CRW 1301 – Beginning Poetry Writing (Section 1651, Class #12300), Fall 2021

Instructor Name: Elizabeth Agans
Course Meeting Time & Location: W – Period 9-11 (4:05 PM-7:05 PM), **CBD 0212**;
synchronous Zoom sessions for remote access if necessary (**Synchronous Class Zoom link**)
Office Location and Hours: T & W – Period 8 (3:00PM-3:50PM) in person (location TBD) and
synchronously on Zoom; also by appointment (**Office Hours Zoom link**)
Course Website: Canvas
Instructor Email: **elizabeth.agans@ufl.edu**

Course Description: As writers, we all want our work to be as universally relatable as possible. After all, as students of the humanities, we strive to produce and think critically about work that speaks to the human condition. In my first undergraduate creative writing course, I remember having the urge to shy away from specific, concrete details and rely more on abstract images and language in order to appeal to as many readers as possible. While it may seem counter-intuitive, specific, concrete details are actually what makes a poem spring to life, no matter the audience. In this course, we will be focusing on ways to avoid abstraction in order to write poems that speak clearly and powerfully about each student's individual experience of the human condition.

Through weekly readings, writing prompts, and discussions, we will cultivate our skills as writers of poetry. There are essentially two halves to this course. In the first, we will build up our knowledge and vocabulary to help us read and talk about poems and poets critically. While doing so, we will begin both writing poems and writing *about* poems to set us up for the course's second half. We will then apply what we have learned, and continue to learn, to our own work and that of our peers in a workshop environment. Here, our ability to revise and improve a poem will be practiced while we continue to develop our skills and knowledge.

COVID Statement:

Please continue to check the University's updates moving forward throughout the semester:
https://coronavirus.ufl.edu/university-updates/

This semester, the university has mandated a return to face-to-face (F2F) teaching.

I am mindful, however, of the fact that we are still in the midst of a global pandemic and that the general population may not have had access to vaccinations. Thus, if you are registered for the F2F section of this class and suspect you may have been exposed to COVID, you should report for testing immediately and observe an obligatory quarantine period. https://coronavirus.ufhealth.org/screen-test-protect-2/ You should also report to me immediately so that we can discuss continuing coursework remotely. Likewise, if I suspect I have been exposed to the virus, I will immediately report and quarantine. During this time, we will continue coursework remotely during the assigned class meeting time and dates. I will also be offering remote, synchronous access to the class via Zoom for those who feel this would be the best option for learning during the semester.

I am aware of the fact that COVID-19 continues to impact our daily lives. Thus, if you are experiencing any hardships because of the virus, please contact me as soon as possible so that we may make any necessary arrangements contingent on your circumstances.

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.

Course Policies:

1. *Assignments:* You must complete *all* assignments to receive credit for this course—completion means meeting the word count requirements and following any prompt guidelines.
2. *Attendance:* As this is a once per week class, you are allowed only two absences (two weeks of class). A third absence will result in an automatic failure of the course. Only university-sponsored events (such as athletics, band, or religious holidays) will be excused and must be accompanied by documentation from an appropriate authority. Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with me PRIOR to the date that will be missed. If you have documented extenuating circumstances, such as illness or family emergency, please reach out to me; I will handle such situations on a case-by-case basis.
3. *Tardiness:* Three tardies (arriving more than five minutes late or leaving class early) equals one absence. I keep track of these things. For UF's official attendance policy, you can visit: https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx
4. *Classroom Behavior and Etiquette:* The classroom is a safe space. As such, behave in a respectful manner in class—listen thoughtfully and engage in any discussion with respect. If you do not, you will be asked to leave and be counted as absent. Bear in mind always that we are the product of

different backgrounds and different sets of experiences. The purpose of the workshop aspect of this course is to help each other become better poets through community.

    a. *Email communication*: Please remember to include a greeting, use complete sentences, and have an appropriate signature when emailing me or anyone else in this classroom. I try to respond to email within 24 hours during business days. Check your email regularly, as this is how I will communicate with you to send announcements, changes to the schedule, cancelled class, etc.

5. *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 any and all members of the community: https://titleix.ufl.edu/about/title-ix-rights/

6. *Paper Format & Submission*: *Paper Format & Submission:* All assignments should be typed in **Times New Roman 12 pt. font** with standard one-inch margins. **All assignments except poems should be double-spaced**. (Spacing and line length of poems, of course, will be formatted according to the poet's decisions on aesthetics and form.) All assignments must have your name, the date, and the assignment title in the header. *All* assignments must be titled (no "Untitled" poems).

    a. *Poems* are to be printed and handed to me in class. Poems should be single-spaced and aligned left (allowing for indentation and purposeful variation in form).

    b. *All other assignments* are to be submitted via Canvas.

7. *Late Papers/Assignments*: I do not accept late work. I will consider extensions only in extenuating circumstances with advance notice (at least 24 hours before the deadline).

8. *Paper Maintenance Responsibilities*. Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.

9. *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 a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions.

As specified by the current 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:
a. 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.
d. Submitting a document, assignment, or material that, in whole or in part, is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment the Student did not author.

In short, show respect to yourself, your colleagues, and me by submitting original work earnestly and honestly produced by you for all assignments.

10. 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.
11. *Students who are in distress* or who are in need of counseling or urgent help: please visit https://umatter.ufl.edu/ or call 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/
12. For information on UF Grading policies, see: https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx
13. *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 Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.
14. *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://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/Default.aspx
15. *Policy on environmental sustainability.* Whenever possible, I will use paper-sparing electronic media to distribute our course materials. Consider purchasing electronic editions of assigned texts when they are available, or used copies of print texts. If you do not elect to keep your print books, 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.)

Course Expectations:
In this course, I expect you to communicate and respond as a professional student. These expectations include but are not limited to:

- **Preparation:** reading and understanding the syllabus in full, planning and preparing to meet all due dates, asking questions about assignments before "the night before."
- **Self-initiative:** asking questions when course expectations are unclear, pre-planning if you know of life or work events that will interfere with due dates, checking the syllabus before emailing the instructor, carefully reading assignment feedback.
- **Maturity/Respect:** expecting and developing a willingness to receive constructive criticism, not taking constructive comments personally, making sure that your own comments are constructive and respectful.
- **Community:** being an active team participant, offering a safe and open-minded environment for peers, and contributing helpful, constructive, and encouraging comments on the work of others.

All of these qualities will help you be a successful student and professional colleague. When we all come to the table with energy, enthusiasm, and professionalism, our virtual classroom feels much more like an in-person workshop.

Required Texts: I highly recommend purchasing **used** copies of books to save money. These selections will be supplemented by additional poems posted on Canvas. Amazon is a good resource for discounted books, as well as Thriftbooks.com, Abe Books and Bookshop.org. You can also support local bookstores like Book Gallery West (https://www.bookgallerywest.com/) and Third House Books (https://www.thirdhousebooks.com/order-online). Keep in mind also that both Library West and the Alachua County Library System have options for curbside pick-up.

Writing Poems by Michelle Boisseau, Hadara Bar-Nadav, Robert Wallace, 8th edition
The Carrying by Ada Limón
House of Lords and Commons by Ishion Hutchinson
Postcolonial Love Poem by Natalie Diaz

Assignments (see below for Grading Rubric):

Assignment	Word count	Points available
Prompts (x10)	-	100 (10 x 10)
Critical Response Papers	750 (x4)	300 (75 x 4)
Critical Analysis	1,250	150
Workshop & Participation	-	150
Live Reading Review	750	75
Journal Submission	-	25
Chapbook	1,000	200
Total	**6,000**	**1,000**

- **Prompts and Poems:** We are here to write poetry as well as talk about it. As such, I will assign a prompt every week, which will contain guidelines for your poems. These prompts are intended to stretch your creative muscles and make you think beyond the initial instinct. A copy of your poem is to be turned in to me in class, on the due date (you will be required to print additional copies of poems for your peers when workshop begins). I will return them with my comments and feedback with a full or partial credit according to the following scale:

No Credit 0 pts.	Low Partial Credit 5 pts.	High Partial Credit 8 pts.	Full Credit 10 pts.

Drafts that receive full credit will:
  o Adhere to the assigned prompt,
  o be turned in to me (and the rest of your classmates) on time,
  o have 1-inch margins, single-spaced, and be written in 12 pt. Times New Roman,
  o be left-justified (not center- or right-, although indentation and other variations in form are allowed depending on the prompt for the week),
  o employ correct spelling and grammar,
  o be titled (no "Untitled" poems),
  o demonstrate thought and preparation.

Do not write these poems five minutes before class. I will anticipate, as a mentor once said to me, "full efforts at writing well." Late, missing, and unlabored poems will earn no credit.

- **Critical Responses:** To become a good writer of poetry, you must first be an informed and engaged reader of poetry. To that end, you will be asked to write a response paper about one poem of your choice that has been assigned in class. Your response should be a considered critique of the poem in question, paying particular attention to the poetic devices/strategies discussed in class. The response should not simply say "I liked this poem" or "The poet did a good job." Go deeper than that—we'll discuss approaches and angles to this in class. Quoting the poem is encouraged,

but quotations must not exceed 10% of the paper's word count and must be correctly cited. Papers should employ MLA format.

- **Critical Analysis**: For this assignment, you will be asked to critically analyze either:
  - a poet we have read, looking at two to three poems (including one poem not discussed in class) that you believe to be a good representation of the poet's stylistic choices,
  - a single poem (not discussed in class), focusing on poetic devices employed by the poet in the poem, or
  - a poetic device employed by more than one poet we have read throughout the course, bringing them into dialogue with each other.

- **Workshop**: Workshop is a participation-based grade. To receive full credit for workshops, you must be there and be prepared. I expect you to come to class having read each piece carefully *at least* once. Formulate a response wherein you note the piece's strengths and weaknesses, as well as provide ideas for the next draft. This can be written directly on your peer's poem or typed on a separate page. You should complete these before class begins. Please do not scribble frantically on these poems during class, right in front of the person who worked hard on the poem. You should be honest, constructive, and encouraging. *The Golden Rule of Workshop* is to critique others as you would like to be critiqued. The workshop grade of those who fail to respect their peers' thoughts, feelings, and efforts will be affected accordingly.

- **Participation**: Being prepared for this course means not only doing the reading and writing, but also participating in discussion and engaging in class. You should bring the required reading to class every day, prepared and ready to contribute to the discussion of said material. Everyone is expected to contribute during workshop.

- **Live Reading Review:** You will attend and write a short critical response to a local reading, either an MFA@FLA Reading Series event or an event at the UF Writers' Festival to be held November 4-6. Further dates and times will be provided throughout the semester.

- **Journal Submission**: Sending work to literary journals and magazines is an integral part of the writing life—after all, we want our messages heard, right? You will submit (at least) one of your revised poems for consideration to a literary magazine, forwarding me the email confirmation as evidence. We'll talk about how to do this in class!

- **Chapbook:** The final project for this course will be a chapbook, which will include at least 5 revised, "finished" poems. Your chapbook will also include a cover and title, a **400-word Artist Statement**, a **300-word reflective piece** that details your revision process, and a **300-word letter** to a current (living) poet whose work you admire. You may also include any other design/visual elements you wish, provided you create them on your own or have permission to use them.

SYLLABUS: The following schedule is subject to tweaking. I will always notify you of changes in class, via email, and/or through Canvas Announcements. Poems are to be printed and brought to class on the Wednesday they are due. Assignments submitted to Canvas are due by 11:59pm on their respective due dates. Chapters refer to *Writing Poems*.

- <mark>Assignments in yellow highlighter are due on the day of class.</mark>

- Critical Response Papers are due the Friday following class via Canvas, and are highlighted in teal.

- Deadlines for final assignments closer to the end of the course are highlighted in magenta.

Date	Readings/Classwork	Assignments Due
Week 1 (Aug 25)	▪ Course Syllabus & Introduction ▪ Supplemental Poems	▪ None
Week 2 (Sep 1)	▪ Ch. 1: Starting Out ▪ Supplemental Poems	▪ Poem #1 Due
Week 3 (Sep 8)	▪ Ch. 6: Subject Matter ▪ Limón, Section I	▪ Critical Response #1 Due (by 11:59pm, Friday, Sep. 10)
Week 4 (Sep 15)	▪ Ch. 10: Finding the Poem ▪ Limón , Section II	▪ Poem #2 Due
Week 5 (Sep 22)	▪ Ch. 7: Metaphor ▪ Ch. 2: Verse (first 2 pages only, stop at "Line" section) ▪ Limón, Section III	▪ Poem #3 Due ▪ Critical Response #2 Due (by 11:59pm, Friday, Sep. 24)
Week 6 (Sep 29)	▪ Ch. 5: The Sound (and Look) of Sense ▪ Supplemental handout on poetic forms	▪ Poem #4 Due
Week 7 (Oct 6)	▪ **Go Over Workshop Guidelines** ▪ Selections from Hutchinson	▪ Poem #5 Due (bring copies for the class) ▪ Critical Response #3 Due (by 11:59pm, Friday, Oct.8)
Week 8 (Oct 13) *Workshop Begins*	▪ Workshop (Poem #5) ▪ Selections from Hutchinson	▪ Poem #6 Due (bring copies for the class) ▪ Comments on your peers' poems for workshop
Week 9 (Oct 20)	▪ Workshop (Poem #6) ▪ Selections from Hutchinson	▪ Poem #7 Due (bring copies for the class) ▪ Comments on your peers' poems for workshop
Week 10 (Oct 27)	▪ Workshop (Poem #7) ▪ Selections from Diaz	▪ Poem #8 Due (bring copies for the class) ▪ Comments on your peers' poems for workshop ▪ Critical Response #4 Due (by 11:59pm, Fri. Oct. 29)
Week 11— Writer's Festival Weekend (Nov 3)	▪ Workshop (Poem #8) ▪ Selections from Diaz	▪ Poem #9 Due (bring copies for the class) ▪ Comments on your peers' poems for workshop

Week 12 (Nov 10)	• Workshop (Poem #9) • Selections from Diaz	• Poem #10 Due (bring copies for the class) • Comments on your peers' poems for workshop • Work on Critical Analysis!!
Week 13 (Nov 17)	• Workshop (Poem #10) • Supplemental Poems • Individual Conferences for Critical Analysis	• Revised poem for portfolio (for my eyes only—one copy) • Comments on your peers' poems for workshop • Critical Analysis Due (by 11:59pm, Fri. Nov. 19)
Week 14 (Nov 24)	**NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING**	
Week 15 (Dec 1)	• Ch. 11: Devising and Revising • Discussion about revision and final Chapbook	• Live Reading Review
Week 16 (Dec 8)	**Last day of class!** Discussion of the world of poetry today and next steps. Course evaluations.	• Chapbook • Journal Submission

Grading Scale + Rubric

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

"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.