

## CRW 2300 – Poetry Writing (Section #37B8 Class #12008), Fall 2023

**Instructor name:** Gregory Calabro

**Course meeting time and location:** Thursday, Periods 6-8 (12:50-3:50) in TUR 2353

**Office location and hours:** Turlington 4317; Thursdays 4:00pm-6:00pm or by appointment

**Course website:** Canvas (<https://ufl.instructure.com/>)

**Instructor email:** gregory.calabro@ufl.edu

**Course Description:** It should come as no surprise that in this course we'll be reading, writing, discussing, and responding to poetry. With that being said, poetry has a broad range of definitions in both the public and academic spheres. Poetry also maintains a strange existence in which it is scarcely consumed (how often does the average person crack open a book of Frost or Dickinson without being prompted by a teacher?) yet arguably growing in popularity **if** we include music (Bob Dylan winning the Nobel Prize, Kendrick Lamar winning a Pulitzer) and social media (Instagram poetry, etc.). With this in mind, three major questions on which we will focus are the following: What is poetry? Why do we consume it? and How do we create it?

This course will unfold in two parts. In the first, we'll get comfortable with some of the conventions, traditions, and techniques poets use to their advantage (or subvert in impressive fashion). In the second, we'll begin exploring our own poetic sensibilities by crafting and respectfully critiquing poems for workshop.

### 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 will include multiple forms of effective writing, different writing styles, approaches and formats, and methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes, and contexts. Students will 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 the 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:** Hard copies are required, and I highly recommend purchasing used copies of books to save money. These selections will be supplemented by additional poems posted on Canvas. Amazon is a

good resource for discounted books, as are Thriftbooks.com, Abe Books, and Bookshop.org. You may also choose to support local bookstores like Book Gallery West (<https://www.bookgallerywest.com/>) and Third House Books (<https://www.thirdhousebooks.com/order-online>). Keep in mind also that both Library West and the Alachua County Library System have options for curbside pick-up.

- *The Making of a Poem* by Mark Strand & Eavan Boland
- *Nil Nil* by Don Paterson
- *Lighthouse* by Terrance Hayes
- Supplemental poems posted on Canvas

### Assignments:

Assignment	Word Count	Points Available
Close Readings	400 (x4)	35 (x4)
Close Reading Responses	200 (x4)	15 (x4)
Critical Essay	1,100 (x2)	125 (x2)
Practice Annotation	-	10
Poem Drafts	-	20 (x8)
Final Portfolio	1,200	200
Participation	-	150
Poem Recitation	200	20
Literary Magazine Submission	-	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>6000</b>	<b>1000</b>

### Writing:

- **4 Close Readings (400 words each):** These assignments will require you to examine the language and construction of a poem carefully and deliberately. **The aim is not mere summary;** instead, you should advance an argument about what a poem does and how/why it does it. You'll choose one poem that interests you from those we'll read during the week your Close Reading is due, and then select **one to six lines** of that poem to examine in your Close Reading. You may, and often should, draw on the context offered by the entire poem when crafting your reading, but it's important that you narrow your focus to only a few lines—good poems will give you plenty to talk about, even in such a small space. You'll upload your completed assignments to the appropriate Canvas discussion board.
- **4 Close Reading Responses (200 words each):** For these assignments, each of you will reply to one other student's close reading via the Canvas discussion board. The goal of these assignments is to allow exploration of poems' tensions, complexities, and shades of meaning. To this end, you'll work to adapt, expand, specify, or even challenge your classmates' close readings in a meaningful and respectful way. **\*Please be sure to paste the full text of the close reading to which you're responding at the top of your reply, in quotation marks—this will make my life a bit easier.\***
- **2 Critical Analyses (two 1,100-word essays):** Each Critical Analysis will give you space to explore the poetry collections we read during this course. While you'll still employ your close-reading abilities, Critical Analyses should attend to and critique the ways in which poems across a collection interact, or the ways in which a given technique, formal element, motif, symbol, etc. manifests in and affects the collection. In short, you'll use close analysis of poems and parts of poems to say something broader about the collection at hand (your analysis should amount to something much more rigorous than "I really like this book," or "This book flows nicely"). In these analyses, you must use evidence from the text to support your arguments, but quotations should not exceed 10% of a paper's total word count. It will be impossible, of course, for you to discuss a collection's every poem in your response—it wouldn't be useful to attempt such a feat, either. On the contrary, you'll want to limit your argument to the most relevant poems.

- **1 Practice Annotation (no word count):** As you prepare to encounter and critique each other's poems in workshop, you'll need to learn how to mark up a poem, and what to look for as you do so. I'll assign one poem, on which you'll leave at least 5 insightful notes in the margins, and one short critical paragraph. As you annotate, ask yourself what the poem is saying, what features seem to contribute to or detract from that purpose, what could use more explanation, and what may not be necessary. You're welcome and encouraged to ask additional questions of yourself, and the poem, too. Above all, practice responding and questioning in a respectful manner, but without fixating on empty praise.
- **8 Poem Drafts (no word count):** These poems will be responses to a prompt given in class. Ideally, the prompts will help you to fend off writer's block, but their main purpose will be to provide you with constraints that compel you to think outside the box and make innovative choices. When you revise these poems, you may choose whether or not to do away with the constraints of the prompt. Please make sure your poems include a title, along with your name and the assignment number. Poems must employ correct spelling and grammar, and be written in complete sentences. Additionally, you should strive to avoid fantasy, reliance on cliché, rhyme that feels forced, abundances of abstract concepts not rooted in the physical world, and attempts at sounding wise. Each poem's grade will depend on its earnest exploration, deliberate construction, grammatical polish, and adherence to the prompt, but not on its success or failure as a first draft.
- **Final Portfolio (including 600-word Artist's Statement and 600-word Revision Reflection):** With the aid of the feedback your peers and I will have offered on your poems, you'll revise four of them, and assemble them in an order that makes sense to you, as though you were putting together a mini-chapbook; each poem should interact meaningfully with those before and after, perhaps even coming together to present a shared theme or story. With each revised draft, you must include the original draft with my comments. The frontmatter of the portfolio will include a 600-word Artist's Statement, in which you'll call upon what you've learned from our readings and in class to describe the scope and purpose of your poetry, and the context in which it can be understood. It will also include a 600-word Revision Reflection, which will examine the ways in which your poetry and poetics have evolved through revision, incorporating evidence from your work and from the annotations thereon.

### **Participation, etc.:**

- **Class Discussion:** Your frequent and insightful contributions to the conversations we have in class will contribute to your participation grade. In order to make such contributions, you'll have to complete the required readings for each week (it helps to take notes!) and come to class prepared and eager to engage. This class will be discussion-driven, so you must do your part to help us learn as a community.
- **Workshop:** The golden rule here is to critique as you'd like to be critiqued. Read each poem up for workshop carefully, **at least twice**, before you come to class, and leave at least 4-5 annotative comments/questions on the poem (you're encouraged to hand your annotated copy to whomever wrote it after workshop ends). Focus on the poem and what it's doing on the page or what it could do in the next draft. In nearly every case, your focus should be on the speaker of the poem rather than the poet themselves. Try your best to further the discussion at hand whenever possible, and always make honest, constructive, and respectful feedback your goal. Your fellow poets depend on this, as does your participation grade.
- **Poem Recitation (with 200-word introduction):** One of the best ways to understand the sonic and aural qualities of a poem, as well as their effects, is to read it aloud. You'll practice getting to know the intimate ins and outs of a poem of your choosing by committing it to memory and then reciting it for the class. The poem you choose must have been published and consist of at least 14 lines, including 50 words. You'll also compose a 200-word introduction on the poet who wrote the poem, that poet's work, the poem itself, why you chose it, etc. Your presentation will be graded on the fluency of your delivery and its embodiment of the material.

- **Literary Magazine Submission (no word count):** By the end of the semester, you'll submit one of your original poems to a literary magazine of your choosing (here's a good list of some notable poetry magazines: <https://cliffordgarstang.com/2020-literary-magazine-ranking-poetry/>). I'll accept any proof of submission (a screenshot of the "Submitted" page, for instance). If you choose to write a cover letter/bio, I'll be happy to give it a look, though this isn't required. This assignment is just an exercise in putting your voice out there as a member of a poetic community.

### Course Policies:

1. *Assignments:* You must complete all assignments to receive credit for this course.
2. *Attendance:* Given that we meet only once a week, you are allowed **one** absence without explanation or excuse (though prior notice would be greatly appreciated given the nature of the course). Subsequent unexplained or unexcused absences will affect your grade. **If you have more than 2 absences, you cannot pass the course.**

Excused absences, such as athletic events, theater commitments, illnesses, family emergencies, etc. **require appropriate documentation AND advance notice given to me.** You will be responsible for meeting with me outside of class to make a plan for completing work missed due to absences. You will also be responsible for turning in any assignments regardless of whether you are in class or not. For UF's official attendance policy, you can visit: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

3. *Tardiness:* Be on time to show respect to your colleagues and me. Should lateness be unavoidable, understand that **3 late arrivals without advance notice = 1 absence.**
4. *Classroom Behavior:* Please be respectful and attentive to your colleagues and to me when we are talking, whether during discussion of published poets or during workshop of our own work. In particular, be respectful of your colleagues' diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and beliefs. Critique others as you would like to be critiqued—for me, that means substantive, actionable feedback that respects the intention and inherent validity of the submitted work.

You are also responsible for keeping up with your UF email, as this is how I will contact you outside of class. Feel free to reach out to me via Canvas messaging anytime—I'll try to respond within 24 hours on business days.

**No use of phones or laptops** during class, unless I specifically instruct you to use your laptops for in-class work.

5. *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/about/title-ix-rights/>
6. *Paper Format & Submission:* All assignments should be typed in a readable, 12 pt. font with standard 1 in. margins. All assignments except poems should be double-spaced. (Poems should be single-spaced.) **Submit all poems**, whether to me or for workshop, **on paper in class AND on Canvas. If your poem is due for workshop, you will be responsible for bringing the specified number of copies.** Submit all other assignments (Critical Analyses, Close Readings, etc.) on Canvas as specified in each assignment's instructions.
7. *Late Papers/Assignments:* Acceptance of late papers/assignments will be at my discretion and dependent on circumstances. **Here, as with absences, advance notice is key.**

8. *Paper Maintenance Responsibilities.* Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.
9. *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 a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions.

As specified by the current 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:

- 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.

In short, show respect to yourself, your colleagues, and me by submitting original work earnestly and honestly produced by you for all assignments.

10. 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.
11. *Students who are in distress* or who are in need of counseling or urgent help: please contact <https://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 at (352) 392-1575. You can also contact them online at <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>

If you are experiencing unmanageable stress or other emotional or physical distress during the semester, please **ask me for help finding resources**. In addition to teaching you to read and write poetry, I am committed to helping you succeed in a rigorous academic environment and to introducing you to the myriad resources for mental, physical, and emotional help and for time- and stress-management available on campus.

12. For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>
13. *Grade Appeals.* In 1000- and 2000-level courses, students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount ([cblount@ufl.edu](mailto:cblount@ufl.edu)), Program Assistant, in the Department office (4008 TUR). Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

14. *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>

**Grading Scale and General Rubric:**

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
93-100	90-92	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	67-69	63-66	60-62	0-59
4.0	3.67	3.33	3.0	2.67	2.33	2.0	1.67	1.33	1.0	0.67	0.00

**"A"**- A paper at this level is truly high quality. It demonstrates a clear understanding of critical concepts, creatively addresses the subject matter, and exceeds the expectations of critical analysis. A paper with this grade will be free of grammatical errors.

**"B"**- A paper with this grade has met the standards of the assignment at a high level. This assignment may need revision but is organized in a logical way and avoids fallacies or mistakes in critical analysis. A paper with this grade may contain grammatical errors but will be readable.

**"C"**- A paper that earns a "C" has done everything that was required, but no more. This assignment may require significant revision to more thoroughly examine critical elements or may need reorganization. A paper with this grade will generally contain a few grammatical errors but will still be readable.

**"D"**- This paper does not adequately fulfill the assignment to a satisfactory degree. One portion of an assignment may be missing or there may be a misused critical element. Papers with this grade tend to be disorganized and contain many grammatical errors.

**"E"**- This paper does not address the assignment prompt or is unreadable/incomplete.

**Course Schedule:**

Our syllabus and course schedule, including planned readings and assignment due dates, follows on the next page. Syllabus and schedule are subject to change and adjustment at my discretion and/or due to severe weather, health/safety concerns, and other mitigating circumstances. I will always advise you of any changes both in class meetings and through email with advance notice.

Date/Week	Readings (Complete Before Class)	Classwork	Assignments Due (by 4:00 p.m. on Thursday unless otherwise stated)
08/24 (Week 1)		Introductions, syllabus review, and discussion about reading closely	
08/31 (Week 2)	<i>The Making of a Poem</i> “The Stanza” Pg. 136-158  Supplemental Poems	What is poetry and why would one engage with it?  Close readings	Close Reading 1 due <b>Wednesday at 4 p.m.</b>  Close Reading Response 1 due
09/07 (Week 3)	<i>The Making of a Poem</i> “The Pastoral” Pg. 207-239  Supplemental Poems	Denotation, connotation, association  Learning from “bad poetry”	Close Reading 2 due <b>Wednesday at 4 p.m.</b>  Close Reading Response 2 due
09/14 (Week 4)	<i>The Making of a Poem</i> “The Ode” Pg. 240-258  Supplemental Poems	Clarity, ambiguity, and obscurity  Using the concrete  Close readings	Close Reading 3 due <b>Wednesday at 4 p.m.</b>  Close Reading Response 3 due
09/21 (Week 5)	<i>The Making of a Poem</i> “Open Forms” Pg. 259-287  Supplemental Poems	Figures of speech and representation  Close readings	Poem 1 due

<p><b>09/28</b> <b>(Week 6)</b></p>	<p><i>The Making of a Poem</i> “Ii Meter” Pg. 159-164  “Blank Verse” Pg. 101-120</p>	<p>Writing about poetry  Formal techniques in poetry  Practice Annotation  Close readings</p>	<p>Close Reading 4 due <b>Wednesday at 4 p.m.</b>  Close Reading Response 4 due  Poem 2 due</p>
<p><b>10/05</b> <b>(Week 7)</b></p>	<p>Part 1 of <i>Nil Nil</i>  <i>The Making of a Poem</i> “The Ballad” Pg. 73-100</p>	<p>Discuss <i>Nil Nil</i>  Writing about poetry  Reading a body of work</p>	<p>Poem 3 due</p>
<p><b>10/12</b> <b>(Week 8)</b></p>	<p>Parts 2 and 3 of <i>Nil Nil</i></p>	<p>Discuss <i>Nil Nil</i>  Workshop Poem 3</p>	<p>Poem 4 due</p>
<p><b>10/19</b> <b>(Week 9)</b></p>	<p>Part 4 of <i>Nil Nil</i>  <i>The Making of a Poem</i> “The Sonnet” Pg. 55-72</p>	<p>Discuss <i>Nil Nil</i>  Workshop Poem 4</p>	<p>Critical Analysis 1 Due  Poem 5 due</p>
<p><b>10/26</b> <b>(Week 10)</b></p>	<p>Parts 1 and 2 of <i>Lighthouse</i></p>	<p>Discuss <i>Lighthouse</i>  Workshop Poem 5</p>	<p>Poem 6 due</p>
<p><b>11/02</b> <b>(Week 11)</b></p>	<p>Part 3 of <i>Lighthouse</i>  <i>The Making of a Poem</i> “The Sestina” Pg. 21-42</p>	<p>Discuss <i>Lighthouse</i>  More about sonics  Workshop Poem 6</p>	<p>Poem 7 due</p>

<p><b>11/9 (Week 12)</b></p>	<p>Part 4 of <i>Lighthouse</i></p>	<p>Class trip to the Harn Museum or movie day!  (Ekphrastic)</p>	<p>Critical Analysis 2 Due</p>
<p><b>11/16 (Week 13)</b></p>	<p><i>The Making of a Poem</i> "The Pantoum" Pg. 43-54</p>	<p>The person behind the poem  Workshop Poem 7  Recitation</p>	<p>Poem 8 due  Recitation intro due</p>
<p><b>11/23 (Week 14)</b></p>		<p><b>No class. Have a wonderful break!</b></p>	
<p><b>11/30 (Week 15)</b></p>		<p>Tearful goodbyes  Class reading  Workshop Poem 8</p>	<p>Final Portfolio due 11:59 on Tuesday, 12/13  Submission to Lit Mag due</p>