

CRW 1301: Writing Poetry
 [Section 1653]
 [Thursday, 4-7 PM / MAT 0003]

Instructor: Jonathan Wolf (he/him)
 Email: jonathanwolf@ufl.edu
 Office Hours: Thursdays, 2:30-3:30, Turlington 4307

Great poems clothe beautiful thought in equally beautiful language—language that is balanced, striking, and sonically *alive*. Our goal in writing poetry is not merely to communicate an idea, experience, or feeling—but also to show the power and the music of ordinary words. Using books from five contemporary poets, all published within the last fifty years (three within the last ten), we'll learn to read and analyze poetry, stealing whatever we can along the way. The core of this class will be Workshop—a space devoted to the discussion of your own original poems. As all good writers begin as excellent readers, before we get to writing poems, we'll take a few weeks to read them carefully and develop a vocabulary with which we can meaningfully discuss them.

Required Texts

Used copies are cheap online (try bookfinder.com). I will provide all additional readings as PDFs.

Amy Clampitt, <i>Westward</i>	(ISBN 10: 0679728678)
Averill Curdy, <i>Song and Error</i>	(ISBN 10: 0374534322)
Ishion Hutchinson, <i>House of Lords and Commons</i>	(ISBN 10: 0374173028)
Lawrence Joseph, <i>A Certain Clarity</i>	(ISBN 10: 0374261121)
Alice Oswald, <i>Falling Awake</i>	(ISBN 10: 0393285286)

Assignments Overview

Poems

This is what we're here for! Your poems should take more time, or at least more thought, than any other assignments. Each week I'll give you a prompt; at first, these will be very specific, but as the semester progresses and you become more accomplished poets, you'll have more freedom. You will submit ten poems for workshop; poems are submitted one week before they are workshopped. The first is due in week five (September 19), after which you'll submit one every week until the end of the semester. **Submitting your poem means bringing printed copies for the whole class in addition to posting it on Canvas.**

I will grade your poems based on effort, timeliness, and completion of the prompt. Poems are individually worth 25 points; collectively, they make up the largest portion of your grade. Failure to submit a poem will result in a score of 0/25 and a five-point deduction from your participation grade (which, together, would lower your overall grade in the course by 3%).

Eleven Rules for Poems in 1301:

1. Put your name and the poem number at the top of the page.
2. Title your poems! No “Untitled” or “Poem.”
3. 12-point font (TNR or Garamond, nothing fancy), single-spaced and left-justified.
4. Don’t write a poem about how you’re having a hard time writing a poem.
5. Don’t write a poem about a dream you had.
6. Poems must be grammatical—no sentence fragments unless allowed by the prompt.
7. Avoid anything, including profanity, done for shock value.
8. Avoid cliché. If you’ve heard a phrase before, probably don’t use it!
9. Avoid abstraction. If it’s difficult to visualize, probably don’t use it!
10. Avoid archaic words and sentence structures. Don’t try to make it sound like Shakespeare—no “thy,” etc. Our language has evolved in the 408 years since he died.
11. Poems shouldn’t end-rhyme unless the prompt says otherwise.

Workshop Notes

I expect you to mark up your classmates’ poems with suggestions, observations, and questions. This means (1) giving line notes, comments specific to particular bits of the poem (noting, for instance, a point at which you got confused, a vague abstraction, a cliché, a particularly beautiful image, etc.), and (2) writing a shortish (2-5 sentences) end-comment giving your overall thoughts on the poem. **Everyone gets feedback from everyone else.** Notes are due in workshop and are given to the poem’s author.

Open Letters

These are letters written to your classmates. Topics will vary by assignment, but these should be at least 500 words long, with casual tone and, as always, proper grammar and punctuation. Open letters will be exchanged in class on the day they are due (*and* submitted to Canvas), and will serve as the basis for small-group and class-wide discussions.

Close Readings

For each book we read as a class, you’ll pick one poem to analyze in 500 words. Imagine you’re an engineer or future archaeologist, examining some unearthed mechanical object. How does it work? What might it have been built for? Where does its motion come from; how does it travel? Discuss the author’s stylistic and formal choices, and provide an interpretation of not just the poem’s *meaning*, but an analysis of how it is constructed. In other words, tell me *how* it generates meaning, not just *what* it means. **Every week, one of you will present your reading of a poem to the class.**

Essays

Topics may vary; I will offer a few different prompts, and if there’s anything specific that you’re aching to write about, I encourage you to propose your own prompt. The idea here is not to churn

out a formulaic five paragraphs like you have to do for the ACT—I want you to write in a spirit of earnest, questioning exploration. The tone should be formal (no second-person, etc.), and the ideas should be organized and clearly articulated. As always, and here in particular, you need to write grammatically.

Portfolio

This is the “final.” You’ll pick five of your ten poems to substantively revise, and turn in your revisions alongside copies of the originals, along with a 200-400-word artist’s statement clarifying your intentions and aspirations for the poems.

Extra Credit

For up to 20 points of extra credit, you can memorize and recite a poem with a minimum of 14 lines (where lines are at least eight syllables). One point of EC per line, capped at 20.

Points Distribution

If you (1) come to class, (2) participate, (3) do all the readings, and (4) thoughtfully complete all assignments, you can expect an “A.” On all assignments, students are graded individually and holistically. If, for instance, English is your second language, or you have less experience with the rules of English grammar, I may grade your writing mechanics with an eye to improvement rather than technical precision.

Assignment	Minimum Word Count	Points
Poems (x10)	N/A	25 (x10)
Workshop Notes and Participation (x10)	N/A	10 (x10)
Open Letters (x2)	500	50 (x2)
Close Readings (x5)	500	50 (x5)
Essays (x2)	1,250	100 (x2)
Portfolio	N/A	100
Totals:	6,000	1,000

Course Policies

1. No electronics. Take notes by hand; don’t use your phone. If this restriction poses an accessibility issue for you, let me know and we can make arrangements. Otherwise, no laptops, no eBooks.
2. Participation is key, both to your grade and to the success of our class. This means you should come ready to share your thoughts on readings, be attentive during lectures, and provide considerate feedback on one another’s poetry.

3. All submitted work must be your own. If you plagiarize your work or use AI to compose it, you will not receive a good grade. (And yes, I can tell if a poem comes from ChatGPT.) If you turn in AI-written or AI-assisted work, your grade is immediately capped at a C (75%). If you do it a second time, your grade is capped at an F (50%).
4. You must attend class. We're a small(ish) group, and we meet only once a week – if you aren't here, the rest of us will suffer! You get one free unexcused absence, no questions asked – any additional unexcused absences result in a 6.25% (1/16) deduction to your final grade per absence (so, one additional unexcused absence brings you from a low A- to a B, etc.).
5. Late work is not accepted – especially if it's a poem for workshop, notes on a classmate's poem, or an Open Letter. These need to be turned in for the class to run smoothly. If you are facing an emergency and need more time for an assignment, let me know.
6. Be kind. Sharing poetry with others is an intimate thing. Be conscious of this fact, and conduct yourself with sensitivity and tact. Criticism is the point of workshop (no suggestions, nothing accomplished), but it should be *specific* and *constructive*. Try to mention a strength of the poem before you say anything else.

Schedule

Date	Agenda	Homework
Week 1 Aug. 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions / How to Read Poetry • Basic Tools of Poetry (in-class reading) 	
Week 2 Aug. 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poetic Form • Exchange OLs • Discuss Handout #1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OL #1 Due • Read Handout #1
Week 3 Sep. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Images and Logic • Discuss Oswald 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CR #1 Due • Read Oswald
Week 4 Sep. 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metaphor and Simile • Discuss Oswald 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Oswald
Week 5 Sep. 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sounding Good: Kinds of Rhyme • Discuss Joseph 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Poem 1 • Read Joseph
Week 6 Sep. 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Joseph • Workshop #1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Poem 2 • CR #2 Due • Read Joseph
Week 7 Oct. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Curdy • Workshop #2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Poem 3 • Read Curdy
Week 8 Oct. 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Curdy • Workshop #3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Poem 4 • CR #3 Due • Read Curdy
Week 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Hutchinson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Poem 5

Oct. 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop #4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay #1 Due • Read Hutchinson
Week 10 Oct. 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Hutchinson • Workshop #5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Poem 6 • CR #4 Due • Read Hutchinson
Week 11 Oct. 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Clampitt • Workshop #6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Poem 7 • Read Clampitt
Week 12 Nov. 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Clampitt • Workshop #7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Poem 8 • CR #5 Due • Read Clampitt
Week 13 Nov. 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision 1 • Workshop #8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Poem 9
Week 14 Nov. 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision 2 • Workshop #9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Poem 10 • OL #2 Due
Week 15 Nov. 28	NO CLASS - Thanksgiving Break!	
Week 16 Dec. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop #10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay #2 Due

Your final Portfolio is due on December 12, or whenever we decide is a better date. Note that there are no assigned readings for the last three classes: this is so we have room to spend an extra week discussing any authors you seem to particularly enjoy.

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
F	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 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 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/>