

CRW-3310
Section M134

Advanced Seminar in Poetry Writing

Professor Ange Mlinko
Tuesday, Period 9-11 (4:05 pm - 7:05 pm)
Matherly 0005
Office Hours: Tuesday 2 pm - 3:30 pm in Turlington 4211-E, or by appointment on Zoom

Required Texts:

Sailing the Forest: Selected Poems by Robin Robertson
Falling Awake: Poems by Alice Oswald
The Craft of Poetry by Lucy Newlyn

Recommended Texts:

Rhyme's Reason by John Hollander
Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics (available online through Library West)
The Oxford English Dictionary (via UF VPN: oed.com)
Merriam-Webster Dictionary and Thesaurus
Chicago Manual of Style
Norton's Anthology of Contemporary Poetry
Oxford Book of English Poetry

Recommended web resources:

poetryfoundation.org Poem Guides and [Glossary of Poetic Terms](#).

Course Description

"Books are a way of learning to feel more acutely." —Marguerite Yourcenar
"Write something for me," Robert Frost implored a friend. "Give it a pain, a laugh, a thrill."

Welcome to the Advanced Seminar in Poetry Writing. Poems are a kind of ancient technology to get feeling into words as effectively, passionately, and joyfully as possible, and we will explore some different ways of doing so by reading poems and modeling our own efforts after them, methodically exploring one craft element at a time.

We will follow Frost's dictum: each poem must contain a pain, a laugh, a thrill. That will be an ongoing prompt, in addition to which you will follow other prompts based on our readings. This is, on the one hand, a rather simple and focused class. But it isn't easy to write a good poem every week. You will have to devise ways of tapping your creativity: day journals or dream journals, formal experiments, taking dictation from people around you and manipulating text—everything is fair game. The point is to avoid cliché and never phone it in. The point is to be true to life and emotion while creating a performance in language. You should hold yourself and your classmates to high standards.

Each week you will be required to do three things:

- 1) **Write a poem** according to the prompt and post it to Canvas by Sunday at midnight. If you are up for workshop on Tuesday, you'll post it in two places: under "Assignments" (for me to grade) and under "Discussion" (for your classmates to access). If you are not being workshopped that week, you can simply upload once to "Assignments." Points will be deducted for not following prompt and presentation guidelines. Late work won't be accepted after workshop.

Poems **must** start with a title, with extra space between title and first line, and end with your name. Font must be serif, 11- or 12-pt., single-spaced. Upload it in Word only. Put your name in the doc name as well, e.g. smith-poem1.docx

- 2) **Critique your classmates' poems** —By Sunday morning, you should be able to download your classmates' poems for discussion on Tuesday. Please make notes and comments in writing; I will call on you in class if you don't participate. Don't scribble comments during class; this is homework.

Vocabulary for discussing classmates' poems will, of course, be respectful, and will not rely on vague, fuzzy terms like "flow" or "relatable." It's not enough to "like" something; you have to point to effectiveness of word choice and elegant variation, vocal register, rhetorical or genre decisions, meter and other prosodic elements (internal rhyme, assonance, variation of sentence length, etc.)

- 3) **Do the reading**—you won't be able to follow the prompt if you don't do the assigned readings. Poems derive from other poems; they are responses to the world, not stuff that just comes out of people's heads *ex nihilo*.

- 4) On the last day of class, you will turn in your portfolio of poems written during this semester, and do a short reading of your own work in addition to a recitation (memorized) of your favorite poem in the anthology.

Schedule

Date	Workshop	Assignment
Jan 11	Introduction to class	Reading: Seamus Heaney, "Feeling into Words," "Digging" Exercise #1: 14-line poem with an original metaphor for writing/memory
Jan 18	Class discussion of exercise 1	Reading: Newlyn, pp. 10-20; PDF packet Exercise #2: Stanzas, one sentence per stanza; <u>or</u> a sonnet in one complete grammatical sentence
Jan 25	Class discussion of exercise 2	Reading: Newlyn, pp. 132-147, PDF packet Excercise #3 Villanelle with two strong repeating lines

Date	Workshop	Assignment
Feb 1	Class discussion of exercise 3	Reading: Newlyn, pp. 85-89; PDF packet Prompt #1: Write a poem exploiting the sounds and connotations of place-names; <u>or</u> a list poem, <u>or</u> a poem using negative grammatical constructions.
Feb 8	Workshop A	Reading: Newlyn, pp. 175-183
Feb 15	Workshop B	Reading: PDF packet Prompt #2: Choose another option from Prompt #1 above.
Feb 22	Workshop A	Reading: Robin Robertson TKTK
Mar 1	Workshop B	Read Robin Robertson: rest of Selected Poems over break Response paper: close reading, 500 words
Mar 8	Spring Break	
Mar 15	Discussion of Robertson	Prompt #3: Narrative poem using mythology, 14-25 lines
Mar 22	Workshop A	Reading: Start Oswald
Mar 29	Workshop B	Reading: Read first half of Oswald (up to "Tithonus") Prompt #4: Write about water, whether a drop, a glass, or a spate of water, 14-25 lines
Apr 5	Workshop A	Reading: "Tithonus"; Oswald lecture
Apr 12	Workshop B	
Apr 19	Discussion of Oswald; turn in papers; recitations	

Criteria for grading poems

I will be starting us off on exercises for three weeks; I will go easy on those. Once we begin the workshop proper, I will deduct points for sloppiness, lazy thinking, and clichés. Here are some expectations for a good poem:

1. Follow the prompts! I will deduct points for not following the prompt.
2. No Dr. Seuss, Shel Silverstein, or children's poetry rhythms and rhymes. In fact, it is better to stay away from end-rhyme and rhyme schemes as a beginner, unless you already have had practice.

Internal rhyme and assonance, however, are encouraged. Attempting to establish an iambic rhythm is also encouraged.

3. Use isometric lines, even if you are unsure about meter—try counting out your syllables if you're unsure about where the stress falls (dictionaries can show you where stress falls in a word). Break a line of verse where you would naturally put a period, comma, or other punctuation. If you break a line where no natural pause occurs, that's called "enjambment," and you should use it sparingly.
4. Creativity is encouraged in subject matter, metaphor, vocabulary choices, and formal approaches. Creativity is not to be found in "using the white space," crazy line breaks, vulgarities, shock value.
5. Educate yourself on what clichés are, and avoid them to the best of your ability. Clichés are dead metaphors like "It's raining cats and dogs," canned language from therapy and politics "we are on a journey," "it empowers me," and the language of pop songs, hashtags, and slang.

Prose

Good poets are also good readers of poetry, and good writers of prose. You will write a response paper (500 words), doing a close reading of one of the poems from Robin Robertson: *Selected Poems*. Your final portfolio at the end of the semester will include a 500-word essay on a poem from this semester that influenced your approach to writing.

Memorization

You will choose one poem from our materials to memorize and recite on the last day of class.

Recommendations

Invest in a good dictionary, thesaurus, and style guide. Expand your vocabulary and practice elasticity in your syntax and word choice.

Keep a notebook—a dream journal, a place to put favorite quotations and passages from literature, place-names that evoke memories, interesting words you want to use in the future, similes and metaphors that occur to you while you are doing other things, overheard bits of dialogue, books you want to read, movies you want to see, places you want to visit. These will provide inspiration for you when the well runs dry.

Policies and Protocols:

1. This is a workshop (seminar), not a lecture course, so your grade will reflect your presence and participation.
2. Class Participation is 50% of your total grade. To maintain your points you must come prepared with all materials: your own poems and papers, plus my PDF packets and assigned texts. Non-participation will result in a deduction in points.
3. Late work, unless accompanied by a doctor's note, will receive a 10-point deduction. All work must be handed to me on paper.
4. Cell phones should be silenced and out of sight.
5. Attendance: UF's attendance policies state that a student who misses more than 6 class periods automatically fails a course. Each of our course 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. Click here for UF's attendance policies: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

6. Being tardy or missing materials 3 times = 1 absence

Point Break Down

Assignment	Points	Total
14 classes (attendance)	72 points each	1008 (50% of grade)
7 Poems	36 points each	252
1 Response Paper	points each	250
1 Final Portfolio/Paper	400 pts	400
1 Recitation from memory	100 pts	100
	Total Possible Points: 2010	

Grading Rubric

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

Criteria for Grading Papers

"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 quality 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 it 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 not have been touched upon 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.

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 any and all members of the community:

2. *Recordings*: Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session. Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.
3. *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. 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.
4. 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.
5. *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/>
6. For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

7. *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 Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.
8. *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/>

COVID Statement:

If you suspect that you may have been exposed to COVID, please report for testing immediately and observe an obligatory quarantine period. You should also report to me immediately so that you may arrange to continue your coursework.

During our face-to-face encounters in-class and in-person office hours, while it is not required, it is expected that students and faculty wear face coverings as advised by the CDC.

Please continue to check the University's updates moving forward throughout the semester: <https://coronavirus.ufl.edu/university-updates/>