

## CRW 1301 - BEGINNING POETRY WRITING, (Section 1652/Class #12792) Fall 2019

Instructor: Mallory Smith  
[mallorysmith@ufl.edu](mailto:mallorysmith@ufl.edu)  
Canvas Website: (*Link here*)

Classroom: R 9-11 (4:05-7:05pm) in RNK 0215  
Office Hours: R 3-4pm & M 1-2pm in Turlington (*Office #*)  
and by appointment

**Course Objectives and Description:** Beginning Poetry Writing helps students learn the tools and rules that writers use to make rhetorically and emotionally engaging art. The ultimate objective of this class is twofold: first, that students will cultivate their critical understanding of poetry through weekly readings, writing prompts, and discussions. Second, students will apply that foundational knowledge of poetry to their own creative work in an effort to practice the craft of writing. The second half of the course will include a weekly workshop where students will give and receive feedback from their peers.

### 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.

**The above are the quantifiable aims of the course—the outcomes on which you are graded.** But there is another aim of the course, one that is not easily explained in tangible means. This goal reinforces what poets call "deep structures": the aim of my class is not only to produce strong poems, but to produce

stronger poets. It may take some time for your understanding of poetry to gel in your writing, and so what I will teach you here is aptly named: it is, in fact, an introduction to beginning poetry.

### Required Texts:

1. Michelle Boisseau, Hadara Bar-Nadav, Robert Wallace, *Writing Poems*
2. Gregory Orr, *Primer for Poets & Readers of Poetry*
3. Plus one book of poetry of your choosing (see Extended Close Reading in assignments; to be purchased after midterms)
4. All handouts and PDFs posted to Canvas which must be brought to class in hard copy

We might not discuss in-depth every reading on the syllabus, but I encourage you to read them anyway. Every poem has something to teach you. Approach each text as if it has some valuable lesson for you—because it does. Ask each text, "What can you teach me about the art I am destined to make?"

### Major Assignments:

1. **Poems (10 pts x 8 poems = 80 pts):** I will read and provide feedback for the first two poems assigned; on the schedule included at the end of this syllabus these poems are called "Poem #1 and Poem #2." The final six poems are workshoped by the class, referred to as "Workshop Poems." There will also be an opportunity for you to revise one poem for a higher grade at the end of the semester.
2. **Close Readings (10 pts x 4 close readings):** Every week for the first half of the semester you will turn in a **500-word** close reading of one of the poems assigned for the week. We will go over an example of a close reading on the first day of class. No outside sources are permitted.
3. **Extended Close Reading (25 pts):** Each week will correspond with a packet of creative work that embodies the lesson. At the end of the semester, you will pick one poet that we read from any week, purchase a full-length collection of their work, and write an extended close reading (**1,500 words**). You will track the aesthetics of the collection while also applying the knowledge that you have learned from previous weeks to illustrate how the poet employs tone, metaphor, image, etc. to create a cohesive work; this assignment will require a research component.
4. **Event Profile (10 pts):** Throughout the semester, you'll have the opportunity to attend several readings. You must attend one such event and write a profile of the occasion (**500 words**). Profiles are vivid descriptions that allow the reader to experience the event vicariously through your powers of description. Profiles should talk about issues of craft as well: what struck you about the work being read? Do not merely summarize the event, but use this assignment as a way to prove your knowledge about the craft of poetry. You can find options for events included in a tab on Canvas called "Event Opportunities."
5. **An Anthology of Creative Work (50 pts):** You will construct and introduce an anthology of creative work from literary journals of the last 10 years. You will write a critical preface or introduction (**1,500 words**) to the works you've assembled. Your Preface should analyze a common craft element that each work employs to various effects. The task here is to introduce creative work you admire, and to analyze specifically the various functions of one or two craft elements (such as image, metaphor, point of view, etc). Select work that engages your intellect, emotion, and spirit. Certainly, your anthology may be thematically organized. Or, you may choose to organize according to your taste for image, metaphor, sonic texture, syntax, tone (all aesthetic considerations), etc.

Regardless of theme, your preface must **analyze craft**. See more about this assignment on the Assignments page on Canvas.

6. **Revision (20 pts):** At the final exam, you will turn in a revision of one of the workshopped pieces, as well as a brief letter (**500 words**) explaining your revision of craft. Do not address the fact that you've fixed your punctuation unless it changes the emotion or theme of the story. Do address how you restructured plot, rethreaded a dominant image, sharpened line endings, etc.
7. **Professionalism (20 pts, evenly divided):** Come to class prepared. Speak intelligently and constructively about the work under discussion. Be engaged with the material in the classroom. You can be intellectually absent just as you can be physically absent.
8. **Attendance (10 pts):** Grading for absences is as follows:  
0: 10pts      1: 7 pts      2: 4 pts      3: Automatic failure of the course
9. **Participation (10pts):** Participation comprises all interactions with me and with your peers. If it becomes clear to me that the class is not doing the reading, I may resort to quizzes that will factor into your Professionalism grade. Also, as I say above, you can be intellectually absent just as you can be physically absent: if it is clear to me that you have not done the reading, I will dismiss you from class and mark you as absent. All students must have an email address and check it at least once daily. If I send you an individual email about a matter, I expect a response back within 24 hours. I understand that some of you may find speaking in class difficult. Please keep in mind, however, that learning should not be an entirely painless process. To give you an idea of my assessment of class participation:
  - If you say **almost nothing** on most days: 0 – 1 points.
  - If you make **1 helpful contribution** on most days: 2-4 points.
  - If you make **2 helpful contributions** on most days: 5-7 points.
  - If you make **3 helpful contributions** on most days: 8 points.
  - If you make **countless helpful contributions** every day: 9-10 points.

Good participation is a matter of quantity and also quality.

Make sure you come to Workshop prepared to talk intelligently and constructively about the work. **On days that workshop material is due**, you will upload the piece to Canvas. If you have difficulty uploading it, you may email me the piece as an attachment (.doc, .docx, or .rtf files only please) and pasted into the email itself. I will **always** acknowledge receipt of your email with one of my own. If I don't acknowledge that I received your emailed piece, it's because I didn't receive it. The responsibility is yours; be sure I receive your work.

Assignment	Word count	Points available
Poems (8 total)	-	80
Close Readings (4 total)	2,000 words	40
Extended Close Reading	1,500 words	25
Event Profile	500 words	10

Anthology of Creative Work	1,500 words	50
Revision & Letter	500 words	20
Professionalism	-	20
Attendance	-	10
Participation	-	10
<b>Total</b>	6,000 words total	265 points total

### General Course Policies

**Course Completion:** You must complete *all* assignments to receive credit for this course.

**Attendance Policy:** I take attendance by in-class Writing Assignments and by roll sheets. The only excused absences are those required by the University of Florida (i.e., athletic events), religious observances, and court-imposed legal obligations. I must have **written notice 48 hours before the absence** takes place. Students automatically fail the course after receiving their third absence. Please see how attendance is counted towards overall grade in the “Grading” section of this syllabus.

**Tardiness:** Please arrive to class on time. Interrupting class distracts from your peers’ learning. Two instances of tardiness will count as an absence as will tardiness over ten minutes.

**Classroom Etiquette:** This course values all voices dedicated to depicting an honest world-view. We will read work by writers of various religious persuasions, ethnicities, sexualities, and politics. You may not agree with certain texts; this course, like art itself, does not require your agreement. Some of these texts may make you feel uncomfortable or challenge your world-view. However, each text does insist upon your intellectual participation and creative engagement. I expect all of us to respect each member of this classroom community. In this course, we will engage adult themes and controversial issues. I expect students to comport themselves as adults do: by engaging texts and each other thoughtfully and respectfully.

**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/>

**Formatting:** It goes without saying that everything you hand in for this class must be typed (except for photocopies of creative work in journals for the Anthology). Please use 12 point, Garamond, in black (default) type. Use one-inch margins. Always include a title. Double space for prose; single space for poetry. Defaults on most computers now are 1.15 spacing, with a 10-point letting space when you hit the enter key. Change these defaults to single-space for poems, double-space for prose, and 0-point for Before and After. These settings are usually found in the Format Menu, under the Font and Paragraph Menus. Failure to follow these instructions will result in a lower grade.

**Late Work:** Assignments must be turned in on time; late work will receive a score of zero unless other arrangements have been made ahead of the due date. If you must miss class for some reason, please make sure that you turn in the assignment before the class. Workshop materials must be turned in on time or the

student forfeits their workshop time in addition to accepting a zero on the assignment. It's imperative that you observe this practice strictly.

**Paper Maintenance Responsibilities:** Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.

**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. I won't tolerate representing someone else's work as your own. Such academic dishonesty, even at the draft level, will result in serious effects. I turn over all instances of plagiarism to the Dean of Students without exceptions.

**Students with Disabilities:** I believe in a level playing field for all students in this course. If you have a documented disability, please have a conversation with me regarding your specific needs. Students with disabilities who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)), which will provide appropriate documentation to give your instructor early in the semester.

**Students in Distress:** Students who are in distress or who are in need of counseling or urgent help: please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto: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/>

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

**Course Evaluations:** Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

**Electronic Devices Policy:** Please keep your focus on the material during class. For this reason, students must print out all required materials from Canvas in addition to all workshop materials (noted as "to print" on our weekly schedule). Computers, laptops, and E-readers are not permitted during class instruction time unless a student requires them for learning accommodations.

**Cell Phone Policy:** My policy is that if your phone rings in class, I will answer it and politely remind the caller that you are in class. If my phone rings in class, I will happily allow a student to answer the call. No texting in class. If I think you're texting in class, you will be dismissed and marked as absent.

**Conferences:** Please avail yourself of my office hours; this weekly time is dedicated for you and your success in the course. Should the allotted time not work for your schedule, please email me to arrange an alternative meeting time.

## Grading Policy

Excellence occurs when students employ successful rhetorical approaches, dazzling syntax, and active voice. It happens when students arrange evocative specificity, engage metaphor and image that are idea-bearing, and use pattern and variation to produce consistency and rapture. Excellence occurs when the foundations of craft work in concert with each other, and the piece uses tactics of dis/engagement effectively. Excellent work contains few errors in grammar and mechanics. I encourage you to aspire to excellence.

At the university level, As mean that students have achieved excellence: lofty feats and towering triumphs. Bs denote that students have met the requirements and have achieved excellence in some aspects of the assignment. Cs mean that students have completed an assignment satisfactorily. Grades lower than C mean that the student may have achieved satisfactory progress on some aspects of an assignment, but that most of the aspects have not met the minimum expectations of the assignment. **I encourage you to aspire beyond the average.**

On a 10-point scale, 5 points is average (acceptable work). A score of 7 points is above-average. A score of 9-10 means that rare thing, excellence.

### Grading Scale:

100: A+	99-94: A	93-90: A-
89-87: B+	86-84: B	83-80: B-
79-77: C+	76-74: C	73-70: C-
69-67: D+	66-64: D	63-60: D-    59-0: F

### Tentative Schedule

#### Week One, August 22<sup>nd</sup>: Course Introduction; does poetry matter?

- First day of class housekeeping: read syllabus, take roll, introduce course, demonstrate how Canvas will function in this class, go over assignments due for week two
- Does poetry matter? Class discussion
- We will read excerpts from “The Scourge of Relatability” (Rebecca Mead)
- Complete a mock close-reading of a song as a class

#### Week Two, August 29<sup>th</sup>: How to Read a Poem

- “Anatomy of a Poem” lecture
- Please come prepared to play the saddest song you can think of and print class copies (#) of the lyrics for a discussion
- What are the differences between reading a poem, writing a poem, and talking about poems?

Read for class: “Poetry is Both Simple and Complex” (Orr 15-41) AND “Writing About Poems” (Vendler, *Canvas*)

Print for class: class copies of the lyrics from the saddest song you can think of; please shrink the font or use columns to make the lyrics fit one page

Due: Close Reading #1 Due at the Beginning of Class, uploaded to Canvas

#### Week Three, September 5<sup>th</sup>: Making the Poem Happen

- In class we will discuss the way poets approach subject matter and how to find poems in your daily life
- In class writing prompt, 'Mining for Poems'

Read for class: "Letting in the Disorder" (Orr 41-59) AND "Making the Poem Happen" (Boisseau) AND "Writing from Memory" (Ted Kooser, Canvas)

Print for class: "How to Write a Poem" Packet (Canvas)

Due: Close Reading #2 Due at the Beginning of Class, uploaded to Canvas

#### **Week Four, September 12<sup>th</sup>: Poetic Temperaments, Narrative and/vs Lyric Apertures**

- In class we will map our individual poetic temperaments and the way they will impact our poems moving forward
- Aperture lecture and discussion

Read for class: "The Four Poetic Temperaments" (Gregory Orr, Canvas) "Lyric and Narrative: Two Fundamental Ordering Impulses" (Orr 82-110)

Print for class: "Poetic temperaments, Narrative and/ vs Lyric Apertures" Packet (Canvas)

Due: Close Reading #3 Due at the Beginning of Class, uploaded to Canvas

#### **Week Five, September 19<sup>th</sup>: Meta(phor)**

- In class we will discuss the readings and poems assigned. We will also ask these poems how they create metaphor
- Lecture on tenor and vehicle
- In class writing prompt, 'Making Metaphor'

Read for class: "The Six Principles of Metaphor" (Mark Doty, Canvas) "Imagining" (Orr 240-248 and 252-261)

Print for class: "Meta(phor)" Packet (Canvas)

Due: Close Reading #4 Due at the Beginning of Class, uploaded to Canvas

#### **Week Six, September 26<sup>th</sup>: Diction, Tone, Voice, and other things that go bump in the night**

- Shakespearian sonnets versus Shakespearian rap lyrics lesson
- Class discussion regarding enjambment

Read for class: "Tale, Teller, and Tone" (Boisseau) AND "Making (And Breaking) a Poem" (Chloe Clark, Canvas)

Print for class: "Diction, Tone, Voice" Packet (Canvas)

Due: Poem #1 Due at the Beginning of Class, uploaded to Canvas

#### **Week Seven, October 3<sup>rd</sup>: Psychic Distance**

- "Purple is a Bad Word" Lecture
- Popular examples of sentimentality in music, examine some Hallmark greeting cards to find connections to poetry

Read for class: "Some Basic Issues" (Orr 118-136) AND "Psychic Distance in Creative Writing" (Aaron Smale, Canvas)

Print for class: "Psychic Distance" Packet (Canvas)

*Due: Anthology of Creative Work Due at the beginning of class, uploaded to Canvas AND Poem #2 Due at the Beginning of class, uploaded to Canvas*

### **Week Eight, October 10<sup>th</sup>: Image/Imagination**

-Class trip to the Harn Museum on campus to learn about Ekphrasis; please bring a writing instrument; class coincides with “Museum Night” at the Harn

*Read for class: “Naming” (Orr 160-183) AND “Ekphrasis in American Poetry” (Sandra Kleppe, 4-12)*

*Print for class: “Image/Imagination” Packet (Canvas)*

*Due: Workshop Poem #1 Due at the Beginning of Class, uploaded to Canvas*

### **Week Nine, October 17<sup>th</sup>: Beginnings and Endings**

-Class conversation regarding the workshop environment, expectations, and  
-We will workshop poem #1 in class

*Read for class: “First Impressions” (Ted Kooser, Canvas) AND “Where Poems Begin and End” (Orr 144-147)*

*Print for class: “Beginnings and Endings” Packet (Canvas) AND Workshop Poem #1 Packet (Canvas and Emailed), please annotate and give feedback to peers*

*Due: Workshop Poem #2 Due at the Beginning of class, uploaded to Canvas*

### **Week Ten, October 24<sup>th</sup>: Let’s Get in Formation, Meter**

-Identifying forms challenge  
-Guest lecturer: Ashley Kim, teaching meter  
-We will Workshop poem #2 in class

*Read for class: “Form, the Necessary Nothing” (Boisseau) AND “Why Write in Form & The Choice of Constraint” (Rebecca Hazleton, Canvas)*

*Print for class: “Form and Meter” Packet (Canvas) AND Workshop Poem #2 Packet (Canvas and Emailed), please annotate and give feedback to peers*

*Due: Workshop Poem #3 Due at the Beginning of class, uploaded to Canvas*

### **Week Eleven, October 31<sup>st</sup>: Informal Forms**

-Class discussion: What are the limits of poetry?  
-We will workshop Poem #3 in class

*Read for class: “We Might As Well Call it the Lyric Essay” (John D’Agata, Canvas) AND “Prose Poems” (Ted Kooser, Canvas)*

*Print for class: “Informal Forms” Packet (Canvas) AND Workshop Poem #3 Packet (Canvas and Emailed), please annotate and give feedback to peers*

*Due: Workshop Poem #4 Due at the Beginning of class, uploaded to Canvas*

### **Week Twelve, November 7<sup>th</sup>: Revision Strategies**

-Writing prompt: “The Second Time Around”  
-We will workshop Poem #4 in class

*Read for class: “Devising and Revising” (Boisseau) AND “The Energy of Revision” (Allen, Canvas) AND “Relax and Wait” (Ted Kooser, Canvas)*



Print for class: *Workshop Poem #4 Packet (Canvas and Emailed), please annotate and give feedback to peers*  
Due: *Workshop Poem #5 Due at the Beginning of class, uploaded to Canvas*

### **Week Thirteen, November 14<sup>th</sup>: The Practice of Poetry (Submissions, etc.)**

- Lecture on living a writing life, the publishing world, and possible next steps after finishing this class
- We will workshop Poem #5 in class

Read for class: *“What Editors Want; A Must-Read for Writers Submitting to Literary Magazines” (Lynn Barrett, Canvas) AND “Becoming a Poet” (Boisseau)*

Print for class: *Workshop Poem #5 Packet (Canvas and Emailed), please annotate and give feedback to peers*  
Due: *Workshop Poem #6 Due at the Beginning of class, uploaded to Canvas*

### **Week Fourteen, November 21<sup>st</sup>: Last Day Wrap Up**

- Course Evaluations
- Revisiting course objectives and discussing again whether poetry matters
- Questions about upcoming assignments
- We will workshop Poem #6 in class

Read for class: *“The Future has an Ancient Heart” (Cheryl Strayed, Canvas) AND “Letters to a Young Poet, Letter #1” (Rilke, Canvas)*

Print for class: *Workshop Poem #6 Packet (Canvas and Emailed), please annotate and give feedback to peers*  
Due: *Nothin’!*

### **Week Fifteen, November 28<sup>th</sup>: No class; Thanksgiving Break**

Due: *Extended Close Reading Assignment due to Canvas by midnight*

### **Week Sixteen, December 5<sup>th</sup>: No class; Reading Day**

Due: *Revision of one Poem + 500-word letter due to Canvas by midnight AND Event Profile due by midnight*