

   CRW 4906   

(class 12357 / sect. 19D2)

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Monday 9-11 (4:05-7:05 pm)  
CBD 216

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4211-H Turlington (Monday, 2-3:45 pm)

Poetry requires the manipulation of words—it’s the words, even more than the feelings within them, that make poetry memorable. To treat poetry as simply a collection of words would be too austere, like treating a dog as just a bundle of DNA (not that some dogs shouldn’t be so treated). We’ll look closely at words and the way that altering even a single one may change the effect of a poem, without ever forgetting that a poem must proceed simultaneously through what those words evoke.

Eliot said of Milton that a “man may be a great artist, and yet have a bad influence.” We will be looking at poets who are by and large good artists and trying to see what might make them good influences as well.

⇒ *Logistics*

Note: It is possible that we will move to live, remote meetings for this class. We will discuss this at the first class.

At the end of each class, I’ll give you a writing assignment. Assignments vary from the straightforward to the perverse. I’ll ask you to write a poem to a form of my devising, with three or four additional requirements meant to obstruct your conscious mind and give access to your imagination. I hope to entangle your censoring conscious so completely that you’ll concentrate on fulfilling the form and not worry overmuch about what’s being said. The poem is due the following week at the end of class (sent to me and then distributed to the listserv). I’m immune to excuses for late assignments, however ingenious. You may obtain grace until noon the next day without penalty. (Normally this triggers a cookie penalty, where you bring lashings of cookies to class the following week.) Late assignments will otherwise be marked down severely, one point per day (one-third of a grade, so A becomes A-). These penalties are cumulative and cannot be remitted.

From the poems submitted, I’ll choose five as the worksheet for our discussion (emailing you the names of the lucky poets), to which the first half of class will be devoted. Over the course of the semester, each poet’s work will be workshopped about the same number of times. *Late assignments should be sent to me as attachments in .pdf (preferred) or .docx.* (When classes again meet face to face this also applies to assignments where you didn’t print out enough copies.) Do not leave assignments in my English Department mailbox. *All assignments must have your name, class, number of the*

*assignment, and my name in the upper-left corner. (Do NOT use MS Word's header feature—type in the information just above the poem.) Don't make me your secretary.*

In the second half of each class, we'll discuss assigned readings. This term we'll read we'll read Derek Walcott, *Collected Poems 1948-1984*; Geoffrey Hill, *Canaan*; Sylvia Plath, *Poems*; Michael Hofmann, *Selected Poems*; and *Norton Anthology of Poetry: Shorter* ed. Ferguson. It's a prerequisite of the course that you buy the books. Failure to complete the readings or engage in discussion is a sign of lack of interest in a decent grade. You can buy the books at the campus book-store or on the web. (Used books from Amazon or ABE are much cheaper than new.) If you don't have a particular book one evening, it's one point off your grade; if you don't have it a second evening, it's two points off your grade, and so on. Ebooks are not permitted, because you can't scribble on them..

I won't set the direction of our discussions, but I like to look intensely at the collusive uses of language and the habits and craft of revision. My complaint about many contemporary poets is that they have no concern for the richness of words, the complication of expression, and rarely use what might be called the subsidies of sense (as opposed to plain bread-and-butter prose meaning). These subsidies include ambiguity, nuance, the right wrong word, music of various sorts (alliterative, consonantal), patterns of adherence (meter, set form), thematic tangles, sensitivity to verb tense, timing, and delay—in short, the ways that poets have traditionally put English on English.

#### ⇒ *Discussions*

You're responsible for printing out and reading the worksheet each week *in advance of class*, making notes upon it, and bringing it with you. Copious notes. The quick wit, intelligence, and charm of your analysis will be appreciated by all. Use of laptops or cell phones during class, except to connect to us online, is forbidden. If your cell phone rings, you owe everyone cookies.

#### ⇒ *Portfolios*

The week after I receive your assignment, I'll hand it back with suggestions. Keep these copies! These annotated assignments should be collected in a file folder, due December 3 (the Friday before the final week of class), accompanied by new revisions of all poems. Put the folder in my mailbox in Turlington 4301 or on my porch. There's no midterm, no final, just the hard work of poems. I may on occasion ask to see your notes, which will be marked from 0-5 and count in your final grade.

#### ⇒ *Grades*

I'll give you eleven poetry assignments, the last due November 23. After reading your brilliantly revised portfolios (see deadline under *Notebooks*, above), I'll give each poem a mark of 1 to 10 (these are chili-pepper grades, from ultra mild to red hot). The

mark will reflect the courage and imagination shown in the assignment, as well as the technical dexterity or ingenuity, and, in addition, the quality of the revision. Class participation will be awarded 0 to 10 additional points. I'm not able to reward mere chatter, but I'm sure that you'll always respond to the poems and the opinions of others in a deft, polite, and witty manner.

#### ⇒ Absences

You may have two absences for any reason, especially whimsical; but you must notify me *in advance*. Email me or call me at home to do so. Each unnotified absence and each absence beyond those permitted will result in loss of half a letter grade for the term. Lateness over ten minutes is equivalent to half an absence. *If you miss a class, your assignment is due by email, sent to me by noon the following day (.pdf or .docx format, please). Otherwise it will be treated as late.* Poems late because of absence do not have to be rescued by sweets. When you're absent, you may pick up your packet from my mailbox in 4301 Turlington. I'm available for conferences Monday afternoons, 2-3:45 pm—or by appointment if the normal time is impossible due to a scheduled class (not a job or a hot hook-up). Take advantage of office hours—the jokes may be funnier then.

#### Rules of presentation

- 1) Title your poems.
- 2) Single space with at least a 12-point font (13, if Times Roman) and don't use a clever font.
- 3) Don't center justify. It makes the poor poems look like embroidery.
- 4) Put your name, class, my name, and the assignment number in the upper-left corner of the page.
- 5) You must use correct grammar and punctuation. I will make all errors and ask you to write a paragraph that gives the correct rule and form.

#### Rules of composition

- 1) Stay away from abstraction until you can handle detail.
- 2) Stay away from passive voice and sentence fragments until you can handle sentences.
- 3) Stay away from dialogue until you can handle exposition.
- 4) Learn the rules of punctuation. Learn verb tenses. Learn how to use a participle.
- 5) Learn the difference between "like" and "as."
- 6) Write only in complete sentences, on pain of defenestration and rustication. No sentence fragments.

#### *From Trollope's Journal*

[Winter, 1861]

As far as statues go, so far there's not  
 much choice: they're either Washingtons  
 or Indians, a whitewashed, stubby lot,  
 His country's Father or His foster sons.  
 The White House in a sad, unhealthy spot

just higher than Potomac's swampy brim,  
 —they say the present President has got  
 ague or fever in each backwoods limb.  
 On Sunday afternoons I wandered—rather  
 I floundered—out alone. The air was raw  
 and dark; the marsh half-ice, half-mud. This weather  
 is normal now: a frost, and then a thaw,  
 and then a frost. A hunting man, I found  
 the Pennsylvania Avenue heavy ground . . .  
 There all around me in the ugly mud  
 —hoof-pocked, uncultivated—herds of cattle,  
 numberless, wond'ring steers and oxen, stood:  
 beef for the Army, after the next battle.  
 Their legs were caked the color of dried blood;  
 their horns were wreathed with fog. Poor, starving, dumb  
 or lowing creatures, never to chew the cud  
 or fill their maws again! Th'effluvium  
 made that damned anthrax on my forehead throb.  
 I called a surgeon in, a young man, but,  
 with a sore throat himself, he did his job.  
 We talked about the War, and as he cut  
 away, he croaked out, "Sir, I do declare  
 everyone's sick! The soldiers poison the air."

—Elizabeth Bishop

*I Remember, I Remember*

Coming up England by a different line  
 For once, early in the cold new year,  
 We stopped, and, watching men with number-plates  
 Sprint down the platform to familiar gates,  
 "Why, Coventry!" I exclaimed. "I was born here."

I leant far out, and squinned for a sign  
 That this was still the town that had been "mine"  
 So long, but found I wasn't even clear  
 Which side was which. From where those cycle-crates  
 Were standing, had we annually departed

For all those family hols? . . . A whistle went:  
 Things moved. I sat back, staring at my boots.  
 "Was that," my friend smiled, "where you 'have your roots'?"  
 No, only where my childhood was unspent,

I wanted to retort, just where I started:

By now I've got the whole place clearly charted.  
Our garden, first: where I did not invent  
Blinding theologies of flowers and fruits,  
And wasn't spoken to by an old hat.  
And here we have that splendid family

I never ran to when I got depressed,  
The boys all biceps and the girls all chest,  
Their comic Ford, their farm where I could be  
"Really myself." I'll show you, come to that,  
The bracken where I never trembling sat,

Determined to go through with it; where she  
Lay back, and "all became a burning mist."  
And, in those offices, my doggerel  
Was not set up in blunt ten-point, nor read  
By a distinguished cousin of the mayor,

Who didn't call and tell my father *There*  
*Before us, had we the gift to see ahead—*  
"You look as though you wished the place in Hell,"  
My friend said, "judging from your face." "Oh well,  
I suppose it's not the place's fault," I said.

"Nothing, like something, happens anywhere."  
—Philip Larkin

## TEXTS:

Geoffrey Hill, *Canaan*Michael Hofmann, *Selected Poems*Sylvia Plath, *Poems*Derek Walcott, *Collected Poems 1948-1984**Norton Anthology of Poetry: Shorter* ed. Ferguson

week

1 (August 24)	Introduction and Baptism by Fire
2 (August 31)	Ballads and Bards from the <i>Shorter Norton</i>
3 (September 7)	Derek Walcott, <i>The Castaway</i> and <i>The Gulf</i> Eliot, Milton
4 (September 14)	Derek Walcott, <i>Sea Grapes</i> and <i>The Star-Apple Kingdom</i> Wordsworth, Shakespeare
5 (September 21)	Derek Walcott, <i>The Fortunate Traveller</i> and <i>Midsummer</i> Heaney, Dryden
6 (September 28)	Sylvia Plath, 1958-1961 Clare, Hopkins, Dickinson
7 (October 5)	MOVIE NIGHT
8 (October 12)	Sylvia Plath, 1962-1963 Bishop, Marianne Moore
9 (October 19)	Sylvia Plath, 1962-1963 Bishop, Clampitt
10 (October 26)	NO CLASS—INSTRUCTOR IN IDAHO (Eating potatoes, no doubt)
11 (November 2)	Geoffrey Hill, <i>Canaan</i> Herbert, Swift
12 (November 9)	Geoffrey Hill, <i>Canaan</i> Browning, Glück
13 (November 16)	Michael Hofmann, <i>Nights in the Iron Hotel</i> and <i>Acrimony</i> Keats, Berryman
14 (November 23)	Michael Hofmann, <i>Corona, Corona</i> Hass, Frost
15 (November 30)	Michael Hofmann, <i>Approximately Nowhere</i> Frost (part deux) (PORTFOLIOS DUE: Friday, December 3)
16 (December 7)	Fireworks and final pronouncements

It may (but probably will not) be necessary for the instructor to be absent a second evening. Warning shall be given!

## *All the Other Things*

### Classroom Behavior:

Every student in this class is expected to participate in a responsible and mature manner that enhances education. Any conduct that disrupts learning may lead to disciplinary action. Because this course requires collaboration and dialogue among students, it's essential that each student create an environment of respect and tolerance. Remember that students come from very different cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of our may treat controversial topics and opinions. Diverse student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may be foreign to your own. Disrespectful behavior may result in dismissal, and accordingly absence, from the class.

Important Tip: *Never copy and paste something from the Internet without providing the exact location.*

Final Grade Appeals: Students should consult the Associate Chair of the English Department.

Mask Policy: UF expects you to wear masks while in class.

Turn off your cell phone before class.

### *Grading*

A few reminders: (1) This is a studio course, so grading is even more subjective than usual; (2) You're graded on your final assignments and your class participation; (3) There are penalties for late assignments that may affect your final grade; (4) There are penalties for lateness to class, or for missing more than two classes.

#### A

Assignments almost always show remarkable ingenuity or imagination, as well as a complete understanding of the formal or informal demands of the poem, and might often pass for graduate-level work. Class participation is almost always adept, insightful, and surprising in its perceptions.

#### A-

Assignments often show remarkable ingenuity or imagination, as well as an almost complete understanding of the formal or informal demands of the poem, and might reasonably often pass for graduate-level work. Class participation is usually adept, insightful, and surprising in its perceptions.

#### B+

Assignments reasonably often show remarkable ingenuity or imagination, as well as an excellent understanding of the formal or informal demands of the poem, and might fairly often pass for graduate-level work. Class participation is frequently adept, insightful, and surprising in its perceptions.

#### B

Assignments more often than not show remarkable ingenuity or imagination, as well as a very good understanding of the formal or informal demands of the poem, and might sometimes pass for graduate-level work. Class participation is sometimes adept, insightful, and surprising in its perceptions.

#### B-

Assignments sometimes show remarkable ingenuity or imagination, as well as a very good understanding of the formal or informal demands of the poem, and might very occasionally pass for graduate-level work. Class participation is on occasion adept, insightful, and surprising in its perceptions.

#### C+

Assignments rarely show remarkable ingenuity or imagination, as well as a fair understanding of the formal or informal demands of the poem, and might once or twice pass for graduate-level work. Class participation is usually not adept, insightful, and surprising in its perceptions.

C

Assignments almost never show remarkable ingenuity or imagination, have a not so good understanding of the formal or informal demands of the poem, and might once or twice pass for graduate-level work. Class participation is almost never adept, insightful, and surprising in its perceptions. In addition, there may be frequent problems with grammar and syntax.

C-

Assignments virtually never show remarkable ingenuity or imagination, have a poor understanding of the formal or informal demands of the poem, and would probably never pass for graduate-level work. Class participation is virtually never adept, insightful, and surprising in its perceptions. In addition, there may be very frequent problems with grammar and syntax.

D+

C- work further marred by problems of insight and understanding, as well as persistent difficulties with grammar and syntax.

D

D+ work further marred by very great problems of insight and understanding, as well as extraordinary difficulties with grammar and syntax.

D-

D work further marred by inexplicable and apparently ineradicable problems of insight and understanding, as well as even more extraordinary difficulties with grammar and syntax.

E

D- work further marred by nearly incomprehensible insights and understanding, as well as difficulties with grammar and syntax far beyond the norm for someone who cares about the language.

Remember that these are the rubrics only for the assignments and class participation. Your grade may move down with penalties for late attendance or late assignments.

### *UF Stuff*

This course can satisfy the UF General Education requirement for Composition (not *Humanities*). For more info, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-educationrequirement.aspx>

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more info, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/sexual/>

All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more info about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcode.php>

This is a General Education course providing student learning outcomes listed in the Undergraduate Catalog. For more information, see <http://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-educationrequirement.aspx#learning>.



## Further UF Stuff

Course evaluation. 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/>.

Policy on academic honesty. The University community's policies and methods regarding academic honesty, your obligations to me and mine to you with regard to academic honesty, are spelled out in the UF Student Honor Code, which is available online at <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>. Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated in this course. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

- Possessing, using, or exchanging improperly acquired written or oral information in the preparation of graded assignments submitted for this course.
- Substitution of material that is wholly or substantially identical to that created or published by another individual or individuals.
- False claims of performance or work submitted by a student for requirements of this course.

I am obliged to act on any suspected act of academic misconduct. If you are found to have engaged in misconduct penalties may include a reduced or failing grade for the course or other disciplinary proceedings, as per the recommendation of the Dean of Students. If you have any concern that you may not have made appropriate use of the work of others in your research or writing for this course, please confer with me before you submit the assignment. You should retain all graded materials that you receive from me until you receive your final course grade.

Emergency services. U Matter, We Care serves as the umbrella program for UF's caring culture and provides students in distress with support and coordination of a wide variety of appropriate resources. Contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) seven days a week for assistance if you are in distress. Call 352-392-1575 for a crisis counselor overnight and during weekends.

Note also these support services:

University Counseling Center—301 Peabody Hall, 352-392-1575; <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu>  
 Student Health Care Center—352-392-1171  
 Career Resource Center, Reitz Union—352-392-1601  
 Center for Sexual Assault/Abuse Recovery and Education (CARE), Student Health Care Center—  
 352-392-1161  
 University Police Department – 352-392-1111 (non-emergency); call 9-1-1 for emergencies