

## CRW 1301: Beginning Poetry Writing

Instructor: Chloe Cook

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Office Hours: W 2:30pm – 3:30pm, TUR 4343

Course Info: W 9-11 (4:05pm – 7:05pm), FLI 0101

### **Introduction**

*Welcome to the world of poetry*, a place iridescent yet rarely well-behaved. Most of us know a poem when we see one: there are words, lines, titles, and all that. This semester, we will become examiners of the “all that” (i.e., poetic flesh). We will learn to dissect poems, wade through their guts, and form critical opinions about them. We will explore the art of the poem inside and out, upside down and backwards. Then, we will use this knowledge to produce our own exceptional works. By the end of the semester, you will understand what differentiates the “meh” from the “wow,” and perhaps be able to write a bit of wow-worthy stuff yourself.

Our course will unfurl in two parts. In the first half, we will learn all things poetic jargon; we’ll become familiar with conventions, techniques, and craft principles within the genre. We will read Lowell, Plath, and other masters for our sanity (to write the best stuff we must read the best stuff). In the second half, our focus will turn to you as we engage in workshops and learn what constitutes an effective writerly community. Come prepared to play.

### **Required Texts**

*The Poet’s Companion: A Guide to the Pleasures of Writing Poetry*, Kim Addonizio and Dorianne Laux  
*Firstborn*, Louise Glück

*The Collected Poems (with introduction by Ted Hughes)*, Sylvia Plath

*Life Studies and For the Union Dead*, Robert Lowell

### **Overview of Assignments**

Close Readings: We will read three books of poetry throughout the semester. For each close reading, you must select and explore one poem from the collection currently being discussed in class. You will discuss stylistic choices, craft techniques, and other elements you believe to be significant. These close readings will focus on analysis. Each initial post must be at least 300 words. You will also respond to a peer’s post in at least 100 words. These will be due on Canvas on Sundays at 11:59pm.

Critical Analysis Essays: Part of being a poet is being a critic. For these assignments, you will select a poem to thoroughly analyze. The essay will respond to issues of poetic devices, contexts, and forms, and make an assertion about the effectiveness of those elements. These papers will allow you to explore a poem in more depth than the weekly close readings. You will write two analyses, each 750 words in length.

Original Poems: Over the course of the semester, I will assign a series of writing prompts for which you will produce ten original poems. These will be evaluated on adherence to prompt, evidence of effort, and cleanliness (absence of typos/observance of assigned format). I encourage you to play, take risks, and have fun with these prompts. All prompts will have specific guidelines listed on the assignment page. These will be handed in at the start of each class. (Paper copies only!)

**Portfolio:** Your final project will have three parts. First, you will revise five poems, taking into consideration workshop comments and instructor feedback. (Note that you will submit the original version of the poem alongside the revisions, so don't lose those copies.) You will also include a 300-word artist's statement explaining your poetic philosophy, visions, and intuitions. (Maybe even hallucinations?) Lastly, you will write a 200-word letter to your past writer self (the one who showed up on the first day of class) and contemplate the changes you've undergone. This portfolio should be formatted as a chapbook (with a title, table of contents, and third-person author bio). Be encouraged to use (or create) a cover image for your chapbook, and feel free to include a picture of yourself next to your bio.

Assignment	Word Count	Points
Close Readings (x10)	400 x 10 = 4000	20 x 10 = 200
Critical Analysis Essays (x2)	750 x 2 = 1500	100 x 2 = 200
Original Poems (x10) + Workshop Annotations	-	10 x 10 = 100  100 base (2 points will be deducted for each missing set of annotations)
Final Portfolio	300 (Artist Statement) + 200 (Reflective Letter)  = 500	5 Revised Poems = 50 Artist Statement = 25 Reflective Letter = 20 Format = 5  = 100
General Class Participation	-	100 base
	= 6000 total	= 800 total

### Workshop

In our class, workshop space is an intentional space. It is my goal to foster a productive community for which to share our work. You will be introduced to the workshop in more detail during class, but here is an overview: for each workshop, I will select five of the poems submitted to the weekly poetry prompt. When your piece isn't being workshopped, you will need to prepare commentary for the students that *are* being workshopped. For full credit, all workshop poems must follow these guidelines:

1. Times New Roman or Garamond, 12- or 14-point font, single spaced.
2. Title (you may not title a poem "Untitled").
3. Your name must be on the paper.
4. Avoid the use of profanity for shock value.
5. Avoid clichés and empty abstractions.
6. Poems must obey the rules of grammar—no fragments, use proper punctuation, etc.

**Participation:** Workshop relies on discussion; come to class prepared. Unpreparedness will result in a deduction from the general class participation points.

Workshop Poems: Workshop will commence in week 7. As in the first six weeks, you will continue to bring paper copies of your weekly poetry prompt to class. From the poems submitted, I will select 5 for discussion in workshop (I'll email you the names of those poets by Thursday evening). Over the course of the semester, each poet will be workshopped roughly the same number of times.

Classmate Annotations: For each poem being workshopped, you will be expected to annotate the poem and come to class prepared for discussion. You will receive a paper copy of each poem being workshopped and mark it up. I will check these for completion before each workshop.

### **Course-Specific Policies**

1. *Since creative writing is art*, your poetry will be graded holistically. I will evaluate for effort, timeliness, contemplation, and evidence of revision. I will provide feedback aimed at helping you grow as a poet.
2. *Participation* is integral to this class. You must engage in lectures and complete all readings, exercises, and assignments to receive credit. I will holistically evaluate your participation based on your efforts in class and on Canvas. You will automatically start off with 100 participation points. To keep these points, you must complete assignments, arrive to class prepared, participate in workshops/class discussions, and generally contribute to our writerly community. Non-participation will result in a deduction from your 100 points. The more you participate, the more you will learn. (Note: general participation points are graded separately from workshop annotations.)
3. *Late work* will not be accepted for any assignments pertaining to workshop, critical essays, or the final portfolio. For all other assignments, you have a 24-hour grace period. If you submit within the grace period, no points will be deducted. Any work submitted after the grace period will result in a deduction of one full letter grade after your initial grade. (So, if the assignment is originally of B+ merit, but it was submitted after the grace period, it will be graded as a C+.)
4. *Absences* are not encouraged. Since we meet only once a week, attendance is imperative for you to fully engage with the material. You are allotted ONE unexcused absence. More than one unexcused absence will result in your grade being affected. On par with the University of Florida's attendance policy, a student who misses more than 6 class periods automatically fails a course. Each of our meetings is equal to THREE class periods. Therefore, if you miss more than two class meetings, you will automatically fail. This policy is for unexcused absences and does not apply excused absences. Absences are only excused with a doctor's note. Please communicate with me if you have questions or concerns about attendance.
5. *Tardiness* can result in deduction from your participation points. 2 tardy arrivals = 1 absence. A tardy arrival is defined as being 5 minutes late for class without notice.
6. *Classroom etiquette* involves paying attention, doing the work, and treating others with respect. Please keep electronics away.

7. *Essays* must be formatted in MLA.
8. *Paper Maintenance Responsibilities*: You must keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over. The portfolio assignment will require you submit the original versions of your revised poems. Develop a system to organize your work to avoid problems later in the semester.

### **Grading Scale**

A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
E	0-59

For information on UF Grading policies, see:

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

### **General Education Objectives**

- This course confers General Education credit for Composition (C) and 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.

### University-Specific Policies

1. *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 all members of the community: <https://titleix.ufl.edu/about/title-ix-rights/>
2. *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 several behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions.
 

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 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.
3. *Accommodations:* 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.
4. *Crisis:* 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/>
5. *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.
6. *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://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>

Schedule (subject to change)

<b>Date</b>	<b>In Class</b>	<b>Homework</b>
Week 1 Aug. 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• What Is Poetry? Defining “Good” Poetry</li> </ul>	
Week 2 Aug. 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terminology, Clichés</li> <li>• How to Approach and Read Poetry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poem 1</li> <li>• Close Reading 1</li> <li>• Read PC 19-28</li> <li>• Read Glück</li> </ul>
Week 3 Sep. 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss PC 21-29 and Glück</li> <li>• Punctuation, Enjambment, Form</li> <li>• In-Class Readings, Practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poem 2</li> <li>• Close Reading 2</li> <li>• Read PC 85-103</li> <li>• Read Glück</li> </ul>
Week 4 Sep. 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss PC 85-103 and Glück</li> <li>• Simile, Metaphor, Imagery</li> <li>• In-Class Readings, Practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poem 3</li> <li>• Close Reading 3</li> <li>• Read PC 104-112</li> <li>• Read Glück</li> </ul>
Week 5 Sep. 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss PC 104 -112 and Glück</li> <li>• Meter, Rhyme, Sound</li> <li>• In-Class Readings, Practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poem 4</li> <li>• Close Reading 4</li> <li>• Read “The Art of Finding”</li> <li>• Read Plath</li> </ul>
Week 6 Sep. 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss “The Art of Finding” and Plath</li> <li>• Language, Play, Associative/Lateral Logic</li> <li>• In-Class Readings, Practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poem 5</li> <li>• Close Reading 5</li> <li>• Read Plath</li> </ul>
Week 7 Oct. 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop</li> <li>• Discuss Plath</li> <li>• In-Class Readings, Practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Critical Essay 1 Due</b></li> </ul>
Week 8 Oct. 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop</li> <li>• Discuss Plath</li> <li>• In-Class Readings, Practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poem 6</li> <li>• Close Reading 6</li> <li>• Read Plath</li> </ul>
Week 9 Oct. 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop</li> <li>• Discuss Plath</li> <li>• In-Class Readings, Practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poem 7</li> <li>• Close Reading 7</li> <li>• Read Plath</li> </ul>

Week 10 Oct. 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop</li> <li>• Discuss Lowell</li> <li>• In-Class Readings, Practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poem 8</li> <li>• Close Reading 8</li> <li>• Read Lowell</li> </ul>
Week 11 Nov. 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop</li> <li>• Discuss Lowell</li> <li>• In-Class Readings, Practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poem 9</li> <li>• Close Reading 9</li> <li>• Read Lowell</li> </ul>
Week 12 Nov. 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop</li> <li>• Discuss Lowell</li> <li>• In-Class Readings, Practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poem 10</li> <li>• Close Reading 10</li> <li>• Read Lowell</li> </ul>
Week 13 Nov. 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop</li> <li>• Discuss Lowell</li> <li>• In-Class Readings, Practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Critical Essay 2 Due</b></li> <li>• Read “The Warmth of a Messy Page”</li> <li>• Read PC 186-192</li> </ul>
Week 14 Nov. 22	<i>No Class – Thanksgiving Break</i>	
Week 15 Nov. 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop</li> <li>• Discuss “The Warmth of a Messy Page” and PC 186-192</li> <li>• Revision Strategies</li> </ul>	
Week 16 Dec. 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publishing Poetry, Fireworks, Final Notes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Portfolio Due</b></li> </ul>