

# ENG 4953: American Women's Poetry (Department Seminar for Majors)

## Professor M. Bryant

Class # 26194

Section 8MB2

(Fall 2025)

*Class meets* F2F in TUR 2334 on Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays per. 4 (10:40-11:30)

\*If unforeseen circumstances require a remote meeting, I'll put a Zoom Link on Canvas.

*Office Hours:* Mondays & Fridays (1:15 – 2:00) in TUR 4221 + by appointment

*E-mail:* [mbryant@ufl.edu](mailto:mbryant@ufl.edu) & Canvas message

*Web:* <http://people.clas.ufl.edu/mbryant/>

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This weekly seminar-format course offers a close look at 8 American poets who launched their careers in the 20th century. We will examine their poems, lives, and cultural contexts as we take on a wide range of styles. As we move through the syllabus, poets' perceptions of domesticity, love, gender, family, mythology, and poetic language will shift as *women's poetry* becomes a marketing category and an academic field. Our poets: Edna St. Vincent Millay (*Collected Sonnets*), Gertrude Stein (*Tender Buttons*), H.D. (early poems online), Gwendolyn Brooks (*Selected Poems*), Sylvia Plath (*Ariel*, Restored edition), Anne Sexton (*Selected Poems*), Rita Dove (*Mother Love*), and UF's own Ange Mlinko (*Foxglovewise*). We'll also explore a major literary magazine that featured women's writing and art, [Kalliope](#) (founded in Jacksonville, Florida). Course assignments will be a short and a long paper, an individual presentation about 1 poem, a *Kalliope* archive worksheet, Perusall annotations, engaged participation in class discussions, and a creative assignment. Our work together will sharpen your skills in literary analysis, argumentative writing, and creative thinking. I look forward to discussing the poems and exploring the *Kalliope* archive with you.

### COURSE GOALS

1. *Students will be able to identify key poets and cultural contexts for American women's poetry across and beyond the 20th century.*
2. *Students will hone their close reading strategies for interpreting and talking about poems.*
3. *Students will write convincing interpretations and arguments about course texts, improving their writing in response to instructor feedback. They will also have an opportunity to do creative writing.*
4. *Students will do archival research on the Florida-based literary magazine Kalliope: A Journal of Women's Literature and Art.*
5. *Students will gain professional experience by making a brief presentation and facilitating part of class discussion.*

### COURSE TEXTS

Edna St. Vincent Millay, *Collected Sonnets* (Harper)  
Gertrude Stein, *Tender Buttons* (Dover)  
H.D. (early poems only, online)  
Gwendolyn Brooks, *Selected Poems* (Harper)  
Sylvia Plath, *Ariel*, Restored edition (Harper)  
Anne Sexton, *Selected Poems* (Mariner/Houghton)  
Ange Mlinko, *Foxglovewise* (Faber, Macmillan)  
Rita Dove, *Mother Love* (Norton)

Any edition with the complete text should work; I posted good editions I found on UF's Text Adoption site. Some of the textbooks are available as e-books, including Mlinko's new volumes of poems. Some are available electronically through UF Libraries, and some individual poems are linked to our Canvas modules.

## WHAT DETERMINES YOUR COURSE GRADE

(Assignment details in Canvas)

- Class Participation (20%)
- Digital Participation - 9 Perusall annotations (15%)
- Seminar Presentation (15%)
- Paper 1– Keyword & Close Reading (15%)
- Paper 2 – Literary Magazine Project (25%)
- Creative Assignment (10%)
- Worksheet (ungraded)

## COURSE POLICIES

1. You must *complete all assignments* to receive credit for this course.
2. *Attendance*: Like all seminars, ours one needs you; we only meet once a week. Life happens, so everyone has **1** allotted absence this semester without penalty. Use it wisely (for emergencies, illness). You will earn a lowered course grade if you accrue **3** absences, and you will fail the course at **4** absences (4 weeks of the semester). If you have a medical condition or emergency that will affect your attention, you should contact me about a possible accommodation. Providing *documentation* will protect you should you need a long extension, a medical withdrawal or equivalent. For other circumstances, this course follows [UF Attendance Policies](#).
3. *Latecomers* receive partial absences.
4. *Class Participation*: Learning to participate effectively and to move our conversation forward will help you understand the material and develop professional communication skills. If you're shy about offering opinions, try asking questions. Remember that if you are confused about a text, others are, too. (Note that our course also includes credit for Digital Participation.)
5. Note that I have an ADA accommodation for no hybrid teaching, so Zoom attendance can't work in this class.
6. *Netiquette*. While our course communications needn't be formal, *they must always be professional*. This includes respecting diversity in race, ethnicity, class, gender, region, sexuality, and ability. Inappropriate communications in class, office hours, on email or in digital assignments (Annotations, Discussion Posts) violate this rule. Remember: your emails and other communications through UF are public records.
7. *Social Media Policy*. Let us be respectful of one another on social media as well as in our course communications. I often post about my teaching, and it's always something positive. I never describe my students on social media, and I only share (and credit) their work by permission. Whether in person or online, we are a learning community.
8. *Paper Format for Canvas submissions*: Please put your name & email address on the front page of your paper and number your pages. Use a 12 point font, 1-inch margins, and double spacing. Grammatical errors will cost you, so proofread (good practice for preparing job market materials).
9. *Late Paper Submission*. Late papers and other assignments earn grade reductions. *Unless you have an extension*, work submitted over a week late will earn an E (Note Canvas will be Canvas and late-stamp submissions even if I've given you an extension. Just ignore that.)
10. *Save That Assignment!* Always make backup copies of your work for your records.

11. Requests for *Letters of Recommendation* require three weeks' notice before the first Due date. (There's link to my Recommendation Guidelines in the Overview module.) Note that I'm retiring from UF after Spring term 2026.
12. *Policy on environmental sustainability.* If you do not elect to keep your print texts, consider sharing them with others after the semester ends. (For example, donating them to the Alachua County [Friends of the Library](#) annual book sale.)

## UF POLICIES

Our course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see [this link](#), which also contains information about Campus Resources.

## More About In-Class Recordings

Note that our course format tilts toward discussion and student presentations; it is not a lecture course. Student participation in discussion counts toward the course grade, and the UF policy linked above states: *A class lecture does not include academic exercises involving student participation.*

## More About AI and Course Assignments

Note that UF's definition of plagiarism now includes Entities (such as AI) on p. 14, #5. *If detection software picks up generative AI in your Papers*, I will consult with you about the findings. You may need to rewrite all or part of that assignment to receive credit.

## COURSE SCHEDULE OVERVIEW (see Canvas Modules for details)

Dates	Mod.	Topic	Due
8.27	1	Introduction: Women's Poetry & Its Cultural Meanings	
9.3	2	Millay, the New Woman & Modern Love	Annotation 1 <i>Presentations 1 &amp; 2</i>
9.10	3	The Form Continuum: Stein & Millay	Annotation 2 <i>Presentation 3</i>
9.17	4	Stein & The Domestic Avant-garde	Annotation 3 <i>Presentations 4 &amp; 5</i>
9.24	5	H.D. & Revisionist Mythmaking	Annotation 4 <i>Presentations 6 &amp; 7</i>
10.1	6	Brooks, Chicago & City Poetics	Annotation 5 <i>Presentations 8 &amp; 9</i>
10.8	7	<i>Kalliope</i> & Women's Literary Magazines (meet in Library East, Judaica Suite)	Archive Worksheet
10.15	8	Brooks & Postwar Domesticity	Paper 1 (ext. for presenters) <i>Presentations 10 &amp; 11</i>
10.22	9	Plath, Myth & The Domestic Surreal	Annotation 6 <i>Presentations 12 &amp; 13</i>
10.29	10	Plath, Sexton & Mythologies of Writing	<i>Presentations 14 &amp; 15</i>

11.5	11	Sexton, Womanhood & Performance	Annotation 7 <i>Presentations 16 &amp; 17</i>
11.12	12	<i>Foxgloves</i> : Mlinko's New Poetics	Annotation 8 <i>Presentations 18 &amp; 19</i>
11.19	13	Dove & Mythic Reinvention	Annotation 9 <i>Presentations 20 &amp; 21</i>
		Thanksgiving Week Break	
12.3	14	The End: Covers & Cookies	Creative Assignment
12.10		Finals Week	Paper 2