

CRW 2300 - Poetry Writing
Class #12330, Section 1658
Fall 2021

Instructor: Sarina Redzinski (she/they)

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Class Meeting: Wednesday, Period 9-11 (4:05 PM - 7:05 PM) in CBD 0220

Office Hours: Wednesday, 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM or by appointment in Turlington 4335

Course Description: Poetry can often feel like an inaccessible and inscrutable art form, and sometimes it is. But poetry is also a way to better get to know yourself and the world around you while acquainting you more closely with the intricacies and astounding abilities of language. By the end of this class, you will be more confident discussing poetry, writing poetry, and reading poetry. I want you to feel empowered by poetry, not dwarfed by it.

The way we will get there is I will provide you with accessible poetry with which you can more easily engage as well as a vocabulary to discuss more complicated poetry that you may have previously found difficult to relate to. We will look closely at essays and poems written by established poets that will help us integrate into the world of poetry, embracing its wonders and its difficulties. You will also share your own work, which will be workshopped by the class.

When it comes to your own poetry, I ask that you dare to take risks and try new things. Think outside the box and take tips/techniques from the various poets we will be exploring. The assessment of your poetry will depend on the amount of effort and creativity you attempt to bring to your work, not how close to “perfect” it is (there is no such thing as a “perfect poem”). Your growth as a poet will also factor into this—I’m not looking for you to come to me as a fully formed writer (again, there is no such thing), just as someone who wants to learn and improve.

COVID Statement: This semester, the university has mandated a return to face-to-face (F2F) teaching. Thus, if you are registered for a F2F section of this class and suspect you may have been exposed to COVID, you should report for testing immediately and observe an obligatory quarantine period. <https://coronavirus.uflhealth.org/screen-test-protect-2/> We will discuss how to address quarantines and sick days as a class when we meet the first week.

As is the case in all university buildings this semester, masks are expected in our classroom. I also recommend you don’t eat or drink during class—we will usually have a mid-class break that is good for stepping out for a snack or some refreshment.

I am aware of the fact that COVID-19 continues to impact our daily lives. Thus, if you are experiencing any hardships because of the virus, please contact me as soon as possible so that we may make any necessary arrangements contingent on your circumstances. I genuinely want this

class to be a fulfilling and enriching experience for each of you, not an added stressor during an already stressful time. Do not hesitate to ask for help.

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:

- X.J. Kennedy and Dana Gioia: *An Introduction to Poetry*, 13th edition
- Mary Oliver: *New and Selected Poems: Volume One*
- Ishion Hutchinson: *House of Lords and Commons*
- Henri Cole: *Blizzard*

- One approved poetry collection of your choosing (see Extended Close Reading description)
- Supplemental materials (posted on Canvas)

Recommended Texts:

- Melissa Kwasny: *Toward the Open Field: Poets on the Art of Poetry 1800-1950*

Helpful Texts:

- Richard Hugo: *The Triggering Town*
- James Longenbach: *The Art of the Poetic Line*
- Ellen Bryant Voigt: *The Art of Syntax*
- Carl Phillips: *The Art of Daring*

Assignments:

- Participation (100 points): Since this is a discussion-based class with a focus on collaboration and workshopping, it is essential that you participate weekly in both the discussion of published poetry and your peers' work. Your participation includes handwritten line notes on printed copies of the poems we workshop along with a short letter for each. While I understand there will be days that you just aren't up to being fully participant, I will be grading you off of your general level of engagement and contribution throughout our time together. You will get a mid-semester participation evaluation that will inform you of how you are doing in this area and how you may improve.
- Poems (10 points x 10 poems = 100 points): About half of your poems this semester will be guided by mandatory prompts, while the other half will be without prompts. You will submit your poem to Canvas before the class period that it is due and I will then choose a handful of poems to be workshopped by the class the next week. All poems will be sent out to the entire class along with the list of those to be workshopped. Please take care to read all of your peers' poems and feel free to provide feedback to as many people as you'd like, not just those being workshopped. Your first poem will not be eligible for workshop. Always remember that your poems must:
 1. be in complete grammatical sentences
 2. have a title
 3. have a heading that contains your full name, the class, the assignment number, and the date in the upper righthand corner.
 4. be saved under your last name and the assignment number
- Close Readings (10 points x 5 close readings = 50 points): You will write 400 words on an assigned aspect of a poem or poems. We will practice close reading in class.
- Extended Close Reading (25 points): You will write a 1,500 word close reading on a poem or group of poems from the following list of collections, a sample from each of which you will be provided to help you make your decision:
 1. Terrance Hayes: *American Sonnets for my Past and Future Assassin*

2. Seamus Heaney: *Field Work*
3. Louise Glück: *The Wild Iris*
4. Robert Lowell: *Life Studies & For the Union Dead*
5. Wislawa Szymborska: *View with a Grain of Sand*

If you have a collection in mind that you would rather write your Extended Close Reading on, you can consult me and we can decide together if it works

- Event Profile (25 points): You will attend one of the MFA readings (which will be held at the Bull downtown starting in October) and give a 500-word response on the poetry. Do not comment on the appearance, delivery, or other aspects of the poet themselves, and remember that there will also be fiction readers so be sure to only write on the poetry. If you do not feel comfortable attending this (outdoor) event or have scheduling conflicts, please let me know and we can come up with an alternative.
- Anthology of Creative Work (50 points): You will compile a collection of 10 poems written by published poets written after 1950 that you believe fit together in some way. You will then write 1,500 words on your choices and method of organization.
- Final Portfolio (50 points): You will compile revisions of 5 of your 10 poems and a reflective letter at the end of the semester.

Course Policies:

- Course Completion: You must complete *all assignments* to receive credit for this course.
- Attendance: This class thrives on participation and personal engagement, so you are expected to attend every class. Still, if you find yourself unable to make it to class, you are allowed two unexcused absences for any reason. Once you have three unexcused absences, though, you risk both a docked grade and failure of the class, depending on how class participation is otherwise.
- Tardiness: If you arrive to class 10 or more minutes late, you will be considered tardy. 3 tardies equal one absence.
- Classroom Etiquette: This course values all voices dedicated to depicting an honest worldview. We will read work by writers of various religious backgrounds, ethnicities, sexualities, and politics. You may not agree with certain texts; this course, like art itself, does not require your agreement. In this course, we will engage adult themes and controversial issues. Some of these texts may make you feel uncomfortable or challenge your worldview. However, each text does insist upon your intellectual participation and creative engagement. I expect everyone to discuss the assigned texts thoughtfully and respectfully.

This same policy goes for the workshop poems that we will discuss. You should respect your peers and their work as they do the same for you. No hateful or discriminatory comments will be tolerated. We are not here for debate—we are here for attentive and considerate discussion that helps us become better writers.

- **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:** Your poems should be typed in 12 pt., black, legible and professional font (think Times, Times New Roman, etc.) and submitted to Canvas. Use one-inch margins, double-spaced if prose, single-spaced if poetry.
- **Late Work:** You are allowed to turn in either one poem or close reading late (within a week of the due date) without penalty. This does not count toward any major assignments. Beyond that, there will be points taken off for lateness. During this pandemic, I have no problem at all giving extensions, but you must be timely in your asking—I cannot accommodate multiple last-minute extensions with the grading timeline on which I have to operate. Try to ask for extra time at least three days before the due date. Just to reiterate: please contact me if you are having trouble meeting a deadline or multiple deadlines **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE** and we will work out a plan.
- **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. Plagiarism has no place in any class, let alone a creative one, and any attempts at passing over another’s work as your own will result in a substantial grade reduction and, in some cases, a report to the Dean of Students.
- **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/), 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 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). Please contact Ms. Blount at cblount@ufl.edu Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade. For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

- 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>
- Policy on environmental sustainability: Whenever possible, I will use paper-sparing electronic media to distribute our course materials. Consider purchasing electronic editions of assigned texts when they are available, or used copies of print texts. If you do not elect to keep your print books, consider sharing them with others after the semester ends. (For example, you could donate them to the Alachua County [Friends of the Library](#) annual book sale.)

Grading Scale:

93-100: A

90-92: A-

87-89: B+

83-86: B

80-82: B-

77-79: C+

73-76: C

70-72: C-

67-69: D+

63-66: D

60-62: D-

0-59: E

(Tentative) Schedule

Week One: Welcome

August 25th, 2021

- Read: N/A
- In Class: Syllabus, introductions, sharing poems
- Due: One poem of your choosing shared during class

Week Two: Exploration

September 1st, 2021

- Read: Various poems posted to Canvas
- In Class: Discussion of poems posted to Canvas
- Due: At least one question and one comment about assigned readings

Week Three: How to Read a Poem

September 8th, 2021

- Read: First chapter of textbook, poems posted to Canvas
- In Class: Study of textbook chapter, discussion of poems posted to Canvas
- Due: FIRST POEM @ class time

Week Four: Inspiration

September 15th, 2021

- Read: Second & third chapters of textbook, poems posted to Canvas
- In Class: Study of textbook chapters, discussion of poems posted to Canvas, intro to Oliver
- Due: SECOND POEM @ class time

FIRST CLOSE READING @ 11:59 PM on Sept. 17th

Week Five: NO CLASS

September 22nd, 2021

I will be out of town this week, but I suggest you use this free time to get ahead on the Mary Oliver reading and read your classmates' poems, as well as work on your first non-prompt poem & second close reading

Week Six: Mary Oliver

September 29th, 2021

- Read: First four parts of *New and Selected Poems* (i.e. *New Poems*, from *House of Light*, from *Dream Work*, from *American Primitive*), chosen workshop poems
- In Class: Workshop, discussion of Oliver poems

- Due: THIRD POEM @ class time

Notes for workshop poems @ class time

SECOND CLOSE READING @ 11:59 PM on Oct. 1st

Week Seven: Mary Oliver

October 6th, 2021

- Read: Next two parts of *New and Selected Poems* (i.e. from *Twelve Moons* and from *The Night Traveler...*), chosen workshop poems
- In Class: Workshop, discussion of Oliver poems
- Due: FOURTH POEM @ class time

Notes for workshop poems @ class time

Week Eight: Mary Oliver

October 13th, 2021

- Read: Final two parts of *New and Selected Poems* (i.e. from *The River Styx...* and from *No Voyage...*), chosen workshop poems
- In Class: Workshop, discussion of Oliver poems
- Due: FIFTH POEM @ class time

Notes for workshop poems @ class time

THIRD CLOSE READING @ 11:59 PM on Oct. 15th

Week Nine: Branching Out—Exploring Poems in the Spirit of Mary Oliver

October 20th, 2021

- Read: Fourth & fifth chapters of textbook, poems posted on Canvas, chosen workshop poems
- In Class: Workshop, study of textbook, discussion of poems posted on Canvas, introduction of Hutchinson
- Due: SIXTH POEM @ class time

Notes for workshop poems @ class time

Week Ten: House of Lords and Commons/Ishion Hutchinson

October 27th, 2021

- Read: First half of *House of Lords and Commons*, poems posted to Canvas, chosen workshop poems
- In Class: Workshop, discussion of Hutchinson poems
- Due: SEVENTH POEM @ class time

Notes for workshop poems @ class time

FOURTH CLOSE READING @ 11:59 PM on Oct. 29th

Week Eleven: House of Lords and Commons/Ishion Hutchinson

November 3rd, 2021

- Read/Watch: Second half of *House of Lords and Commons*, selected section of NYRB discussion with Hutchinson, chosen workshop poems
- In Class: Workshop, discussion of Hutchinson poems
- Due: EIGHTH POEM @ class time

Notes for workshop poems @ class time

Week Twelve: Blizzard/Henri Cole

November 10th, 2021

- Read: First half of *Blizzard*, “How I Grew” essay, chosen workshop poems
- In Class: Workshop, discussion of Cole poems and essay
- Due: NINTH POEM @ class time

Notes for workshop poems @ class time

EXTENDED CLOSE READING @ 11:59 PM on Nov. 14th

Week Thirteen: Blizzard/Henri Cole

November 17th, 2021

- Read: Second half of *Blizzard*, poems posted to Canvas, chosen workshop poems
- In Class: Workshop, discussion of Cole poems
- Due: TENTH POEM @ class time

Notes for workshop poems @ class time

Week Fourteen: Conversations—How Do Poems/Poets Talk to Each Other?

December 1st, 2021

- Read: Sixth & seventh chapters of textbook, poems posted to Canvas, chosen workshop poems
- In Class: Workshop, study of textbook, discussion of poems posted to Canvas
- Due: Notes for workshop poems @ class time

FIFTH CLOSE READING @ 11:59 PM on Dec. 3rd

Week Fifteen: Wrap-Up

December 8th, 2021

- Read: Poems posted to Canvas
- In Class: Final class discussion

FINAL PORTFOLIO and EVENT PROFILE due @ 11:59 PM on Dec. 15th