

**CRW 1301 – Beginning Poetry Writing** (Section #1653, Class #12302), Fall 2021

**Instructor name:** William Carpenter

**Course meeting time and location:** Thursday, Periods 9-11 (4:05-7:05) in Matherly 0013

**Office location and hours:** Held via Zoom at <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/99418272387> until further notice, Tuesdays from 1:50-3:50 p.m., or by appointment

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

**Instructor email:** [carpenterwilliam@ufl.edu](mailto:carpenterwilliam@ufl.edu)

**Why we're here and what we'll do:** As you may have guessed, we'll be reading, writing, discussing, and responding to poetry. But poetry is a slippery substance—it can be hard to say what poetry is or isn't, and many of us (myself, from time to time, included) struggle to figure out why we bother with it, at all. At their best, poems seem to thrill us, frustrate us, relax us, or confound us, like so many cars. Our chief undertaking, then, will be to work as fledging auto-mechanics; we'll dirty our hands figuring out what makes poems tick, rev, or sputter. We'll also learn how to talk shop with one another, and begin experimenting with our own poetic creations.

This course will unfold in two halves. In the first, we'll get comfortable with some of the conventions, traditions, and techniques poets use to their advantage, or subvert in impressive fashion. In the second, we'll begin exploring our own poetic sensibilities by crafting and respectfully critiquing poems for workshop, immersing ourselves in the *praxis* of poetry as we draft and revise poems, and build, engage with, and contribute to a community of poets.

**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 are preferred over e-books, and 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 are Thriftbooks.com, Abe Books, and Bookshop.org. You may also choose to 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.

- *An Introduction to Poetry* by X.J. Kennedy and Dana Gioia, 11<sup>th</sup> edition
- *Bright Dead Things* by Ada Limón
- *Lighthouse* by Terrance Hayes
- *Pitch* by Todd Boss
- Supplemental poems posted on Canvas

**Assignments:**

Assignment	Word Count	Points Available
Close Readings	400 (x4)	35 (x4)
Close Reading Responses	200 (x4)	15 (x4)
Critical Responses	550 (x2)	50 (x2)
Critical Essay	1,100	150
Practice Annotation	-	10
Poem Drafts	-	20 (x8)
Final Portfolio	1,200	200
Participation	-	150
Poem Recitation	200	20
Literary Magazine Submission	-	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>6000</b>	<b>1000</b>

**Writing:**

- **4 Close Readings (400 words each):** These assignments will require you to examine the language and construction of a poem carefully and deliberately. **The aim is not mere summary;** instead, you should advance an argument—about what a poem does and how/why it does it—by carefully explicating the movements and possibilities you notice. You’ll choose one poem that interests you from those we’ve read during the week your Close Reading is due, and then select **one to six lines** of that poem to examine in your Close Reading. You may, and often should, draw on the context offered by the entire poem when crafting your reading, but it’s important that you narrow your focus to only a few lines—good poems will give you plenty to talk about, even in such a small space. You’ll upload your completed assignments to the appropriate Canvas discussion board.
- **4 Close Reading Responses (200 words each):** For these assignments, each of you will reply to one other student’s close reading via the Canvas discussion board. The goal of these assignments is to allow exploration of poems’ tensions, complexities, and shades of meaning. To this end, you’ll endeavor to adapt, expand, specify, or even challenge your classmates’ close readings in a meaningful and respectful way. **\*Please be sure to paste the full text of the close**

**reading to which you're responding at the top of your reply, in quotation marks—this will make my life a bit easier.\***

- **3 Critical Analyses (2 550-word responses, 1 1,100-word essay):** Each Critical Analysis will give you space to explore the poetry collection we read the week the analysis is due. While you'll still employ your close-reading abilities, Critical Analyses should attend to and critique the ways in which poems across a collection interact, or the ways in which a given technique, formal element, motif, symbol, etc. manifests in and affects the collection. In short, you'll use close analysis of poems and parts of poems to say something broader about the collection at hand (your analysis should amount to something much more rigorous than "I really like this book," or "This book flows nicely"). In these analyses, you must use evidence from the text to support your arguments, but quotations should not exceed 10% of a paper's total word count. It will be impossible, of course, for you to discuss a collection's every poem in your response—it wouldn't likely be useful to attempt such a feat, either. On the contrary, you'll want to limit your argument to the poems most relevant to it.
  - **You will choose which collection you'd like to respond to in a 1,100-word essay.** The analysis in this essay should not only be more intensive than that in the responses, but should attempt to convincingly connect your argument about the collection's innerworkings to a context broader than the book itself; it should establish a relationship between the book at hand and the author's other works, the works of other authors, or a greater literary tradition. Robustly establishing such links will take a bit of research (cite all sources in MLA format). If you hold out on this essay until the third collection (*Pitch*), and decide you'd like to like to write it on one of the collections to which you've already responded in 550 words, you may do so. However, **you may not use any language from your original 550-word response in your 1,100-word essay, and your argument in the essay should be significantly different from the one you present in your response**, whether it's evolved substantially or been replaced entirely.
- **1 Practice Annotation (no word count):** As you prepare to encounter and critique each other's poems in workshop, you'll need to learn how to mark up a poem, and what to look for as you do so. I'll assign one poem, on which you'll leave at least 5 insightful notes in the margins, and one short critical paragraph. As you annotate, ask yourself what the poem is saying, what features seem to contribute to or detract from that purpose, what could use more explanation, and what may not be necessary. You're welcome and encouraged to ask additional questions of yourself, and the poem, too. Above all, practice responding and questioning in a respectful manner, but without fixating on empty praise.
- **8 Poem Drafts (no word count):** These poems will be responses to a prompt given in class. Ideally, the prompts will help you to fend off writer's block, but their main purpose will be to provide you with constraints that compel you to think outside the box and make innovative choices. When you revise these poems, you may choose whether or not to do away with the constraints of the prompt. Please make sure your poems include a title, along with your name and the assignment number. Poems must employ correct spelling and grammar, and be written in complete sentences. Additionally, you should strive to avoid fantasy, reliance on cliché, rhyme that feels forced, abundances of abstract concepts not rooted in the physical world, and attempts at sounding wise. Each poem's grade will depend on its earnest exploration, deliberate construction, grammatical polish, and adherence to the prompt, but not on its success or failure as a first draft.
- **Final Portfolio (including 1 600-word Artist's Statement and 1 600-word Revision Reflection):** With the aid of the feedback your peers and I will have offered on your poems, you'll revise four of them, and assemble them in an order that makes sense to you, as though you were putting

together a mini-chapbook; each poem should interact meaningfully with those before and after, perhaps even coming together to present a shared theme or story. With each revised draft, you must include the original draft with my comments. The frontmatter of the portfolio will include a 600-word Artist's Statement, in which you'll call upon what you've learned from our readings and in class to describe the scope and purpose of your poetry, and the context in which it can be understood. It will also include a 600-word Revision Reflection, which will examine the ways in which your poetry and poetics have evolved through revision, incorporating evidence from your work and from the annotations thereon.

### Participation, etc.:

- **Class Discussion:** Your frequent and insightful contributions to the conversations we have in class will contribute to your participation grade. In order to make such contributions, you'll have to complete the required readings for each week (it helps to take notes!), and come to class prepared and eager to engage. This class will be discussion-driven, so you must do your bit to help us learn as a community.
- **Workshop:** The golden rule here is to critique as you'd like to be critiqued. Read each poem up for workshop carefully, **at least twice**, before you come to class, and leave at least 4-5 annotative comments/questions on the poem (you're encouraged to hand your annotated copy to whomever wrote it after workshop ends). Focus on the poem and what it's doing on the page, or what it could do in the next draft. In nearly every case, your focus should be on the speaker of the poem, rather than the poet themselves. Try your best to further the discussion at hand whenever possible, and always make honest, constructive, and respectful feedback your goal. Your fellow poets depend on this, as does your participation grade.
- **Poem Recitation (with 200-word introduction):** One of the best ways to understand the sonic and aural qualities of a poem, as well as their effects, is to read it aloud. You'll practice getting to know the intimate ins and outs of a poem of your choosing by committing it to memory, and then reciting it for the class. The poem you choose must have been published and consist of at least 14 lines, including 50 words. You'll also compose a 200-word introduction to the poet who wrote the poem you choose, that poet's work, the poem itself, why you chose it, etc. Your presentation will be graded on the fluency of your delivery and its embodiment of the material.
- **Literary Magazine Submission (no word count):** By the end of the semester, you'll submit one of your original poems to a literary magazine of your choosing (here's a good list of some notable poetry magazines: <https://cliffordgarstang.com/2020-literary-magazine-ranking-poetry/> ). I'll accept any proof of submission (a screenshot of the "Submitted" page, for instance). If you choose to write a cover letter/bio, I'll be happy to give it a look, though this isn't required. This assignment is just an exercise in putting your voice out there as a member of a poetic community.

### 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, you cannot pass the course.**

Excused absences, such as athletic events, theater commitments, illnesses, family emergencies, etc. **require appropriate documentation AND advance notice given to me.** You will be

responsible for meeting with me outside of class to make a plan for completing work missed due to absences. You will also be responsible for turning in any assignments regardless of whether you are in class or not. For UF's official attendance policy, you can visit:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

3. *Tardiness*: Be on time to show respect to your colleagues and me. Should lateness be unavoidable, understand that **3 late arrivals without advance notice = 1 absence**.
4. *Classroom Behavior*: Please be respectful and attentive to your colleagues and to me when we are talking, whether during discussion of published poets or during workshop of our own work. In particular, be respectful of your colleagues' diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and beliefs. Critique others as you would like to be critiqued—for me, that means substantive, actionable feedback that respects the intention and inherent validity of the submitted work.

You are also responsible for keeping up with your UF email, as this is how I will contact you outside of class. Feel free to reach out to me via UF email or Canvas messaging anytime—I'll try to respond within 24 hours on business days.

**No phones and no laptops** during class, unless I specifically instruct you to use your laptops for in-class work.

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/about/title-ix-rights/>
6. *Paper Format & Submission*: All assignments should be typed in a readable, 12 pt. font with standard 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 paper in class AND on Canvas**. **If your poem is due for workshop, you will be responsible for bringing the specified number of copies**. Submit all other assignments (Critical Analyses, Close Readings, etc.) 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 key**.
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 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 at (352) 392-1575. You can also contact them online at <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 on campus.

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 ([cblount@ufl.edu](mailto:cblount@ufl.edu)), Program Assistant, in the Department office (4008 TUR). 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>

### Grading Scale and General Rubric:

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

**"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 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 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 be missing 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.

More generally, work in this class will be graded on the earnestness with which you endeavor to undertake meaningful investigations of poetic and critical concepts, revise your work and adapt your practice based on feedback you receive, and adhere to the grammatical and artificial requirements of assignments. Your participation grade will depend on the preparation, thoughtfulness, respect, and professionalism you demonstrate in engaging with your peers as a member of a community of poets.

### Course Schedule:

Our syllabus and course schedule, including planned readings and assignment due dates, follows on the next page. Syllabus and schedule are subject to change and adjustment at my discretion and/or due to severe weather, health/safety concerns, and other mitigating circumstances. I will always advise you of any changes both in class meetings and through email with advance notice.

Date/Week	Readings (Complete Before Class)	Classwork	Assignments Due (by 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, unless otherwise stated)
08/26 (Week 1)		Introductions, syllabus review, and discussion about reading closely	
09/02 (Week 2)	<i>An Introduction to Poetry</i> Ch 1 (p. 3-20) and Ch 18. (p. 396-400)  Supplemental Poems	What is poetry and why would one engage with it?  Close readings	Close Reading 1 due <b>Wednesday at 4 p.m.</b>  Close Reading Response 1 due
09/09 (Week 3)	<i>An Introduction to Poetry</i> Ch. 3 (p. 53-79) and Ch 17. (p. 370-395)  Supplemental Poems	Denotation, connotation, association  Learning from “bad poetry”	Close Reading 2 due <b>Wednesday at 4 p.m.</b>  Close Reading Response 2 due
09/16 (Week 4)	<i>An Introduction to Poetry</i> Ch 4 (p. 80-93) and Ch 5 (p. 94-117)  Supplemental Poems	<b>REMOTE CLASS—medium TBA</b>  Clarity, ambiguity, and obscurity  Using the concrete  Close readings	Poem 1 due (turn in via Canvas)



<p><b>09/23</b> <b>(Week 5)</b></p>	<p><i>An Introduction to Poetry</i> Ch 6 (p. 118-140) and Ch 12 (259-277)</p> <p>Supplemental Poems</p>	<p>Figures of speech and representation</p> <p>Close readings</p>	<p>Close Reading 3 due <b>Wednesday at 4 p.m.</b></p> <p>Close Reading Response 3 due</p>
<p><b>09/30</b> <b>(Week 6)</b></p>	<p><i>An Introduction to Poetry</i> Ch 10 (p. 212-236) and Ch 11 (p. 237-258)</p>	<p>Writing about poetry</p> <p>Why form? And some formal techniques</p> <p>Close readings</p>	<p>Close Reading 4 due <b>Wednesday at 4 p.m.</b></p> <p>Close Reading Response 4 due</p> <p>Poem 2 due</p>
<p><b>10/07</b> <b>(Week 7)</b></p>	<p>Parts 1 and 2 of <i>Bright Dead Things</i></p> <p><i>An Introduction to Poetry</i> Ch 19 (401-440) and Ch 23. (p. 616-634)</p>	<p>Discuss <i>Bright Dead Things</i></p> <p>Practice annotation</p> <p>Writing about poetry</p> <p>Reading a body of work</p>	<p>Poem 3 due</p>
<p><b>10/14</b> <b>(Week 8)</b></p>	<p>Parts 3 and 4 of <i>Bright Dead Things</i></p>	<p>Discuss <i>Bright Dead Things</i></p> <p>Workshop Poem 3</p>	<p>Critical Analysis 1 Due</p> <p>Poem 4 due</p>
<p><b>10/21</b> <b>(Week 9)</b></p>	<p>Parts 1 and 2 of <i>Lighthouse</i></p> <p><i>An Introduction to Poetry</i> Ch 2 (p. 21-52) and Ch 8 (p. 165-186)</p>	<p>Discuss <i>Lighthouse</i></p> <p>Hearing and uttering poems</p> <p>Workshop Poem 4</p>	<p>Poem 5 due</p>
<p><b>10/28</b> <b>(Week 10)</b></p>	<p>Parts 3 and 4 of <i>Lighthouse</i></p>	<p>Discuss <i>Lighthouse</i></p> <p>Workshop Poem 5</p>	<p>Critical Analysis 2 Due</p> <p>Poem 6 due</p>

<p><b>11/04 (Week 11)</b></p>	<p>Pages 1-60 in <i>Pitch</i></p> <p><i>An Introduction to Poetry</i> Ch 7 (p. 141-164) and Ch 9 (p. 188-211)</p>	<p>Discuss <i>Pitch</i></p> <p>More about sonics</p> <p>Workshop Poem 6</p> <p>Recitation</p>	<p>Poem 7 due</p> <p>Recitation intro due</p>
<p><b>11/11 (Week 12)</b></p>		<p><b>No class. Happy Veteran's Day!</b></p>	
<p><b>11/18 (Week 13)</b></p>	<p>Pages 61-112 in <i>Pitch</i></p> <p><i>An Introduction to Poetry</i> Ch 13 (p. 278-305) and Ch 14 (p. 306-327)</p>	<p>Discuss <i>Pitch</i></p> <p>The person behind the poem</p> <p>Workshop Poem 7</p>	<p>Critical Analysis 3 due</p> <p>Poem 8 due</p>
<p><b>11/25 (Week 14)</b></p>		<p><b>No class. Have a wonderful break!</b></p>	
<p><b>12/02 (Week 15)</b></p>		<p>Tearful goodbyes</p> <p>Class reading</p> <p>Workshop Poem 8</p>	<p>Final Portfolio due 11:59 on Tuesday, 12/14</p> <p>Submission to Lit Mag due</p>

