

CRW 2300: Poetry Writing

SECTION & CLASS: Section 1645

SEMESTER: Spring 2025

MEETING TIME: Wednesdays 9–11 (4:05–7:05pm)

LOCATION: AND 0021

INSTRUCTOR: Taylor Johnson

EMAIL: taylorjohnson1@ufl.edu

OFFICE: Turlington 4307

OFFICE HOURS: Wednesdays 3–4pm

“The dream of art is not to assert what is already known, but to illuminate what has been hidden.”
—Louise Glück, “Education of the Poet”

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is focused on the reading, writing, and revision of poetry. Through poems, we will examine the relationship between people and the natural world, exploring how landscapes spark poetic interest and how poets interpret and reimagine the environments around them. Students will analyze works from Elizabeth Bishop, Wallace Stevens, and Louise Glück, alongside a selection of contemporary poets. Through close readings, discussions, class exercises, and workshopping, students will develop an academic vocabulary to discuss how a poem works to capture the spirit of a landscape—whether geographical, mythical, or imagined.

Throughout the semester, students will practice writing poems inspired by their own environments, fostering a creative dialogue with the ecology and geography that surrounds them. By the end of this course, students will have a considerable foundation in the vocabulary of poetic devices and forms. Additionally, students will be able to conduct themselves as productive members of a creative writing workshop and demonstrate a sincere attempt to develop an independent writing practice. At the end of the semester, students will produce a final portfolio of revised work accompanied by an artist’s statement.

GENERAL EDUCATION OBJECTIVES

- Composition courses provide instruction in the methods and conventions of standard written English (i.e. grammar, punctuation, usage) and the techniques that produce effective texts.
- Composition courses are writing intensive, require multiple drafts submitted to the instructor for feedback prior to final submission, and fulfill 6,000 of the university’s 24,000-word writing requirement.
- Course content must include multiple forms of effective writing, different writing styles, approaches and formats, and methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes and contexts. Students are expected learn to organize complex arguments in writing using thesis statements, claims and evidence, and to analyze writing for errors in logic.

GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, critical thinking, and communication:

- **Content:** Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, methodologies and theories used within the subject area.
- **Critical Thinking:** Students carefully and logically analyze information from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions to problems within the subject area.
- **Communication:** Students clearly and effectively communicate knowledge, ideas, and reasoning in written or oral forms appropriate to the subject area.

WRITING REQUIREMENT

- The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning.
- Course grades have two components. 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.
- Over the course of the semester, I will evaluate and provide feedback on all of the student's written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Hard copies are required, and I highly recommend purchasing used copies of books to save money. 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 The Lynx, Book Gallery West, and Third House Books. Keep in mind also that both Library West and the Alachua County Library System have options for curbside pick-up.

The Poet's Companion — Kim Addonizio & Dorianne Laux

Collected Poems — Elizabeth Bishop

Meadowlands — Louise Glück

Foxgloves — Ange Mlinko

Harmonium — Wallace Stevens

The Best American Poetry 2024 — David Lehman & Mary Jo Salter

ASSESSMENT

Assignment	Word Count	Points Available
Participation & Attendance	-	200
Close Readings	500 (x4)	100
Critical Analysis	1250 (x2)	200
Poet Study	1000	100
Discussion Leading	-	50
Workshop Poems	-	15 (x8)
Recitation	-	30
Final Portfolio	500	200
Total	6000	1000

DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF ASSIGNMENTS & COURSEWORK

Participation & Attendance

To succeed in this course (and in this field), you must be willing to become an active member in the community. In this course, your active participation will take the following forms:

- Contributing to **class discussions** at least twice per class.
- Performing every in-class and take-home **writing exercise** with serious, thoughtful effort.
- **Commenting on your peers' work in verbal and written forms.** (More information regarding verbal and written comments can be found under "Workshop Poems.")
- **Completing the readings.** Important note: reading quizzes may be implemented as a portion of your participation grade at any time.

If you have an unexcused absence and miss in-class participation activities, I cannot offer makeup credit for the activities you miss.

Close Readings

You will complete **4 Close Readings** of 4 different poems over the course of the semester (see schedule for dates). These should be at least 500 words in length. In these, you are expected to engage as a critic and an artist with a recent (i.e., since the prior Close Reading assignment) assigned reading, and explain precisely *how* you observe that a poem is working. Close Readings should be written without referring to outside critical sources: while such engagement is also very important, the purpose of these responses is not for you to find a "correct" outside interpretation of the piece, but to show me how *you* attend to and read it. Close Readings cannot be written over a poem previously discussed in class. Examples and further instruction will be provided in class.

Critical Analysis

Students will write two Critical Analysis papers that analyze aspects of two or more poems. These papers are intended to incorporate criticism, terminology from the textbook, and personal observations. Include evidence from the text to support your ideas and arguments. The response should be rigorous.

The entries will be evaluated based on the following criteria: 1) demonstrated reading of the works, 2) critical thinking, 3) depth of analysis, 4) use of textual evidence, and 5) engagement with the discussion of craft. Your analytical and critical skills are expected to improve over the course of the semester. "I" statements are allowed but should be used sparingly. You may include quotes from the poems or from the textbook, but the quoted material may not exceed 10% of the word count. The Critical Analysis may be written in MLA or Chicago format. The word count for each Critical Analysis is 1250 words.

Poet Study

Choose a poet whose work you're interested in and write a brief essay considering some shared elements in 3-5 of their poems. 1,000 words.

Discussion Leading

You will lead a fifteen-minute class discussion once during the semester based on a poem you've chosen.

Workshop Poems

Workshopping one another's work together as a class will be a key portion of this course. Your approach to workshop should be constructive and professional. Our workshop is a **community**; the shared goal is for you and your fellow workshop participants to become better writers. In order for this to happen effectively, you need to combine respect for the writer with thoughtful, serious, and insightful criticism about each piece. Our workshop is also a **contract**. You will be exchanging rough drafts with each other, and it is crucial that you extend trust to your fellow workshop members as they extend trust to you. Respect your classmates' privacy; be careful and responsible with each other's work. You should be kind, not conflate the poem with the person who wrote it, and keep your critiques focused on craft, not on the person.

At all levels of discussion, comments need to be well-qualified, offering explanation or evidence from the text for assertions, without sliding into jargon. A workshop should not be a poll, so it isn't OK to say things like "I loved this line / section" or "This doesn't work for me" without further elaboration. Finally, the aim of workshop is to make the piece more fully and effectively *itself*. Your job is to **meet each piece where it lives**, rather than trying to make it into something else.

Every member of this class will be **workshopped at least 2 times** over the course of the semester based on the schedule we determine in the first week of class. You will be required to **write a total of 8 poems**. These poems will be submitted as a single-spaced, left-aligned, 12pt serif font document. Additionally, each poem will include a title, as well as your name and poem assignment number in the top left corner of the page. Poems must employ correct spelling and grammar and be written in complete sentences.

Furthermore, poems should be submitted on time and should adhere to the given prompt. Poems will be evaluated based on seriousness of undertaking, adherence to prompt, and professionalism / polish (free of typos/grammatical errors), not on their success or failure as first drafts. Each poem will be **turned in via hard copy in class and in Canvas**.

Recitation

Memorizing poems is an ideal way to get inside elements such as rhythm, meter, voice, and rhyme. You will recite a memorized poem during class. The poem will be at least 14 lines long. If not chosen from assigned material, the poem must be approved by me. Your recitation will be graded on fluency of delivery and embodiment of the material in question.

Final Portfolio & Artist Statement

This assignment will be the culmination of our work together this semester. The **Final Portfolio** should include a cover page, all 8 of your original drafts with my comments, and 5 extensively revised poems. These revisions should not simply consist of line edits and minor fixes. (In all

likelihood, your final drafts will bear little resemblance to your first drafts.) Upon submission, it should be clear that you took into account 1) my feedback, 2) your peers' feedback, and 3) the craft techniques we studied over the course of the semester. In addition, you will submit a 500-word **Artist Statement** that discusses your views of poetry, who/what influences your writing, what styles of writing you're interested in, what creative vision you have for your work, what creative risks you took with revision and why, and so on.

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 (though prior notice would be greatly appreciated given the nature of the course). Subsequent unexplained or unexcused absences will affect your grade. **If you have more than 2 absences, you cannot pass the course.**

You will be responsible for providing me with an advance notice and appropriate documentation (if required), as well as meeting with me outside of class to make a plan for completing work missed due to an absence. You will also be responsible for turning in any assignments regardless of whether you are in class or not. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

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 peers' 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 Canvas messaging anytime—I'll try to respond within 24 hours on business days.

No use of phones or 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 1 in. margins. All assignments except poems should be double-spaced. (Poems should be single-spaced.) **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.** Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>
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.

Additionally, any use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in this class is considered a form of plagiarism. Poems or papers that are submitted using any form of AI, like Chat-GPT, will automatically result in a zero. If the student submits a second poem or paper that uses any form of AI, the assignment will result in a zero, alongside the 200 points allotted for participation.

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 in the Department office (4008 TUR). Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.
14. 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.ua.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.ua.ufl.edu/public-results>
15. *Writing Studio*. At any point in the course, feel free to utilize the Writing Studio. Students at all levels and in every discipline are welcome. They are located in 2215 Turlington Hall. To schedule an appointment, visit their website: www.writing.evl.edu

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.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Please note:

- Additional work and reading may be assigned in class that is not detailed on the calendar. It is your responsibility to ask a classmate about missed assignments if you are absent.
- **Readings and assignments are listed on the day they're due.**
- **All poem assignments are due by 4:05p.m. via Canvas & paper.**
- Readings must be read thoroughly—not skimmed—by class time.
- Addonizio and Laux's *The Poet's Companion*, one of our required texts, is referred throughout as *PC*.
- *The Best American Poetry 2024* is referred throughout as *Anthology*.

Week 1: Jan 15

Read	<i>PC</i> : "Introduction," pp. 11–18; selections from <i>Anthology</i>
Class	Introductions; syllabus; first day survey; discuss reading & workshop schedule; workshop & discussion leading sign-up; in-class reading
Assignments	

Week 2: Jan 22

Read	<i>PC</i> : "Images," pp. 85–93; "The Family: Inspiration and Obstacle," pp. 30–38 Selections from Elizabeth Bishop's <i>Collected Poems</i>
Class	Reading, attention, annotation practices; what is a poem?; patience; close reading
Assignments	Close Reading #1 on Friday by 11:59pm via Canvas

Week 3: Jan 29

Read	<i>PC</i> : "Simile and Metaphor," pp. 94–103 Selections from Elizabeth Bishop's <i>Collected Poems</i>
Class	Abstract vs. concrete language (i.e., "showing" vs. "telling"), the image, metaphor, associative movement, narrative; discussion leaders 1 & 2
Assignments	Close Reading #2 via Canvas

Week 4: Feb 5

Read	<i>PC</i> : "The Music of the Line," pp. 104–114; "Meter, Rhyme, and Form," pp. 138–150 Selections from <i>Anthology</i>
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Class	The line: form, structure, and syntax; introduce metrical terminology; discussion leaders 3 & 4
Assignments	Poem #1; Close Reading #3 via Canvas

Week 5: Feb 12

Read	PC: "Writing the Erotic," pp. 46–54 Selections from Louise Glück's <i>Meadowlands</i>
Class	Love poems; discussion leaders 5 & 6
Assignments	Poem #2; Close Reading #4 via Canvas

Week 6: Feb 19

Read	PC: "The Shadow," pp. 56–63 Selections from Louise Glück's <i>Meadowlands</i>
Class	Symbols, sounds, and resonance; discussion leaders 7 & 8; workshop mechanics, expectations, and commenting; introduce Critical Analysis
Assignments	Poem #3

Week 7: Feb 26

Read	PC: "Voice and Style," pp. 115–128 Selections from <i>Anthology</i>
Class	Voice and strangeness; persona poems and dramatic monologues; discussion leaders 9 & 10; workshop Poem #3
Assignments	Poem #4; Critical Analysis #1

Week 8: Mar 5

Read	PC: "Witnessing," pp. 64–73 Selections from Wallace Stevens' <i>Harmonium</i>
Class	Ekphrastic poems; <i>ars poetica</i> ; discussion leaders 11 & 12; workshop Poem #4
Assignments	Poem #5

Week 9: Mar 12

Read	PC: "Death and Grief," pp. 39–45
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	Selections from Wallace Stevens' <i>Harmonium</i>
Class	Elegy; discussion leaders 13 & 14; workshop Poem #5
Assignments	Poem #6; Critical Analysis #2

Week 10: Mar 19

No Class. Spring Break.

Week 11: Mar 26

Read	PC: "Writing and Knowing," pp. 19–29 Selections from Ange Mlinko's <i>Foxglovenise</i>
Class	Integrating allusion, research, and outside sources within poems; discussion leaders 15 & 16; workshop Poem #6
Assignments	Poem #7

Week 12: Apr 2

Read	PC: "Poetry of Place," pp. 74–84 Selections from Ange Mlinko's <i>Foxglovenise</i>
Class	Place-based poems; the senses; discussion leaders 17 & 18; workshop Poem #7
Assignments	Poem #8

Week 13: Apr 9

Read	Selections from <i>Anthology</i>
Class	One-on-One & Group Conferences
Assignments	Poet Study due via Canvas

Week 14: Apr 16

Read	PC: "The Energy of Revision," pp. 195–198; "Writer's Block," pp. 199–203; Selections from <i>Anthology</i>
Class	Intro to Final Portfolio; revision practices; discussion leaders 19 & 20; workshop Poem #8
Assignments	

Week 15: Apr 23

Read	“Self-Doubt,” pp. 195–198; “Getting Published,” pp. 217–224 Selections from <i>Anthology</i>
Class	Discussion leaders 21 & 22; the writing life and publication
Assignments	Recitation (in class); Final Portfolio