

Not much to say. I think most of you know the drill, and while I've not had the pleasure of teaching you (bar one or two) in other classes, a lot of you come recommended, and I'm eager to meet you and read you.

All beginnings are difficult – for me, as much as for you. Somehow, one is always on the rebound, and no recipe is infallible. (Though I may as well give you my three tips for eternity right now. They are: Read. Walk. Switch off your gadgets.) As indicated in my Course Description, I would like us to read one recent-ish anthology, *Emergency Kit*, and two individual volumes by two of the more curious and electrifying poets alive and working now: the Briton Jo Shapcott and the Canadian Karen Solie.

Because these classes (at least in my experience of them) have an unfortunate tendency to fall apart, with the reading and writing having less and less to do with each other, I'd like you to write short, detailed, informal papers/ appreciations/ analyses on 1 (or 2?) poem(s) by each of the poets. Say, 2-3 pages. Length isn't the primary criterion here: these things are for reading, not weighing. Quality trumps quantity, though skimmed stays skimmed. Perhaps in your off-weeks, when you can't manage or don't feel like a poem? One on Shapcott (a single poem), one on Solie (ditto), and one on an anthology poem. A fourth piece would be a review of an entire volume by one – any one, pick one! – contributor to the anthology. Go to the library, or inter-library loan, for a copy. Remember, though: the earlier you write these, the more choice you have, because otherwise chances are, the class and I will have trampled over them. I may ask you to read your paper aloud to the class; therefore, write accordingly (be lively, honest, inquiring).

I will grade these; final grades will be based on a combination of these response papers; presence and participation in class; and my overall sense of the worth and improvement in your own poems (individual poems will not be graded).

From time to time, I may mix things up by bringing in other materials myself. Sometimes I will set a subject or approach or limitations; oftentimes not. Try, if you can, to follow these hesitantly given prompts; I think you will enjoy your 'freedom' more if you work with, though I hope not under, compulsion. This is all I have in the way of forward planning. Don't come to class if you feel unwell. Don't for heaven's sake use AI. (Or even think of it.) Let's just hope we all get through the semester and have some illuminating literary experiences on the way.

Office hours are Mondays and Tuesdays, 1-4 pm. 4211-D.

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