

English 4110
Advanced Poetry Workshop
Fall 2026

Professor: **Corey Marks**

Office: **AUDB 214**

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Office Hours: **Wednesday 1:00-2:30 & by appointment**

Course Description

A developing poet needs to study craft, poetic tradition and the contemporary state of the art. This semester we will read widely—both poetry and prose about poetry—and write and revise original works. As writers, you will be asked to complete assignments that will lead to more sophisticated understandings of imagery, form, structure and subject matter. As readers, you will respond to poems and essays by accomplished writers of the past and present.

Our Ways of Being

This course meets in person and so much of it will be analog. Even so, we will use Canvas for some tasks, including the distribution of your poems in advance of workshop, so please keep an eye on our class' digital doppelganger.

Assigned Texts (in order we will read them)

Required

The Seeds, Cecily Parks

Recommended

My Trade Is Mystery, Carl Phillips

Structure and Surprise, Michael Theune, ed.

A note on difficult subject matter: Poetry can trouble and console as it provides, in the words of poet Adam Zagajewski, both “forms for our inner life” and “a sober eye directed toward the historical world.” This semester, we will occasionally consider—both in course readings and student writings—work that deals with painful subjects that could prove triggering to some readers. Poetry often illuminates human suffering and trauma, and if you're concerned that such work could cause you emotional or physical duress, please exercise awareness and self-care as you encounter class readings. You are expected to read all the work assigned this semester. That said, we will attend to how the best poetry that shoulders these subjects seeks not to sensationalize or exacerbate trauma, but rather to find the language, empathy, and imagination necessary to give form to those difficult experiences and histories.

Attendance & Participation

Because this course focuses on in-class discussion, regular attendance is essential. Absences will harm your grade, and three or more will result in failure of the course. Notify me by phone or email prior to missing a class. *You are responsible for any materials distributed or assignments made during your absence.* You will also be expected to attend at least two conferences with me during the semester.

If you intend to stop attending the class, it is your responsibility to inform me of your decision and to take care of the necessary paperwork.

UNT Rilke Prize Events

You are required to attend one of the Rilke Prize events this semester: 1. The reception and Q&A on Wednesday, November 4; 2. The Reading on Thursday, November 5.

If you cannot make either event, inform me ASAP. You will be expected to complete an alternate assignment to fill the requirement.

Workshop Procedures

You will participate in workshop by putting your own work forward for discussion and by commenting on your peers' poems. Poems will post on Canvas in discussion threads. You will then be expected to print, read and write comments on all your peers' poems. I will also provide detailed written comments.

Course Requirements and Grading

Your grade will be based on:

1. Creative work (50%):
 - a. At least six original poems
 - b. A final portfolio, including significant revisions of at least three poems
2. Participation and Attendance (25%):
 - a. Responses to peers' poems
 - b. Responses to course materials
 - c. Two conferences
3. Critical work (25%):
 - a. Ten-poem anthology drawn from recent issues of literary journals and introduced by an essay (5 pages minimum)

A note on grading creative work: I will not give letter grades for the poem drafts you submit, but I will offer detailed responses that I expect you to consider carefully during the revision process. My goal is to emphasize the ways in which a draft works, the questions and possibilities it raises, and the strategies for development it can

use during revision. This approach stresses the process of writing poems. If you engage the assignments with seriousness and put considered effort into your drafts and revisions, you will readily succeed in the class. If you do not submit a poem for an assignment you will fail that assignment.

I will give a letter grade to your final portfolio, and to determine that grade I will weigh the first drafts submitted for each of the assignments and the revisions you've produced in response to my comments. Your revisions should significantly develop the poems in response to the questions and suggestions offered in those comments.

Generative AI Policy

Given that this is a creative writing course, my assumption is that you are here because you want to create poems that embody your particular perspective, understanding, and style. AI is imitative, not creative. Therefore, the use of GenAI tools is not permissible in this course. No matter the approach, any attempt to represent GenAI output as a student's own work will be considered fabrication, cheating, and/or academic dishonesty as determined on a case-by-case basis.

I share with you this quote from Joshua Bennett's article "Why So Many MIT Students Are Writing Poetry," published in *The Atlantic*:

In a moment marked by widespread institutional investment in the promise of artificial intelligence, we should be asking more about not only what AI can and cannot do but what drives the desire for its proliferation: what hope, what sense of longing, boredom, or emptiness. A large language model is a prediction machine. Crucially, it does not think or dream. It establishes the likeliest sequence of words based on its training data and relays it back to you. A well-crafted poem performs a nearly opposite function. It is made from original, dynamic language choices, and it lives and dies on its ability to surprise. It is a means of preserving the particular.

Special Needs

If you need any special accommodations, please let me know. The University of North Texas is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 – The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens.

English 4110 Advanced Poetry Workshop Course Schedule Fall 2026

Further readings may be added during the semester.

Week 1

Tuesday, August 18

Introduction to class

Thursday, August 20

Read: "A Retrospect," Ezra Pound; "Four Temperaments and the Forms of Poetry,"
Gregory Orr

Week 2

Tuesday, August 25

Read: "One Body: Some Notes on Form," Robert Hass; "Some Notes on Organic
Form," Denise Levertov; "The Point of Poetry," James Longenbach

Thursday, August 27

Read: Selection from *My Trade Is Mystery*, Carl Phillips
Due: Poem 1 (to be submitted on Canvas by Friday, August 28)

Week 3

Tuesday, September 1

Workshop: Poem 1

Thursday, September 3

Workshop: Poem 1

Week 4

Tuesday, September 8

Workshop: Poem 1

Thursday, September 10

Workshop: Poem 1

Week 5

Tuesday, September 15

Read: Selection from *My Trade Is Mystery*, Carl Phillips
Workshop: Poem 1

Thursday, September 17

Read: "Poetic Housing: Shifting Parts and Changing Wholes," Tony Hoagland; selections
from *Structure & Surprise*
Workshop: Poem 1
Due: Poem 2 (Friday, September 18)

Week 6

Tuesday, September 22

Workshop: Poem 2

Thursday, September 24

Workshop: Poem 2

Week 7

Tuesday, September 29

Workshop: Poem 2

Thursday, October 1

Read: "Contemporary Poetry and Ekphrasis," Peter Barry; "Ekphrasis and the Question of Perfect Equilibrium," Gregory Pardlo

Workshop: Poem 2

Due: Poem 3 (Friday, October 2)

Week 8

Tuesday, October 6

Workshop: Poem 3

Thursday, October 8

Workshop: Poem 3

Week 9

Tuesday, October 13

Workshop: Poem 3

CONFERENCES

Thursday, October 15

Workshop: Poem 3

Due: Poem 4 (Friday, October 16)

CONFERENCES

Week 10

Tuesday, October 20

Workshop: Poems 3 & 4

Thursday, October 22

Workshop: Poem 4

Week 11

Tuesday, October 27

Workshop: Poem 4

Thursday, October 29

Workshop: Poem 4

Due: Poem 5 (Friday, October 30)

Week 12

Tuesday, November 3

Read: *The Seeds*, Cecily Parks

Workshop: Poem 5

Thursday, November 5

Workshop: Poem 5

Rilke Prize Reading

Week 13

Tuesday, November 10

Workshop: Poem 5

Thursday, November 12

Workshop: Poem 5

Due: Poem 6 (Friday, November 13)

Week 14

Tuesday, November 17

Workshop: Poem 5 & 6

Thursday, November 19

Read: "Against Poetry," Adam Zagajewski

Workshop: Poem 6

Week 15

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 16

Tuesday, December 1

Workshop: Poem 6

CONFERENCES

Thursday, December 3

Workshop: Poem 6

CONFERENCES

Finals Week

Thursday, December 10

Final projects (portfolio, anthology & intro) due