

CRW 2300—Poetry Writing (12162), Section #1658, Fall 2022 (Aug 24-Dec 7)

Peter Vertacnik | peter.vertacnik@ufl.edu
T Periods 9-11 (4:05-7:05 p.m.) TUR 2342

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2:15-3:45 p.m. TUR 4323 or by appointment

Course website: Canvas

Why we're here and what we'll do

In this course, you will read poems, write poems, and write about poems. Throughout the semester, prompts will direct your writing practice for class. You will give critique to and receive suggestions from your classmates and instructor through workshops and produce final portfolios of revised work.

By the end of this course, you will have a considerable foundation in the vocabulary of poetic devices and forms, and you will be able to read and talk about poetry in an academic setting. You'll be able to conduct yourselves as productive members of a creative writing workshop and demonstrate a sincere attempt to develop an independent writing practice.

Ultimately, you are here for a rigorous exploration of poetry. Emily Dickinson once wrote in a letter, "Nature is a Haunted House—but Art a House that tries to be haunted." A good poem should haunt you. These haunting poems will cause you to ask, "What does this say about the human experience?" or "Why has this stayed with me?" I hope you leave this class having found the poems that resonate with you and inspire you to create your own fine work.

Required Texts

These books have been selected for both effectiveness and affordability. New or used, hardcopy or ebook:

A Poet's Companion - Addonizio and Laux

The Vintage Book of Contemporary American Poetry - McClatchy, 2nd ed.

The Survival Expo - Caki Wilkinson

The Tradition - Jericho Brown

Supplementary readings will be distributed via Canvas.

Assignment Descriptions

PARTICIPATION: Come prepared! Read and write notes on all readings. Arrive on time with all material necessary for class. Make thoughtful and witty comments during each class session. Please note that this course will be discussion-driven. You must contribute.

For workshops, you should make notes on the poems we will workshop. You should read and give complete commentary on each poem before class begins. Please do not do this in a rush right before class. In this class, the workshop demands thoughtfulness, preparation, and effort. Critiques should be honest, constructive, and encouraging. The Golden Rule of Workshop is to critique others as you would like to be critiqued.

POEM DRAFTS: Your poems must be submitted as single-spaced, left-aligned, 12pt serif font. We will write eight of these (plus one revision to be workshopped). Please make sure your poems include a title. Additionally, your name and the assignment number should appear in the top left corner of the page.

Poems must employ correct spelling and grammar and be written in complete sentences. Furthermore, poems should be submitted to me on time and should adhere to the prompt, although if you choose to revise some of these prompted poems for the final packet, you may do away with the constraints of the prompt if it suits the poem. You will compose poems based on prompts that I will provide. Poems will be evaluated based on seriousness of undertaking, adherence to prompt, and professionalism / polish (free of typos/grammatical errors), not on their success or failure as first drafts. You are encouraged to take risks and go where your writing leads you. Each poem will be turned in via hard copy in class **and** in Canvas.

READING RESPONSES: Find the poems that inspire you to want to do your own good work and demonstrate your reading of three of them on the weeks they are due. Six hundred words per response. I would recommend looking to our anthology, the Poetry Foundation's website, and poets.org to source poems for these assignments. They *cannot* be poems we have previously discussed in class.

DISCUSSION: You will lead a fifteen-minute class discussion once during the semester based on a poem you've chosen.

CRITICAL RESPONSE PAPERS: Students will write two critical response papers that analyze aspects of two or more poems. These papers are intended to incorporate criticism, terminology from the textbook, and personal opinions. Include evidence from the text to support your ideas and arguments. The response should be rigorous.

The entries will be evaluated based on the following criteria: 1) demonstrated reading of the works, 2) critical thinking, 3) depth of analysis, 4) use of textual evidence, and 5) engagement with the discussion of craft. Your analytical and critical skills are expected to improve over the course of the semester. "I" statements are allowed but should be used sparingly. You may include quotes from the poems or from the textbook, but the quoted material may not exceed 10% of the word count. 900 words/response.

POET STUDY: Choose a poet whose work you're interested in and write a brief essay considering some shared elements in 3-6 of their poems. 1,000 words.

POET SLAM: Memorizing poems is an ideal way to get inside elements such as rhythm, meter, voice, and rhyme. You will perform a memorized poem during class. The poem will be at least 14 lines long. If not chosen from assigned material, the poem must be approved by me. Your performance will be graded on fluency of delivery and embodiment of the material in question.

ANTHOLOGY ESSAY: Compile a list of 20-30 poems that you find valuable as a reader and writer of poems. This is your personal anthology. Write a 1,000-word essay to introduce this anthology.

FINAL PORTFOLIO and ARTIST STATEMENT: This is the culmination of your work. It will consist of a cover page, all original drafts of your poems with my comments, seven revised poems that showcase what you have learned this semester, and an artist's statement / reflection of at least 550 words.

Point Breakdown

Participation 300
Reading responses 150 [1,800 words of 6,000]
Discussion 50
Workshop Poems 450
Critical Responses 150 [1,800 words]
Poet Study 100 [1,000 words]

Anthology Essay 150 [850 words]
Poet Slam 50
Portfolio and Artist Statement 200 [550 words]

Total 1,600

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

A: demonstrates excellent grasp of the breadth and depth of the assignment
B: demonstrates a good understanding of the assignment
C: meets all the basic stated requirements of the assignment
D: fails to meet most of the basic stated requirements of the assignment
E: fails to follow the basic stated requirements of the assignment; incomplete or missing assignment

The fine print:

COVID Statement

In response to COVID-19, the following recommendations are in place to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, and our loved ones.

- If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit one.ufl.edu for screening / testing and vaccination opportunities.
- If you are sick, stay home. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 to be evaluated.
- Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work.

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 6,000 words. The poems you write do not count towards this requirement:

Reading Responses (3): 1,800 words; Critical Responses (2): 1,800 words; Poet Study (1): 1,000 words; Anthology Essay (1): 850 words; Artist Statement (1): 550 words= 6,000 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 problem.

Course Policies

1. You must complete all assignments to receive credit for this course.
2. **Attendance:** You are allowed two excused absences. A third absence will result in a failing grade for this class. If you have documented extenuating circumstances, please reach out to me; I will handle such situations on a case-by-case basis.
3. **Tardiness:** Three tardies (arriving more than five minutes late or leaving class early) equals one absence. <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>
4. **Classroom behavior and etiquette:** Behave respectfully in class. If you do not, you will be asked to leave.
5. Students are expected to bring hard copies of relevant class materials and take notes on paper. If a cell phone makes a noise in class (rings, vibrates, etc.), you will lose participation credit for the day. You will also lose participation credit if it is evident you are actively using your phone in class or are unengaged in the class discussion.
6. **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/>
7. **Paper Format & Submission:** Each assignment must be submitted in 12-point, serif typeface. Pages must be numbered. One staple goes in the left-hand corner if you are submitting a hard copy. There must be a title. Formatting failures will result in a point deduction. All non-poetry assignments should be submitted electronically on Canvas. Some assignments will also be brought into class as hard copies. I will remind you throughout the semester how/when things should be submitted. The schedule will also serve as a guide.

8. **Late Papers/Assignments:** Late assignments will not be accepted. If for any reason you need an extension, you must approach me at least 24 hours before the deadline.

9. **Paper/Poem Maintenance Responsibilities:** Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.

10. **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. 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:

a. 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.

d. Submitting a document, assignment, or material that, in whole or in part, is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment the Student did not author.

11. 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 the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

12. 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/>

13. If you, or anyone you know, is experiencing food insecurity, the Pantry is a resource to visit. There is no proof of need required in order to shop at the Pantry; you must only bring in your valid UFID card. For more information: <https://pantry.fieldandfork.ufl.edu/>

14. For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

15. **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). Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

16. **Course Evaluations:** 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/>.

Course Schedule

Week One (8.22-8.26)

Since the semester begins on Wednesday, August 24th, and our class meets on Tuesdays, there will, of course, be no class meeting in Week One.

During this week you should:

Complete the *Poet's Companion* readings for Week Two.
Read the syllabus and note questions you have for discussion.
Also prepare to discuss the questions I emailed to you this week.

Week Two (8.29-9.2)

Read: *Poet's Companion (PC)*, "Images," and "Simile and Metaphor."

Course Intro & Syllabus
Discussion questions
Good poem / bad poem;
How I Read a Poem
Class Discussion of Readings
Reading Response Presentation

Reading Response #1 due 11:59pm, Friday, 9.2, via Canvas.

Week Three (9.5-9.9)

Read: *PC*, "The Family: Inspiration and Obstacle," "Voice and Style" (pp.115-122 only), and "Repetition, Rhythm, and Blues." Selections from *The Survival Expo*.

Reading as a writer
Poet Moves
Class Discussion of Readings

Reading Response #2 due, 11:59pm, Friday, Sept. 9th, via Canvas.

Week Four (9.12-9.16)

Read: *PC*, "The Music of the Line;" from our anthology ("Evening Hawk," p. 72; "Strawberrying," p. 100; "Ode to the Maggot," p. 538; "The Paperweight," p. 571; "The City Limits," p. 272; "Whelks," p. 414).

Description and the Ode
Class Discussion of Poems
Poem #1 assigned

Reading Response #3 due, 11:59pm, Friday, Sept.16th, via Canvas.

Week Five (9.19-9.23)

Read: *PC*, "Voice and Style," (p.122-128); from our anthology ("The Tourist from Syracuse," p. 200; "The Woman at the Washington Zoo," p. 59; "The Mad Potter," p. 334; "Paula Becker to Clara Westhoff," p. 354; "Lady Lazarus," p, 376).

Poem #1 due in Canvas (by 3:30pm on the day of class) and in class, via paper copies for each student (and instructor).

Persona / Dramatic Monologue

Student-led discussion of poems from anthology

Practice Workshop

Poem #2 assigned.

Week Six (9.26-9.30)

Read: *PC*, "Stop Making Sense: Dreams and Experiments;" poems from anthology ("The River of Bees," p. 257; "The Dream," p. 324; "Pillow," p. 583; one or both of the two prose-poem excerpts from *The World Doesn't End*, p. 438; "Lake Drummond Dream," p. 479; "Rules of Sleep," p. 152; "The Evening of the Mind," p. 198).

Poem # 2 due in Canvas and in class via paper copies.

Dream Poems & Surrealism

Discussion of Assigned readings (student-led)

Poetry Workshop #1

Poem #3 Assigned

Critical Response #1 due Friday, Sept. 30th, 11:59pm Canvas.

Week Seven (10.3-10.7)

Read: *PC*, "Death and Grief;" "The Elegy's Structures" (via Canvas); poems from anthology ("An Afternoon at the Beach," p. 188; "Variations on a Text by Vallejo," p. 201; "The Day Lady Died," p. 208; "The War in the Air," p. 123; "For a Coming Extinction," p. 260; "For the Anniversary of My Death," p.258; "The Truth the Dead Know," p. 306). Selections from *The Survival Expo*.

Poem #3 due (canvas + paper)

On Elegy

Student-led discussions

Poetry Workshop #2

Poem #4 Assigned

Week Eight (10.10-10.14)

Read: *PC*, "More Repetition: Villanelle, Pantoum, Sestina;" poems from anthology ("One Art," p. 37; "The Waking," p. 44); other poems via Canvas. Selections from *The Survival Expo* and *The Tradition*.

Poem #4 due (Canvas + paper)
On repeating forms
Student-led discussions
Poetry Workshop #3
Poem #5 Assigned

Critical Response #2 due Friday, Oct. 14th, 11:59pm Canvas.

Week Nine (10.17-10.21)

Read: essay on love poems (Canvas); poems from anthology ("Man and Wife," p. 9; "The Shampoo," p. 28; "Cracked Looking Glass," p. 93; "The Illiterate," p. 111; "Eros," p. 508; "Dwelling," p. 585; "No Kingdom," p. 587; "Movement Song," p. 403). Selections from *The Survival Expo*.

Optional reading: *PC*, "Writing the Erotic."

Poem #5 due
Love poems
Student-led discussions
Poetry Workshop #4
Poem #6 assigned

Week Ten (10.24-10.28)

Read: *PC*, "The Shadow; "The Descriptive-Meditative Structure" (on Canvas); poems from anthology ("Learning the Trees," p. 121; "Mind," p. 129; "Ave Maria," p. 211; "Benjamin Banneker Sends His Almanac to Thomas Jefferson," p. 419; "Meditation at Lagunitas," p. 463; "Beach Glass," p. 467; "Paired Things," p. 530; "From 20,000 Feet," p. 541; "Signs," p. 572); selections from *The Survival Expo*.

Poem #6 due
Meditations / Thinking in Poems
Student-led discussions
Poem #7 assigned

Poet Study due Friday, Oct. 28th, 11:59pm in Canvas.

Week Eleven (10.30-11.4)

Read: *PC*, "Meter, Rhyme, and Form;" essay on the sonnet (Canvas); poems from the anthology ("History," p. 18; "Frederick Douglas," p. 85; "Peonies," p. 578); additional sonnets (Canvas). Selections from *The Tradition* and *The Survival Expo*.

Poem #7 due
The Sonnet
Student-led discussions
Workshop #6
Poem #8 Assigned (last poem assignment)

Week Twelve (11.7-11.11)

Read: *PC*, “Poetry of Place;” “Introduction” to our anthology; brief essay on compiling a personal anthology (Canvas). Selections from *The Tradition*.

Poem #8 due

Discussions on place in poetry and anthology-making.

Workshop #7

Week Thirteen (11.14-11.18)

Read: *PC*, “A Grammatical Excursion” “The Energy of Revision,” and one more reading from Canvas; selections from *The Tradition*.

Revised Poem due (Canvas + class)

Poet as Revisor

Revision strategies

Student-led discussions

Workshop #8

Anthology Essay due Friday, Nov. 18th in Canvas, 11:59pm

Week Fourteen (11.21-11.25)

Individual Conferences (F2F, Zoom, Email)

(Thanksgiving Week)

Week Fifteen (11.28-12.2)

Read: *PC*, “Witnessing,” “Self-Doubt,” and “Writer’s Block;” selections from *The Survival Expo*.

Discussions on final readings

Revision workshop (final workshop)

Week Sixteen (12.5-12.9)

Last class of the semester!

Poet Slam

Final thoughts

Student evaluations

Week Seventeen (Finals Week)

Final Portfolio (w/ Artist’s Statement) due Monday, Dec 12th, 11:59pm in Canvas.