

# CRW 1301: Beginning Poetry Writing Fall 2016

**Instructor:** Nicholas Pierce  
**Section:** 1652, Monday 6-8, MAT 0005  
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**Office Hours:** TBD

## Required Texts

*To Read a Poem* by Donald Hall  
*The Open Door* by Don Share and Christian Wiman  
*Every Riven Thing* by Christian Wiman  
*Elements of Style* (4th ed.) by William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White

## Course Description

This course aims to familiarize you with the reading and writing of poetry. It will provide a by-no-means comprehensive overview, concentrating instead on developments in the field since Modernism, with brief forays into the more distant past. You will be exposed to a variety of poetic styles, in the hope that you will find one that speaks to your interests.

The first half of the semester is dedicated to the fundamentals. From Donald Hall's *To Read a Poem*, you will learn about such concepts as image, metaphor, and tone. These concepts will inform our in-class discussions of poems in the anthology *The Open Door*, which you will read in tandem with Hall's textbook. Workshop begins in week eight, at which point our focus will shift primarily to your writing.

Assignments will include short papers throughout the semester, along with a book review of a contemporary poetry collection. We will cap off the class with an in-depth look at Christian Wiman's *Every Riven Thing*, to give you a sense of how single-author volumes differ from anthologies, and so that you can see how Wiman, who edited *The Open Door*, was influenced by the poets featured in it.

This course fulfills the University's 6000 word requirement *in addition to* the poems you'll write throughout the semester.

This is a General Education course providing student learning outcomes listed in the Undergraduate Catalog. For more information, see: <http://bit.ly/2acIUIW>.

## List of Assignments

**Close Readings:** 5 at 800 words each (4000 words total), 50 points each (250 total)

**Poem Drafts:** 10 poems at 20 points each (200 points total)

**Memorized Poem:** 50 points

**Book Review:** 1500 words, 150 points

**Portfolio:** 500 word introduction with 5 revised poems, 200 points

**Class Participation:** 100 points

(Note: Attendance of the Writers Festival readings will account for the remaining 50 points of your grade. Date TBA.)

*Total point value* = 1000 points

*Total word count (minimum)* = 6000 words

## Assignment Guidelines

**Close Readings** (800 words each)

Each paper will critically engage with a poem, proposing a thesis on a specific element in the poem (e.g. use of diction, image, symbol, etc). Although these assignments are not full-fledged research papers, your argument still requires supporting examples from the text as well as comparisons to at least one other poet. This is designed as an exercise in both developing your argumentation skills as a critic and exploring your own poetic interests and curiosities.

### Poems

You will write a total of ten poems. The first two will be turned in only to me. Starting with Poem 3, we will workshop them in class.

#### Requirements

1. To receive credit, poems must:
  - a. be single spaced with 1" margins
  - b. be left-justified (not center- or right-, although indentation and other variations in form are allowed)
  - c. be written in Times New Roman font, size 12
  - d. have a title, written in bold
  - e. have your name and the assignment number at the top left of the page
2. Poems must respond to the assignment given.
3. Poems must be written in complete sentences (if you eliminated the line breaks, the text would read **coherently and be grammatically correct**).
  - a. If you feel unsure about your skill at writing a complete and grammatically correct sentences, I recommend referring to the *Elements of Style* text.

Workshop Procedure: Email me your poem as a.doc or .docx attachment before class on the date that it is due. I will read every poem and select a portion of them to be

workshopped the following week. Each student will have his/her poems workshopped throughout the semester. Please **PRINT OUT** all poems to be workshopped, read each carefully (at least two times), and mark up the copies with feedback. Prepare at least TWO POSITIVE and TWO CRITICAL comments for each poem, and be prepared to share them during workshop. Bring the copies to class on the day of workshop. At the end of class, you will return the poems to the poets who wrote them.

### **Memorized Poem**

You will commit a poem of at least 14 (full) lines to memory, then recite it in front of the class on 7 November 2016. This is required to pass the course.

### **Book Review (1500 words)**

You will find and read a full-length book of poems by a single poet from *The Open Door* and write a review of the work in 1500 words. For this assignment, we will practice not only reading poems closely, but also engaging our own critical opinions and examining the way poems work together to form a complete volume.

### **Portfolio (500 words)**

You will choose five poems from your work during the semester and revise them based on comments received in class. In a 500-word introduction to these poems, you will explain your thought process during revision, why you made the choices you did, and how you grew as a poet throughout the semester. One individual conference is required before the due date.

### **Participation**

There will be quizzes and graded in-class activities, neither of which can be made up in the case of absence. In order to get the most out of this course, you must speak up in discussions and workshops. I recognize that active listening is also a participation skill and will not punish you for shyness, but I will speak to you individually if I feel that you are not engaging with the material and with your peers.

### **Grading Scale**

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

Grade	Essays	Poems
A	<p>An “A” paper responds to the assignment prompt in full. It presents an original, specific, and clearly worded argument supported by sufficient evidence from authoritative sources. Writing style is engaging, clear, and concise, and the paper employs a logical organization. It is free from mechanical or formatting errors and cites sources using the proper citation format.</p>	<p>An “A” poem responds to the assignment prompt in full. It uses vivid and carefully considered language and follows an original and cohesive vision. It employs poetic techniques discussed in class to a constructive purpose. Its sentences make complete grammatical sense and it is free from mechanical or formatting errors.</p>
B	<p>A “B” paper responds to the assignment prompt. It presents an original argument, but ideas may need further development or clearer articulation. The argument is supported by evidence. Writing style is generally clear and organization is logical, but there is room for improvement. There are very few mechanical errors and sources are cited properly.</p>	<p>A “B” poem responds to the assignment prompt. It presents a unique vision, but ideas may need further development. It uses poetic techniques but could be doing more to bring craft and drama to the poem. Language used is effective but may need some refining. There are very few mechanical errors.</p>
C	<p>A “C” paper may not fully respond to the prompt. Argument is overly broad or in need of clarification and development. Some evidence is used to support the argument, but claims are not sufficiently defended. Writing style lacks clarity and organization is problematic. Several mechanical errors or incorrect citations.</p>	<p>A “C” poem may not fully respond to the prompt. Vision is disjointed or overly clichéd. Poetic techniques are not used to their fullest potential. Language seems hastily chosen or unoriginal. There are several mechanical errors.</p>

D	A “D” paper does not fully respond to the assignment prompt. Argument is underdeveloped or nonexistent. Little or no evidence is used to support claims. Writing style and organization are unclear. Many mechanical errors or incorrect citations.	A “D” poem does not fully respond to the assignment prompt. Poem seems hastily written with little overall vision to hold it together, unoriginal word choices, and many mechanical errors. Poetic techniques are missing or misused.
E	An “E” paper fails to respond to the assignment prompt (including papers that do not meet the minimum word requirement). Papers that are late or plagiarized will also receive an “E.”	An “E” poem fails to respond to the assignment prompt. Poems that are late or plagiarized will also receive an “E.”

### **Course Policies and Procedures**

#### **Attendance and Tardiness**

You are allowed two unexcused absences. A third absence will lower your grade by an entire letter. If you accumulate four unexcused absences, you will fail the course. An absence will count as excused only if a) the student is ill and can provide a doctor’s note, or b) the student is participating in a university-sponsored event (athletics, theater, music, field trip, religious holidays) and provides documentation from an appropriate authority (i.e. faculty member). Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with me PRIOR to the date that will be missed. Lateness and leaving class early also require a legitimate excuse; otherwise, they will negatively impact your grade.

(Note: If you are absent it is still your responsibility to make yourself aware of all due dates and to submit the next week’s assignments on time.)

Statement on Attendance and Make-up Work: <http://bit.ly/1SKNa3L>

#### **Submission Requirements**

I do not accept late work. Failure of technology is not an excuse. Students are expected to factor in time for proofreading, revising, and printing/electronic submission. Assignments must be submitted by the correct time on the day assigned and in the specified format.

Mode of Submission: All poems will be submitted as MS Word (.doc or .docx) documents to my email. All papers will be handed in in class. Final drafts should be polished and presented in a professional manner. All papers and poems must be in 12-point Times New Roman font. Poems should be single-spaced and include your name,

the date, and the assignment number. Papers must be double-spaced with 1-inch margins. Please use correct MLA formatting and citation style for critical writing.

### **Paper Maintenance Responsibilities**

Please do not throw away your assignments. You are responsible for maintaining duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course and retaining all returned, graded work until the semester is over. Should the need arise for a resubmission of papers or a review of graded papers, it is your responsibility to have and to make available this material. I recommend keeping a three-ring binder or expanding folder to organize handouts and workshop poems.

### **Conferences**

I encourage that you make an appointment with me if you have questions or concerns about the work or your progress in the course. Conferences on assignments can improve the quality of your final draft.

### **Extra Help: Writing Studio**

Please take advantage of tutoring at Tigert. These tutors are teachers themselves, some of whom teach creative writing, all of whom have helpful things to say. Make appointments *well in advance* of due dates here: <http://bit.ly/2alcDov>

### **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. Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

### **Statement of Composition**

This course can satisfy the UF General Education requirement for Composition. For more information, see: <http://bit.ly/2aANxRc>

### **Statement of Writing requirement (WR)**

This course can provide 6000 words toward fulfillment of the UF requirement for writing. For more information, see: <http://bit.ly/2aHuF0G>

### **Student Disability Accommodations**

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information, see: <http://bit.ly/2aFuDtK>

### **Harassment**

UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://bit.ly/2acNhni>

## **Academic Honesty**

All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. If you plagiarize work, you'll fail the assignment and/or the course. This policy includes plagiarism in part or in whole—that is, anything from ripping off a section of a paper to an entire paper. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <http://bit.ly/2aIBuU>

## **Schedule**

(Note: This schedule is subject to change. Unless otherwise indicated, assignments and readings are due on the day they are listed, not the week after.)

### **Week 1:** August 22

Introduction to CRW 1301

### **Week 2:** August 29

*To Read a Poem* ch. 1, *The Open Door* pg. 1-21  
Due: Close Reading 1

### **Week 3:** September 5, Holiday (no class)

### **Week 4:** September 12

*To Read a Poem* ch. 2 & 3, *The Open Door* pg. 22-45  
Due: Close Reading 2

### **Week 5:** September 19

*To Read a Poem* ch. 4 & 5, *The Open Door* pg. 45-69  
Due: Poem 1

### **Week 6:** September 26

*To Read a Poem* ch. 6 & 7, *The Open Door* pg. 70-90  
Due: Close Reading 3, Poem 2

### **Week 7:** October 3

*To Read a Poem* ch. 8, *The Open Door* pg. 91-114  
Due: Poem 3

**Week 8:** October 10

Workshop of Poem 3, *To Read a Poem* ch. 9 & 10  
Due: Close Reading 4, Poem 4

**Week 9:** October 17

Workshop of Poem 4, *The Open Door* pg. 115-140  
Due: Poem 5

**Week 10:** October 24

Workshop of Poem 5, *The Open Door* pg. 141-163  
Due: Close Reading 5, Poem 6

**Week 11:** October 31

Workshop of Poem 6, *The Open Door* pg. 164-184  
Due: Poem 7

**Week 12:** November 7

Workshop of Poem 7  
Due: Recitation (in class), Poem 8

**Week 13:** November 14

Workshop of Poem 8, *Every Riven Thing* Part 1  
Due: Poem 9

**Week 14:** November 21

Workshop of Poem 9, *Every Riven Thing* Part 2  
Due: Book Review, Poem 10

**Week 15:** November 28

Workshop of Poem 10, *Every Riven Thing* Part 3

**Week 16:** December 5

Due: Poetry Portfolio (Introduction + 5 Revisions), Film Screening (film TBD)