

CRW 1301 – Beginning Poetry Writing – Section 1652, Class 12301 – Fall 2021

Instructor Name: William Brown (he/him)

Course meeting times: Wednesdays Periods 9 – 11

Office Location and Hours: Thursday 2-4pm via Zoom (these will also be held in office when I receive mine): <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/7494824222>

Course website: Canvas (<https://ufl.instructure.com/>)

Instructor Email: wbrown2@ufl.edu

Course Description:

If she were to sew, she would prick her finger with it.
If she were to bake, it would linger in the kitchen

like an odor snarled in the deepest folds of childhood.
It became her dead pet, her lost love, the baby sister
blue and dead at birth, the chill headwaters of the river

that purred and meandered and ran and ran until
it issued into her, as into a sea, and then she was its
and it was wholly hers.

--excerpt from William Matthews' "Mood Indigo"

There are many working definitions of poetry, mainly because there can never be a singular definition of poetry, neither for the self nor for the collective. In fact, many of these working definitions are seemingly at odds with one another. While William Wordsworth defines poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings," Rita Dove defines it as "language at its most distilled and most powerful." How can something be simultaneously overflowing and distilled—exuberant yet controlled? Throughout this course, we will work to come to our own definition(s) of poetry through reading, writing, workshoping, and revising poems, as well as writing about poems critically. We will also develop our vocabularies to talk about poems more effectively in terms of their forms, ideologies, functions, etc.

By the end of the semester, hopefully we will all have come to have a firmer understanding of poetry, even if that means a firmer understanding of its own elusion to being defined. We will also develop methods to discuss poems both respectfully and productively in a workshop setting, and we will grow as readers both of our own and others' poetry.

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 (hard copies preferred to e-copies, for note-taking!):

- *The Poet's Companion: A Guide to the Pleasures of Writing Poetry* by Kim Addonizio and Dorianne Laux (TPC on Syllabus)
- *Life on Mars* by Tracy K. Smith (LOM on syllabus)
- *Black Hole Factory* by Eric Smith (BHF on syllabus)
- *The Vintage Book of Contemporary American Poetry* (second edition) edited by J.D. McClatchy
- Supplemental materials (poems, essays, articles, etc.) posted on Canvas

Assignments:

Writing:

- 5 Critical Responses (1000 words each; 100 pts each): These critical essays will respond to questions about poetic devices and forms and consider how specific poems work.
- 8 Poems (includes one revision; 35 pts each): Each week you will compose a poem based on a prompt that I will provide to you. Poems will be evaluated based on seriousness of undertaking, adherence to prompt, and professionalism/polish (free of typos/grammatical errors), not on their success or failure as first drafts. You are encouraged to take risks and go where your writing leads you.
- Final Portfolio (1,000 words [of critical writing], 200 pts):
 - Revisions of 4 poems: You will revise 4 poems of your choosing, taking into account my comments, your colleagues' comments from workshop, and your own artistic aesthetics, judgment, and intuition.
 - Artist's statement (500 words): You will write an introduction based on the poetic theory and philosophy you have learned to your final portfolio that explains the scope and purpose of your poetry and provides a context for the work you present therein.
 - Revision letter (500 words): You will write a short letter to your past self, the one that composed the first drafts of your revised poems. You will meditate on the revisions that you have made and include specific examples of the changes you have made and your reasoning behind them.

Participation, etc:

- Class Participation (150 pts): You will earn class participation credit based on your preparedness and presence for active and mindful participation in Zoom workshops and designated Canvas discussions/activities.
- Submission of Work to Literary Journals (35 pts): You are required to submit **one** poem to **one** literary journal by the end of the semester. You will receive detailed information and guidance on how and where to submit.
- Poem Recitation (35 pts): One of the best strategies for both reading and writing poems is to read them aloud. Going even further, memorizing a poem helps one understand its sonic textures such as meter and pacing. You will need to choose a poem from one of our texts and recite it in class. The poem must be at least 14 lines long, and you will be evaluated based on your delivery of the poem.

Assignment	Word Count	Points
Critical Response #1	1000	100
Critical Response #2	1000	100
Critical Response #3	1000	100
Critical Response #4	1000	100
Critical Response #5	1000	100
Poem #1	N/A	35
Poem #2	N/A	35
Poem #3	N/A	35
Poem #4	N/A	35
Poem #5	N/A	35
Poem #6	N/A	35
Poem #7	N/A	35
Poem #8	N/A	35
Final Portfolio, including:		200
4 Revised Poems	N/A	
Artist's Statement	500	
Revision Letter	500	
Class Participation	N/A	150
Submission to Journal	N/A	35
Poem Recitation	N/A	35
Totals:	6000	1200

Course Policies:

1. *Assignments:* You must complete all assignments to receive credit for this course.
2. *Attendance:* Given that we meet only once a week, you are allowed **one** absence without explanation or excuse. Subsequent unexplained or unexcused absences will affect your grade. **If you have more than 2 absences, per department policy, you cannot pass the course.**

If extenuating circumstances prevent you from attending, please contact me via email as soon as you are able. Together, we will devise a plan for completing your assignments and making up missed synchronous meetings.

The above course-specific attendance policy is in keeping with the UF attendance policy, which can be found at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>:

“Students are responsible for satisfying all academic objectives as defined by the instructor. Absences count from the first class meeting.

In general, acceptable reasons for absence from or failure to participate in class include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays, and participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate. Absences from class for court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena) must be excused. Other reasons also may be approved.

Students shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the material or activities covered in their absence.

Students cannot participate in classes unless they are registered officially or approved to audit with evidence of having paid audit fees. The Office of the University Registrar provides official class rolls to instructors.

If a student does not participate in at least one of the first two class meetings of a course or laboratory in which they are registered, and they have not contacted the department to indicate their intent, the student can be dropped from the course. Students must not assume that they will be dropped, however. The department will notify students if they have been dropped from a course or laboratory.

The university recognizes the right of the individual professor to make attendance mandatory.

After due warning, professors can prohibit further attendance and subsequently assign a failing grade for excessive absences.”

3. *Tardiness*: Please try to arrive to class 5 minutes early to give yourself time to get settled, take your books out, etc. **Three late arrivals** (more than 5 minutes and without advanced notice) **will count as one absence**.
4. *Classroom Behavior*: Please give your full attention to those who are speaking, and remember that in order to be a good speaker, one must be a good listener first. Keep in mind that people in class will likely share poems that discuss subjects important to them. I ask and expect you all to be respectful of your colleagues’ diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and beliefs. However, also keep in mind that we are here to improve as writers, so be thoughtful and earnest in your critique/commentary on others’ work—critique them as you would like to be critiqued.
5. *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/policy-statement/>
6. *Paper Format & Submission*: All assignments should be typed in **12 pt font** with standard margins. (I’m not picky on which font, but keep it standard like TNR, Cambria, or something else easy to read.) All critical response paper **should be double**. Submit all assignments on Canvas as specified in each assignment’s instructions.

7. *Late Papers/Assignments*: Acceptance of late papers/assignments will be at my discretion and dependent on circumstances. **Here, as with absences, advance notice is highly preferred.**
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. **If you use previously written work as inspiration for a poem, notify me before submission. Turn-It-In will be enabled 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 contact <https://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/>

If you are experiencing unmanageable stress or other emotional or physical distress during the semester, please **ask me for help finding resources**. In addition to teaching you to read and write poetry, I am committed to helping you succeed in a rigorous academic environment and to introducing you to the myriad resources for mental, physical, and emotional help and for time- and stress-management available at UF.

12. *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/>

13. For information on UF Grading policies, see:
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>
14. *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. To request a grade appeal form, email Ms. Blount at cblount@ufl.edu. Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.
15. *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>

Covid Statement

In response to COVID-19, the following practices 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 at no cost and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit this link for details on where to get your shot, including options that do not require an appointment: <https://coronavirus.uflhealth.org/vaccinations/vaccine-availability/>. Students who receive the first dose of the vaccine somewhere off-campus and/or outside of Gainesville can still receive their second dose on campus.**
- **You are expected to wear approved face coverings at all times during class and within buildings even if you are vaccinated. Please continue to follow healthy habits, including best practices like frequent hand washing. Following these practices is our responsibility as Gators.**
 - **Sanitizing supplies are available in the classroom if you wish to wipe down your desks prior to sitting down and at the end of the class.**
 - **Hand sanitizing stations will be located in every classroom.**
- **If you sick, stay home and self-quarantine. Please visit the UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website about next steps, retake the questionnaire and schedule your test for no sooner than 24 hours after your symptoms began. 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 (or email covid@shcc.ufl.edu) to be evaluated for testing and to receive further instructions about returning to campus. UF Health Screen, Test & Protect offers guidance when you are sick, have been exposed to someone who has tested positive or have tested positive yourself. Visit the [UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website](#) for more information.**
 - **Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work.**
 - **If you are withheld from campus by the Department of Health through Screen, Test & Protect you are not permitted to use any on campus facilities. Students attempting to attend campus activities when withheld from campus will be referred to the Dean of Students Office.**
- **Continue to regularly visit coronavirus.UFHealth.org and coronavirus.ufl.edu for up-to-date information about COVID-19 and vaccination.**

- **Because our class is so long, I will give us at least one break each class so that we may step outside for fresh air, to drink some water, to use the restroom, etc. Because I'm offering these breaks, I do ask that we try to diligently adhere to the mask expectations.**

Grading Scale:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
93-100	90-92	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	67-69	63-66	60-62	0-59
4.0	3.67	3.33	3.0	2.67	2.33	2.0	1.67	1.33	1.0	0.67	0.00

Grading Rubrics:

Above all else, I expect you to seriously undertake any work required for this course and to always demonstrate a sincere and earnest attempt to produce your best effort. I will make my specific expectations for individual assignments clear to you when the assignments are introduced.

For critical responses and other expository writing, I will provide detailed grading rubrics on Canvas that are tailored to each specific assignment. All poems except your final portfolio will be evaluated based on three criteria: seriousness of undertaking, adherence to prompt, and professionalism/polish (i.e. free of typos, grammatical errors, etc).

Class participation points will be awarded each week based on your preparation for and engagement with the course material, including both assigned readings and your colleagues' workshop submissions.

Please ask me for clarification on any assignment instructions, criteria for evaluation, or course policies at any time during the semester.

Syllabus and Course Schedule Beginning on Next Page:

Date	Week	Wednesday Meeting & Reading (complete reading before class)
8/25/21	Week One: Introduction	Reading: N/A Class: Syllabus & Selected Poems
9/1/21	Week Two: Content What Are Poems About?	Reading: TPC Introduction and Part 1 Class: Reading Discussion & Close Readings of Anthology/Packet Poems
9/8/21	Week Three: Building Blocks of Poetry What Separates Poetry from Prose	Reading: TPC Images; Simile and Metaphor; The Music of the Line Class: Reading Discussion & Close Readings of Anthology/Packet Poems
9/15/21	Week Four: Style, Originality, and Defamiliarization	Reading: TPC Voice and Style; Stop Making Sense Class: Reading Discussion & Close Readings of Anthology/Packet Poems HW: Critical Essay 1 Due; Poem 1
9/22/21	Week Five: Poetry's Architecture	Reading: TPC Meter, Rhyme, and Form; Repetition, Rhythm, and Blues; More Repetition: Villanelle, Pantoum, Sestina Class: Reading Discussion & Close Readings of Anthology/Packet Poems HW: Poem 2
9/29/21	Week Six: Revision and Polishing	Reading: TPC A Grammatical Excursion; The Energy of Revision Class: Reading Discussion & Close Readings of Anthology/Packet Poems HW: Poem 3
10/6/21	Week Seven: Workshop	Reading: Selections from <i>BHF</i> Class: Reading Discussion & Workshop HW: Critical Essay 2 Due; Poem 4
10/13/21	Week Eight: Workshop	Reading: Selections from <i>BHF</i> Class: Reading Discussion & Workshop HW: Poem 5
10/20/21	Week Nine: Workshop	Reading: Selections from <i>BHF</i> Class: Reading Discussion & Workshop HW: Poem 6
10/27/21	Week Ten: Workshop	Reading: Selections from <i>LOM</i> Class: Reading Discussion & Workshop HW: Critical Essay 3 Due; Poem 7
11/3/21	Week Eleven: Workshop	Reading: Selections from <i>LOM</i> Class: Reading Discussion & Workshop HW: Poem 8
11/10/21	Week Twelve: Workshop	Reading: Selections from <i>LOM</i> Class: Reading Discussion & Workshop
11/17/21	Revising and Publishing	Reading: TPC Writing Life Section plus supplemental sources HW: Critical Essay 4 Due
11/24/21	Thanksgiving! (plus my sister's birthday)	
12/1/21	Week Thirteen: Readings and Recitations	Reading: Poem you choose to recite

		Class: Bring 1 Revised Poem to Read Aloud and Recite a Poem from one of our texts
12/8/21	Week Fourteen: Wrapping Up	HW: Critical Essay 5 Due