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Fall 2025  
**BEGINNING POETRY WRITING**  
ENGL 3150-004 (1935)  
Time: M/W, 2:00 – 3:20 p.m.  
Location: AUSB 202

Instructor: Daniel DeV Vaughn  
Email: [daniel.devaughn@unt.edu](mailto:daniel.devaughn@unt.edu)  
Office: GAB 515

Office Hours:  
T/R 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.  
& By Appointment

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

There are many paths toward understanding the poetry of others and your own. This class will serve as one of these paths. By way of readings, class discussion, and the workshop you will build a kind of writing toolkit which, by the end of the semester, will be bristling with a wide array of different devices, materials, approaches, and frames, all at your disposal depending on the kind of poem you want to write. Sometimes, of course, you won't use this tool kit at all. As we build our critical vocabulary in matters of craft the various routes to the heart of a poem will reveal themselves. We will begin to learn them and walk them, moving inward and nearer to your own, unique voice. In order to arrive one must listen with sympathy and honesty to the voices of others, in our readings and in the workshop. The workshop will act as your personal chorus (i.e. choir), instructing, aiding, pushing and uplifting you to write your very best work. Most of our time and energy will be spent on exercises in the workshop. The heart of our class will be the workshop, a sphere of mutual respect, candor, and creative exchange.

### **REQUIRED MATERIALS**

- Course Reader (provide by instructor)
- One Full-sized, College-ruled Notebook
- Black or Blue Pen(s)

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

Five Poems.....	30%
Final Portfolio.....	20%
Midterm.....	15%

### **PARTICIPATION**

Attendance.....	10%
Workshop Responses.....	20%

In-Class Writing/Quizzes.....15%

## READINGS

We will be reading an anthology of poems which I have compiled, in addition to a number of critical or prose handouts. The anthology is a survey of English, and some non-English, poetry from the Early Modern era to the present. This means that by the end of the term you should be especially well-acquainted with the tradition of American and British poetry from its beginnings up to the contemporary era. We will use this anthology as a guide in our discussion of line, meter, diction, image, metaphor, and tone. Should we find it necessary to linger on some topics for longer than others, we will do so since we will be incorporating them into our own work. We will discuss each week's poems in light of specific ideas on craft that I have introduced. You should view these poems as material for ideas and fuel for your own poetic endeavors.

## POEMS

Over the course of the semester you will produce five poems using as prompts the exercises which I will assign. The poems will be graded based on your meeting the stipulations of the prompt and of the quality of the original work. This means that *you* must write the poem. **Poems must be posted to Canvas before class on the date specified in the Class Schedule.** When submitting poems, please include your LAST NAME and the number poem for the term you are submitting (i.e. "Dickinson, Poem 1," "Clifton, Poem 2," etc.) [Acceptable formats for submitted poems are .rtf and .doc. I do not accept Google Docs or PDFs.](#) When the poems for a given week have been posted to Canvas, you will print them out for workshop.

## THE WORKSHOP

As stated above, the workshop is the heart of the class. All other aspects of our study—the readings, quizzes, exercises, etc. all revolve around this living exchange of criticism and praise. Notice I said, *living*. The workshop is meant to be a lively affair, an active give-and-take between the constituents of our small community. Take this time as an opportunity to test your voice and utilize the tools that you collect as we progress.

Four of your poems will be fully workshopped this quarter. We will also split into smaller groups from time to time to work on a series of focused exercises, as well as to discuss the more exigent issues that arise in your writing.

While we strive for the most organic workshop experience possible, a few ground rules will insure that all voices receive equal attention and time:

- The writer reads their work aloud.
- The writer takes notes on the feedback they receive.
- The writer being workshopped may not comment as peers respond.
- The writer may ask questions for clarification if necessary.

- 10 to 15 minutes workshop time for each poem

Workshop is an environment in which people express real emotion, where they share their innermost thoughts and feelings, their dreams, fears, regrets, hopes, and memories, some of which may be difficult or even traumatic for the poet to share. It is a place where people can be really real with one another, and it can be a truly awesome thing. However, in this, at times, rather charged atmosphere, it is our responsibility to act and speak with maturity, respect, and care for one another and the written word. It is equally important to remember that the poet is not the poem, and the person bringing a new piece to workshop is not the work they have written. Workshop is always about the poem. Workshop is not therapy. It is a place to engage with and hopefully improve the poem. Respect the writer and respect the written word for what they are, and you will receive respect in return. Ultimately, and more importantly, your writing will improve in ways that may surprise you.

### **A NOTE ON ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Phones, tablets, laptops, and other “smart devices” are not allowed during class time. Those who require a laptop or tablet to take part in the class are, of course, allowed to do so. Please speak with me in person or email me if you feel that your particular style of learning requires electronic support.

### **RESPONSES**

One of the greatest benefits of being in the workshop environment is the critical feedback of your peers. When writing your responses, strive for a balanced tone of brutal honesty and empathetic encouragement. Annotate (add notes to) each poem, then write a letter responding to the author as well. You may write your letter below the printed-out poem or type it up on a separate sheet of paper. Each letter should be approximately one half page in length, typed and double-spaced. You also have the option of email your letter to the author, but you must annotate and mark up by hand poems that are being workshopped.

### **CRAFT EXERCISES / QUIZZES**

As a means to stimulate your poetic imagination, I will occasionally assign small writing exercises to be completed in class. They will help you to develop new writing strategies and expand your individual conception of what it means to write. Take this time as an opportunity to sharpen the tools in your toolkit. With time, they will become not only an aid to creative expression but an extension of yourself.

Quizzes will be given at intervals as preparation for the midterm. You may be asked to define key terms in the text, or to pair a particular quote with the proper author.

### **MIDTERM**

The midterm will basically serve as an evaluation of your technical progress as a writer. To ensure that your writing is grounded in a solid theoretical base as well as a practical, you will be asked to

explain certain poetic concepts. We will also continue with our identification of terms and authors. Think of it as an "exercise" in the ways in which you think *about* poetry and the poem as a unique mode of expression.

## **FINAL PORTFOLIO**

Your portfolio is the final testament of your progress as a writer over the course of the term. You should include your best work as a clear statement of your own unique voice. The portfolio will consist of three drastically revised poems plus any other poetry you have written during the semester. For revisions, 50% of the original poem must be excised and replaced with newer and hopefully better material. In addition to the poems, you will write an Artist's Statement explaining your personal creative perspective.

## **CANVAS**

We will not lean too heavily on Canvas as the class progresses. Readings and workshop schedules will be posted here from time to time, as will occasional announcements.

## **ATTENDANCE**

The bedrock of this class is a sense of community, a shared curiosity about language, expression, and words as vehicles into the inner life and the world. So, being there in body and mind for your fellow writers and workshop participants is paramount. The workshop functions as it should only when all members are present. This means you should make it a priority to come to each and every class ready to discuss the readings and/or the poems being workshopped for the day. To miss even one day of workshop is to lose not only the feedback of your fellow writers, but also a step in your growth as a poet. The skill of a writer is like a muscle, growing with frequent use. Whatever you put into the experience is what you will receive in turn.

**You are allowed three unexcused absences in this class.** Any additional absences will lower your final grade by five percentage points. Absences may be excused with proper written documentation (jury duty, active or reserve military service, special medical emergency, death in the family, etc.).

## **LATE WORK**

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date specified in the Class Schedule. I will grant an extension only in cases of serious illness or other equally dire situations. If you foresee the need for an extension contact me no less than 48 hours prior to the assignment's due date. I will then determine if an extension is necessary.

## **INCOMPLETE POLICY**

An incomplete grade ("I") may be granted only in the case of a documented emergency and where only a single assignment (i.e., a paper, a reader response, etc.) remains undone. An "I" may be

granted only after discussion with the instructor who will, in turn, review it with CRWR faculty. A CRWR Incomplete Grade Record form containing specific assignments and due dates must be completed (with signatures of the student, instructor, and faculty advisor) and submitted to the CRWR business office.

### **PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Laptops, cellphones, tablets, and other smart devices should not be used during class without instructor approval.

### **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE POLICY**

The use of artificial intelligence applications, programs, or websites, and the use of language models, algorithms, or other “smart” technology in the research, drafting, creation, or editing of class assignments is strictly forbidden. “Use” in this context includes idea generation and the rephrasing of original material (stuff you’ve written).

### **UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

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#### **ADA Accommodation Statement**

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the [Office of Disability Access](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access) website (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

*Note: Dates and content may change according to our, and the universe's, needs.*

Date	Description
<b>Week 1</b>	
8/18/25	Introductions, Syllabus Overview
	Poems: “Western Wind”; Elizabeth Bishop, “In the Waiting Room”
	Exercises: What Is Poetry? & <i>The Real</i>
8/20/25	<i>The Line</i>
	Poems: Walt Whitman & Emily Dickinson
	Exercise: <i>Common Time</i>
	<a href="#">Poem 1 Assignment</a>
<b>Week 2</b>	
8/25/25	<i>The Line</i>
	Poems: Walt Whitman & Emily Dickinson
	Exercise: <i>Luxury &amp; Withdrawal</i>
	Handout: Charles Wright, “Improvisation on Form and Measure”
8/27/25	<i>The Line</i>
	Poems: William Carlos Williams & Jane Huffman
	Exercise: <i>Breath &amp; Measure</i>
<b>Week 3</b>	
9/1/25	LABOR DAY – NO CLASS
	<i>Meter &amp; Measure</i>
	Poems: John Donne & Gwendolyn Brooks
	Exercise: <i>Rhythm Speaks</i>
	<b>Poem 1 Due</b>
9/3/25	<i>Meter &amp; Measure</i>
	Poems: & John Milton & Rita Dove
	Exercise: <i>Repetition &amp; Disruption</i>
<b>Week 4</b>	
09/8/25	Workshop Poem 1, Group A
	Poems: (If time) Analicia Sotelo

09/10/25	Workshop Poem 1, Group A
	Poems: (If time) Roger Reeves
	Critical Texts: Walt Whitman, from Preface to <i>Leaves of Grass</i> (p. 865); Emily Dickinson, <i>Letters</i> (pp. 870 – 874); Gerard Manley Hopkins, <i>Letters</i> (pp. 874 –877)
	<a href="#">Poem 2 Assignment</a>
<b>Week 5</b>	
9/15/25	Workshop Poem 1, Group B
	Poems: (If time) Philip Larkin
9/17/25	Workshop Poem 1, Group B
	Poems: (If time) Tony Hoagland
<b>Week 6</b>	
9/22/25	<i>Diction &amp; Prosody</i>
	Poems: Gerard Manley Hopkins & Lucille Clifton
	Exercise: <i>Idiolect</i>
	<b>Poem 2 Due</b>
9/24/24	<i>Diction &amp; Prosody</i>
	Poems: Robert Frost
	Exercise: <i>What Can't Be Translated</i>
	<b>Quiz</b>
<b>Week 7</b>	
9/29/25	Workshop 2, Group A
	Poems: (If time) Marianne Moore
	<a href="#">Poem 3 Assignment</a>
10/01/25	Workshop 2, Group A
	Poems: (If time) Philip Levine
<b>Week 8</b>	
10/6/25	Workshop 2, Group B
	Poems: (If time) Robert Hayden
10/8/25	Workshop 2, Group B
	Poems: (If time) Anthony Hecht
	<b>Poem 3 Due</b>

<b>Week 9</b>	
10/13/25	Image & Description Poems: Frank O'Hara & Elizabeth Bishop
	<b>Midterm Exam</b>
10/15/25	Image & Description
	Poems: James Wright & Danez Smith
	Exercise: <i>Eating Diamonds</i>
<b>Week 10</b>	
10/20/25	Workshop 3, Group A
	Poems: (If time) Larry Levis
	<a href="#">Poem 4 Assignment</a>
10/22/25	Workshop 3, Group A
	Poems: (If time) Diane Seuss
	Handout: Wallace Stevens, from <i>Adagia</i> (p. 972)
	<b>Quiz</b>
<b>Week 11</b>	
10/27/25	Workshop 3, Group B
	Poems: (If time) Alberto Ríos
10/29/25	Workshop 3, Group B
	Poems: (If time) Ilya Kaminsky
	<b>Poem 4 Due</b>
<b>Week 12</b>	
11/3/25	Metaphor
	Poems: Federico García Lorca & T.S. Eliot
	Exercise: <i>How the World Sounds</i>
	Handout: Richard Hugo, "The Triggering Town" (handout)
11/5/25	Metaphor
	Poems: Wallace Stevens & Jericho Brown
	Exercise: <i>The Sense of Sensation</i>
<b>Week 13</b>	
11/10/25	Workshop 4, Group A
	Poems: (If time) John Berryman



11/12/25	Workshop 4, Group A
	Poems: (If time) Wisława Szymborska
	Handout: Louise Glück, “Education of the Poet” (handout)
	<a href="#">Poem 5 Assignment</a>
<b>Week 14</b>	
11/17/25	Workshop 4, Group B
	Poems: (If time) Derek Walcott
11/19/25	Workshop 4, Group B
	Poems: (If time) Ada Limón
	<b>Quiz</b>
<b>Week 15</b>	
11/24/25 to 11/28/25	<b>FALL BREAK</b>
<b>Week 16</b>	
	Tone & Voice
12/1/25	Poems: Louise Glück & Terrance Hayes
	Exercise: <i>I’m Not Going to Lie</i>
12/3/25	Tone & Voice (Revising)
	Poems: Agha Shahid Ali & Czesław Miłosz
	Handout: W.H. Auden, “Writing” (p. 1000)
<b>Finals Week</b>	
12/8/24	<b>Portfolio Due between 1:30 and 3:30 p.m. on Monday, December 8 in GAB 515.</b>

### No Classes

Labor Day: Monday, September 1

Fall Break: November 24 – 28

Students will be notified via Eagle Alert if there is a campus closing that will impact a class. The academic calendar and important dates for this class are subject to change. For more information, please refer to the [Campus Closures Policy](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/15-006) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/15-006>).