CRW 1301 – Beginning Poetry Writing (Section 1652, Class #12467), Fall 2020

Instructor Name: Elizabeth Agans
Course meeting times: M – Period 9-11 (4:05 PM-7:05 PM)
Session Breakdown: 4:05 PM-5:35 PM synchronous – Live via Zoom; 5:35 PM-7:05 PM asynchronous work (ie: Discussion Board posts on Canvas, work on Critical Responses)
Office Location and Hours: TUR 4325 M – Period 8 (3:00 PM – 3:50 PM) – **Online** via Zoom; additional meetings by appointment
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: In light of the continuing impacts of COVID-19, this course will be offered entirely through online course sessions. We will meet synchronously on Zoom every Monday, from 4:05PM-5:35PM. Outside of class time, you are responsible for completing readings, discussion board posts, responses, and your own creative work asynchronously. Our classes will rely heavily on discussion which, I hope, will help to bridge some of the gap between our computer screens. Please be sure to download Zoom on your personal computer before the start of the class and familiarize yourself with how it works. I will send instructions to the class via email about how to join our Zoom meetings. If you as an individual have any COVID-related hardships which may obstruct your performance in this class, please communicate with me as well as making use of all UF resources available to you. We can then assemble a plan to help you complete the class and fulfill all requirements in the way most beneficial for you.

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.
2. *Attendance:* Attendance at live Zoom meetings is mandatory. 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. 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/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/
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/policy-statement/

6. *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.) **Submit all poems**, whether to me or for workshop, **on Canvas.** Submit all other assignments (critical responses, final portfolio, etc.) on Canvas as specified in each assignment's instructions.

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 (http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honorcode/) 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, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/), 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 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/

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.* 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
When My Brother Was an Aztec by Natalie Diaz
Life on Mars by Tracy K. Smith

Assignments (see below for Grading Rubric):

Assignment	Word count	Points available
Prompts (x10)	-	10 (x 10)
Discussion Board Posts	150 (x5)	20 (x5)
Response papers	750 (x4)	70 (x4)
Critical Analysis	1,000	150
Workshop & Participation	-	100
Recitation	250	50
Journal Submission	-	20
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 on Canvas (you will be required to post the poems to a discussion board for your peers as well 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:
  - Adhere to the assigned prompt,
  - be turned in to me (and the rest of your classmates) on time,
  - have 1-inch margins, single-spaced, and be written in 12 pt. Times New Roman,
  - be left-justified (not center- or right-, although indentation and other variations in form are allowed depending on the prompt for the week),
  - employ correct spelling and grammar,
  - be titled (no "Untitled" poems),
  - 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.

- **Discussion Board Posts:** You will be expected to post to themed discussion boards five times throughout the semester. Each board will have a prompt related to concepts we've discussed that week. Each entry must be at least 150 words long and written formally, including proper grammar, spelling, and audience consideration. You will also respond to at least two of your peers' posts per cycle.

- **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. You should make notes on the poem itself, either via Word's Review/comments feature or typed up as a separate document. You must make *at least* four comments: two outlining devices that worked throughout the poem and two in critique, as well as annotated suggestions and comments throughout. Complete these before class begins and send them to your peers & to me before the end of the day.

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 have the required reading material with you during all live class meetings and participate in all asynchronous activities/exercises as well. Be prepared and ready to contribute to the discussion of each day's material. Everyone is expected to contribute during workshop.

- **Recitation**: You will recite from memory a poem of your choice in a video recording towards the end of the semester. This is a great way to *tune your ear* to the variations of meter, rhythm, rhyme, and the other aural characteristics of poetry. The poem you recite is up to you (i.e. it can be the work of ANY poet), as long as it is at least 14 lines and approved by me before the recitation. In addition, you will be required to prepare a short introductory passage (250 words) about the poet, the poem, and why you chose the poem with reference to the poem's qualities.

- **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 or via email. Assignments are due on Monday by 4:00pm on Canvas (before class), unless otherwise specified.

Date	Readings/Classwork	Assignments Due
Week 1 (Aug 31)	▪ Course Syllabus & Introduction ▪ In class: Selections from *Writing Poems* Chapter 1—Starting Out ▪ Supplemental poems	▪ Introduce Yourself (Discussion Board) by 11:59 pm
Week 2 (Sep 7)	**LABOR DAY / NO CLASS**	
Week 3 (Sep 14)	▪ *Writing Poems* Chapter 6—Subject Matter ▪ *Writing Poems* Chapter 10—Finding the Poem ▪ Supplemental poems	▪ Poem #1 Due ▪ Discussion Board #1 by 11:59pm
Week 4 (Sep 21)	▪ *Writing Poems* Chapter 7—Metaphor ▪ *Writing Poems* Chapter 2—Verse (first two pages only, stop at "Line" Section)	▪ Poem #2 Due ▪ Critical Response #1 Due
Week 5 (Sep 28)	▪ *Writing Poems* Chapter 5—The Sound (And Look) of Sense ▪ Supplemental poems	▪ Poem #3 Due ▪ Discussion Board #2 by ▪ 11:59pm
Week 6 (Oct 5)	▪ Supplemental handout on poetic forms	▪ Poem #4 Due ▪ Critical Response #2 Due
Week 7 (Oct 12)	▪ *When My Brother Was an Aztec*, section I ▪ Go Over Workshop Guidelines	▪ Poem #5 Due ▪ Discussion Board #3 by 11:59 pm
Week 8 (Oct 19) *Workshop Begins*	▪ *When My Brother Was an Aztec*, section II ▪ Workshop (Poem #5)	▪ Poem #6 Due ▪ Comments on your peers' poems for workshop ▪ Critical Response #3 Due
Week 9 (Oct 26)	▪ *When My Brother Was an Aztec*, section III ▪ Workshop (Poem #6)	▪ Poem #7 Due ▪ Comments on your peers' poems for workshop ▪ Discussion Board #4 by 11:59 pm
Week 10 (Nov 2)	▪ Selections from *Life on Mars* ▪ Workshop (Poem #7)	▪ Poem #8 Due ▪ Comments on your peers' poems for workshop ▪ Critical Response #4 Due
Week 11 (Nov 9)	▪ Selections from *Life on Mars* ▪ Workshop (Poem #8)	▪ Poem #9 Due ▪ Comments on your peer's poems for workshop ▪ Discussion Board #5 by 11:59 pm

Week 12 (Nov 16)	▪ Supplemental poems by contemporary poets ▪ Workshop (Poem #9)	▪ Poem #10 Due ▪ Comments on your peer's poems for workshop ▪ Work on Critical Analysis!!
Week 13 (Nov 23)	▪ Individual Conferences about Critical Analysis ▪ Workshop (Poem #10)	▪ Revised poem for portfolio (for my eyes only) ▪ Comments on your peers' poems for workshop ▪ Critical Analysis (by Wed., 11:59pm)
Week 14 (Nov 30)	▪ Discussion about revision and final Chapbook	▪ Recitation
Week 15 (Dec 7)	**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.