

## CRW 2300 – POETRY WRITING, (Section 1658/Class # 12501) Fall 2020

Instructor: Mallory Smith

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Canvas Website: ([Link here](#))

Classroom: TURL 2333, W | Period 9 - 11, *Synchronous*

Office Hours: M | Period 8-9, W | Period 8-9

and by appointment

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“The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling, doth glance from heaven to Earth, from Earth to heaven; and as imagination bodies forth the forms of things unknown, the poet's pen turns them to shape, and gives to airy nothing a local habitation and a name; such tricks hath strong imagination.”

— William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Act V, Scene 1)

“You might as well answer the door, my child,  
the truth is furiously knocking.”

— Lucille Clifton, *Good Woman: Poems and a Memoir 1969-1980*

**Course Description:** 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 aimed at the individual facets of academic response. Second, students will apply that foundational knowledge of poetry to their own creative work in an effort to practice the craft of writing. The semester will culminate in a one-on-one online conference wherein students will talk about the artistic process and discuss a revised poem. This is a General Education course providing student learning outcomes listed in the Undergraduate Catalog.

**COVID Statement:** This class utilizes lectures, readings, collaborative work, and Canvas assignments in order to maximize the synchronous meeting times. Where noted in the schedule, some class meetings will be replaced with a combination of individual conferences via Zoom and independent assignments the correlate to the weekly lessons. Please sign in to class every week for attendance. Furthermore, I fully recognize the struggle of learning and creating during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. As your instructor, my primary goal is to support your academic process and growth as poets. We will have check-ins throughout the semester to foster open communication regarding course materials and outcomes. I am available over email and during office hours to discuss solutions to these challenging circumstances. Please see my course policy on office hours, extensions, and individual conferences and rest assured that I support maximum flexibility guidelines to foster your success.

### 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:

1. *Writing Poems* (7<sup>th</sup> edition) by Michelle Boisseau, Hadara Bar-Nadav, Robert Wallace (ISBN-13: 978-0321474063)
2. *Best of the Best American Poetry: 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition* (Best of the Best) edited by Robert Pinsky (ISBN-13: 9781451658880)
3. *A Poetry Handbook* by Mary Oliver (ISBN-13: 978-0156724005)

### Major Assignments:

1. **Poems (10 pts x 8 poems = 80 pts):** Students will turn in a poem every week on Canvas along with a recording of the poem read aloud attached in the “comments” section. These workshop poems have prompts that correlate to the weekly subject. We will practice workshopping poems in class.
2. **Poem Recitation (10 pts):** Each student will have the opportunity to recite a poem from memory. Poems must be from a reputable, published source (no online forums/social media poetry) and should be at least 14 lines long.
3. **Close Readings (10 pts x 4 close readings):** Throughout the semester you will turn in four **750-word** close readings 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.
4. **Journal Presentation (50 pts):** Students will complete a presentation on a current poetry journal for the class. The presentation should include the history of the journal, its mission statement, aesthetic/temperament, and a short analysis of a poem published in the past ten years. Journal Presentations have a written component in the form of 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 presentation will be recorded by students and submitted at the midterm point for a class discussion. Students will answer questions from their peers.

5. **Online Reading Event Profile (10 pts):** Students will watch and respond to a video of a professional online poetry reading before writing a profile of the occasion (**500 words**). Profiles are vivid accounts 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 video, but use this assignment as a way to prove your knowledge about the craft of poetry. Please pick one of the videos on the submission page called “Online Event Profile;” students may choose their own online reading of at least 45 minutes with prior permission. This assignment is due at the end of the semester.
6. **Revision & Artist Statement (50 pts):** At the final exam, you will turn in a revision of one of the workshopped pieces, as well as a brief Artist Statement (**1000 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. For more information see the submission page called “Artist Statement.”
7. **Individual Meetings (30 pts, evenly divided):** I would like to have a one on one Zoom conference with each student in the first week of class to get to know you on an individual level. No preparation is required for this first meeting. The second meeting will occur as a midpoint check-in. Finally, in lieu of a final exam, students will meet with me via Zoom to discuss their Artist Statement and Final Revision. During this time the student will answer questions about their poem and process (writing/revision, form choices, line meanings, etc.) These meeting will be between 15 and 20 minutes each.
8. **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.

**a. Attendance (10 pts):** Attendance for class is necessary for your learning. Due to COVID-19 I will be flexible with students so long as they communicate their needs in a timely manner (ideally 48 hours in advance.) Satisfactorily completing all in-class work will factor into your attendance. Grading for absences is as follows:

0: 10pts      1: 7 pts      2: 4 pts      3: Automatic failure of the course

**b. Participation (10 pts):** 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
Poem Recitation	-	10
Close Readings (4 total)	750 words each	40
Journal Presentations	1,500 words	50
Online Reading Event Profile	500 words	10
Revision & Artist Statement	1,000 words	50
Individual Zoom Conference	-	30
(Professionalism) Attendance	-	10
(Professionalism) Participation	-	10
<b>Total</b>	6,000 words total	320 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 sign in to class on time. Interrupting class distracts from your peers’ learning. Two instances of tardiness will count as an absence as will tardiness over fifteen 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 mature 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. 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.

**Extensions:** I believe students should turn in their best work. If you are having outside factors inhibit your success in this class, please let me know so we can find a solution that supports your learning and the course outcomes. Extensions must be discussed during office hours 48 hours before an assignment is due.

**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 need 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). Please contact Ms. Blount at [cblount@ufl.edu](mailto: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>

**Electronic Devices Policy:** Please keep your focus on the material during class. I know there will be numerous distractions working in our home environments instead of the traditional classroom, so please do your best to limit interruptions and engage with the lesson. If you have trouble participating due to your home environment (Internet insecurity, job responsibilities, etc.) please consider telling me in our first individual meeting so that we can talk about possible paths forward with the class.

**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, September 2<sup>nd</sup>; Course Introduction**

- 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
- Sign up for first individual conferences in the coming week
- Necessary technology (Canvas, Zoom, Cahoot, Youtube) and assignment of small workshop groups
- In class activity: in small groups do a close reading of two songs. Then come back together to discuss findings as a class.

### **Week Two, September 9<sup>th</sup>; How to Read a Poem**

- “Anatomy of a Poem” lecture to discuss poetic terminology. Lecture will correspond to a short response on Canvas utilizing both the lecture material and the reading
- Due: Answer Canvas prompt regarding poem selection for recitation assignment
- Read: Pages 1-52 of A Poet’s Handbook AND pages 70-71, 91-94 of The Best of the Best Anthology

### **Week Three, September 16<sup>th</sup>; How to Write About Poetry**

- Individual conferences this week
- Students will complete an activity on Canvas in real time responding on the message boards to some basic questions: Why is it easier to talk about music than poetry? How do you determine if a poem is successful? What are the methods and mechanics to complete a close reading of a poem? What does a thesis statement about poetry look like?
- Discuss first close reading assignment and poem due next week
- Due: Poem recitation assignment during Individual Conferences
- Read: Dobyns “Function of Tone” and Hoagland’s “Tone” (on Canvas via Files)

### **Week Four, September 23<sup>rd</sup>; Making the Poem Happen**

- Generative in class free write
- Due: Poem 1 & Close Reading #1 uploaded to Canvas by 4PM
- Read: Pages X-X of A Poet’s Handbook

### **Week Five, September 30<sup>th</sup>; Stakes for the Poet, Stakes for the Reader**

- In class: Celebration and Funerals, Lost Lands and Infatuation: do common themes have inherent structures? How do poets both mimic and subvert cliché?
- In class writing with workshop groups
- Workshop with workshop groups
- Due: Poem 2 & Close Reading #2 uploaded to Canvas by 4PM
- Read: “In This Condition” by Davis (on Canvas via Files)

### **Week Six, October 7<sup>th</sup>; Aperture & the Narrative Lens**

- In class: Attendance, Ekphrasis lecture and [Museum Walk through](#)
- In class writing: Ekphrasis poems
- Workshop with workshop groups
- Due: Draft of Journal Presentation and feedback from peer review and Poem 3 uploaded to Canvas by 4PM
- Read: Dennis “Point of View” (on Canvas via Files)

### **Week Seven, October 14<sup>th</sup>; Journal Presentations**

In class: Attendance, Watch Journal Presentations and complete Canvas message board answering questions

-Midterm conferences to discuss individual class progress

-Workshop with workshop groups

Due: Poem 4 & Journal Presentations uploaded to Canvas by 4PM

### **Week Eight, October 21<sup>st</sup>; (Meta)phor**

-Lecture: Metaphor as a mode of thinking and in class free-writing time

-Workshop with workshop groups

Due: Poem 5 (assigned form) & Close Reading #3 uploaded to Canvas by 4PM

Read: Ostriker Essay (on Canvas via files)

### **Week Nine, October 28<sup>th</sup>; Form, Form, Form**

-Full class workshop to discuss the limitations/expansiveness of form. Read and workshop Poem #5 and discuss how form is an innate function of the line

Due: Poem 6 uploaded to Canvas by 4PM

Read: Syllabics (on Canvas via Files)

### **Week Ten, November 4<sup>th</sup>; Beginnings & Endings**

-Workshop with workshop groups

Due: Poem 7 & Close Reading #4 uploaded to Canvas by 4PM

Read: Levin Essay and Barnett Essay (on Canvas via Files)

### **Week Eleven, November 11<sup>th</sup>; NO CLASS, Veteran's Day**

### **Week Twelve, November 18<sup>th</sup>; Revision**

-Class Canvas discussion regarding three different poets' takes on the art of revising poetry.

(Youtube: [C. D. Wright: The Art of Revision](#), [Naomi Shihab Nye on The Art of Revision](#), and [Dana Gioia n Revising Poetry](#))

-Workshop with workshop groups

Due: Poem 8 uploaded to Canvas by 4PM

Read: X

### **Week Thirteen, November 25<sup>th</sup>; Paired Revision**

-Paired revision activity and portfolio conference preparation in Canvas (under assignments)

Due: Complete draft of Final Exam Portfolio uploaded to Canvas by 4PM

Read: X

### **Week Fourteen, December 2<sup>nd</sup>; Final Exam, Portfolio Defense**

Due: Attend individually scheduled portfolio meetings and be prepared to answer questions in lieu of a traditional final exam (Final exam conference)

Read: None

### **Week Fifteen, December 9<sup>th</sup>; NO CLASS**

-Complete course evaluations

Due: Online Reading Event Profile uploaded to Canvas by 11:59PM

Read: None