	100 per workshop session
Workshop Annotations	-	100 base (2 points will be deducted for each missing set of annotations)
Final Portfolio	500	200
General Class Participation	-	150 base
	= 6000 total	= 1000 total

## Workshop

In our class, workshop space is an intentional space. It is my goal to foster a productive community for which to share our work. You will be introduced to the workshop in more detail during class, but here is an overview: students will be broken up into workshop groups of 3-6 (depending on class size). When your piece isn't being workshopped, you will need to prepare commentary for the students that *are* being workshopped. For full credit, all workshop poems must follow these guidelines:

1. Times New Roman or Garamond, 12- or 14-point font, single spaced.
2. Title (you may not title a poem "Untitled").
3. Your name must be on the paper.
4. Avoid the use of profanity for shock value.
5. Avoid clichés and empty abstractions.
6. Poems must obey the rules of grammar—no fragments, use proper punctuation, etc.

Participation: Workshop relies on discussion; come to class prepared. Unpreparedness will result in a deduction from the general class participation points.

Workshop Sessions: Workshop will commence in week 7. As in the first six weeks, you will continue to bring paper copies of your weekly poetry prompt to class. One group will be slated for workshop each class, and the group members will know their workshop date ahead of time. Over the course of the semester, each poet will be workshopped roughly 2-3 times, depending on class size.

Classmate Annotations: For each poem being workshopped, you will be expected to annotate the poem and come to class prepared for discussion. You will receive a paper copy of each poem being

workshopped and mark it up. I will check these for completion before each workshop. Each missing set of annotations will result in a deduction of two points.

## Course-Specific Policies

1. *Since creative writing is art*, your poetry will be graded holistically. I will evaluate for effort, timeliness, contemplation, and evidence of revision. I will provide feedback aimed at helping you grow as a poet.
2. *Participation* is integral to this class. You must engage in lectures and complete all readings, exercises, and assignments to receive credit. I will holistically evaluate your participation based on your efforts in class and on Canvas. You will automatically start off with 100 participation points. To keep these points, you must complete assignments, arrive to class prepared, participate in workshops/class discussions, and generally contribute to our writerly community. Non-participation will result in a deduction from your 100 points. The more you participate, the more you will learn. (Note: general participation points are graded separately from workshop annotations.)
3. *Late work* will not be accepted for any assignments. However, for the Close Readings, you have a 24-hour grace period. If you submit within the grace period, no points will be deducted. Any work submitted after the grace period will result in a deduction of one full letter grade after your initial grade. (So, if the assignment is originally of B+ merit, but it was submitted after the grace period, it will be graded as a C+.)
4. *Absences* are not encouraged. Since we meet only once a week, attendance is imperative for you to fully engage with the material. You are allotted ONE unexcused absence. More than one unexcused absence will result in your grade being affected. On par with the University of Florida's attendance policy, a student who misses more than 6 class periods automatically fails a course. Each of our meetings is equal to THREE class periods. Therefore, if you miss more than two class meetings, you will automatically fail. This policy is for unexcused absences and does not apply excused absences. Absences are only excused with a doctor's note. Please communicate with me if you have questions or concerns about attendance.
5. *Tardiness* can result in deduction from your participation points. 2 tardy arrivals = 1 absence. A tardy arrival is defined as being 5 minutes late for class without notice.
6. *Classroom etiquette* involves paying attention, doing the work, and treating others with respect. Please keep electronics away.
7. *Plagiarism and the use of AI programs* is expressly forbidden in this course. Your poems must be your original work. Poems may not be inspired by, assisted by, or have words lifted from any AI program or previously published work. I reserve the right to report any incident of academic dishonesty.

8. *Paper Maintenance Responsibilities:* You must keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over. The portfolio assignment will require you submit the original versions of your revised poems. Develop a system to organize your work to avoid problems later in the semester.

## Grading Scale

A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
E	0-59

For information on UF Grading policies, see:

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

## General Education Objectives

- This course confers General Education credit for Composition (C) and 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.

## University-Specific Policies

1. *UF's policy on Sexual Harassment:* The University of Florida is committed to providing a safe educational, working, and residential environment that is free from sexual harassment or misconduct directed towards all members of the community: <https://titleix.ufl.edu/about/title-ix-rights/>
2. *Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism:* UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge: "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: 'On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.'" The Honor Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>) specifies several behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions.  
UF Student Honor Code:
  - a. Student must not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing.
  - b. Self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the student's own submitted work, or the simultaneous submission of the student's own work, without the full and clear acknowledgment and permission of the faculty to whom it is submitted.
  - c. Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.
3. *Accommodations:* Students with disabilities who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu/>), which will provide appropriate documentation to give your instructor early in the semester.
4. *Crisis:* Students who are in distress or who need counseling or urgent help: please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352-392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to you. UF's Counseling and Wellness Center offers additional support: 352-392-1575, or contact them online: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>
5. *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). Please

contact Ms. Blount at [cblount@ufl.edu](mailto:cblount@ufl.edu) Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

6. *Course Evaluations*: Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations. Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages requesting that you do this online: <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>

## Schedule (\*subject to change\*)

Date	In Class	Homework
Week 1 AUG 28 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction: “Poetry in the Wild” (Collins, Oliver)</li> <li>• “Good” vs. “Bad” Poetry</li> </ul>	
Week 2 SEPT 4 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulary, Conventions, Clichés</li> <li>• How to Approach and Read Poetry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close Reading 1</li> <li>• Read PC 19-28</li> </ul>
Week 3 SEPT 11 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poetry’s Architecture</li> <li>• Discuss Class Readings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poem 1</li> <li>• Close Reading 2</li> <li>• Read PC 85-103</li> </ul>
Week 4 SEPT 18 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simile, Metaphor, Imagery</li> <li>• Discuss Class Readings</li> </ul> <p>-Submit Poem 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poem 2</li> <li>• Close Reading 3</li> <li>• Read PC 104-112</li> <li>• Read Weekly PDF</li> </ul>
Week 5 SEPT 25 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meter, Rhyme, Sound</li> <li>• Discuss Class Readings</li> <li>•</li> </ul> <p>-Receive Poem 1, Submit Poem 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poem 3</li> <li>• Close Reading 4</li> <li>• Read Weekly PDF</li> </ul>
Week 6 OCT 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss “The Art of Finding” and Plath</li> <li>• Play, Associative/Lateral Logic</li> <li>• Discuss Class Readings</li> </ul> <p>-Receive Poem 2, Submit Poem 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poem 4</li> <li>• Close Reading 5</li> <li>• Read Weekly PDF</li> </ul>
Week 7 OCT 9 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop Poem 3</li> <li>• Discuss Class Readings</li> </ul> <p>-Receive Poem 3, Submit Poem 4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poem 5</li> <li>• Read Weekly PDF</li> <li>• <b>Critical Essay 1 Due</b></li> </ul>

<p>Week 8 OCT 16<sup>th</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop Poem 4</li> <li>• Discuss Class Readings</li> </ul> <p>-Receive Poem 4, Submit Poem 5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poem 6</li> <li>• Close Reading 6</li> <li>• Read Weekly PDF</li> </ul>
<p>Week 9 OCT 23<sup>rd</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop Poem 5</li> <li>• Discuss Class Readings</li> </ul> <p>-Receive Poem 5, Submit Poem 6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poem 7</li> <li>• Close Reading 7</li> <li>• Read Glück</li> </ul>
<p>Week 10 OCT 30<sup>th</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop Poem 6</li> <li>• Discuss Class Readings</li> </ul> <p>-Receive Poem 6, Submit Poem 7</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poem 8</li> <li>• Close Reading 8</li> <li>• Read Glück</li> </ul>
<p>Week 11 NOV 6<sup>th</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop Poem 7</li> <li>• Discuss Class Readings</li> </ul> <p>-Receive Poem 7, Submit Poem 8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poem 9</li> <li>• Read Weekly PDF</li> </ul>
<p>Week 12 NOV 13<sup>th</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop Poem 8</li> <li>• Discuss Class Readings</li> </ul> <p>-Receive Poem 8, Submit Poem 9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poem 10</li> <li>• Read Weekly PDF</li> </ul>
<p>Week 13 NOV 20<sup>th</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop Poem 9</li> <li>• Discuss Class Readings &amp; Revision Strategies</li> </ul> <p>-Receive Poem 9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Critical Essay 2 Due</b></li> <li>• Read PC 186-192</li> </ul>
<p>Week 14 NOV 27<sup>th</sup></p>	<p>NO CLASS THIS WEEK—HOLIDAY</p>	
<p>Week 15 DEC 4<sup>th</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publishing Poetry Q&amp;A</li> <li>• Final Notes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Portfolio Due</u></b></li> </ul>