**English 4110**

**Advanced Poetry Workshop**

**Fall 2025**

Professor: Dr. Jehanne Dubrow Meeting Time: Mondays 3:30 – 6:20 pm

Office: Auditorium Building 216 Classroom: Language Building 212

Email: Jehanne.Dubrow@unt.edu Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:00 – 4:00 pm

1. **Course Description –**

Welcome to English 4110! By now, all of you have taken at least one lower-level workshop. This course will build upon your previous training, asking that you hone your skills not only as writers but also as readers and scholars of poetry. Expect to be challenged; this course asks that you push yourself both creatively and intellectually.

To ensure that everyone begins with a foundation of shared knowledge, we will start the semester with several weeks of review, going over essential concepts that I hope you learned in previous poetry courses, such as imagery, figurative language, narrative and lyric, as well as fixed and received forms.

As we begin this review of essential concepts, we will also use the assigned poetry collections as models for our own work. These books show the wide spectrum of contemporary American poetry, from poems rooted in the construction of narrative and the use of archival research to those that favor musicality, lyricism.

1. Required Texts –
* *The Wild Iris* (1993),Louise Glück
* *Here, Bullet* (2005), Brian Turner
* *Native Guard* (2008), Natasha Trethewey
* *Temper* (2009), Beth Bachman
* *Romantic Comedy* (2023), James Allen Hall
* *The Animal Is Chemical* (2024), Hadara Bar-Nadav

*A Note About the Assigned Books*—Some of the required readings for ENG 4110 deal with what might be considered triggering topics such as abuse, death or dying, issues related to female health and reproduction, mental illness, self-injury, sexual assault, suicide, or violence. If you think reading any of these texts will induce in you a severely negative emotional or physical response, please exercise awareness and self-care, as all students are asked to read all assigned texts. Of course, we will approach each book with sensitivity, empathy, and a curiosity about the ways that poetry can explore difficult subject matter without inflicting further trauma. These books encourage us to think about how certain kinds of stories demand certain kinds of storytelling, trauma shaping the poets’ language and revealing the profound relationship between form and content.

1. Evaluations –

Your final grade will be calculated using these percentages:

**Written Materials: 50%**

* Final Portfolio (introduction + multiple drafts of all six poems) = 35%
* Weekly Online Canvas Posts of Drafts = 15%

**Class Participation: 50%**

* Workshop = 20%
* Book Discussions = 30%
1. **Grading Scale** –

UNT does not use pluses or minuses in its grading scale. Therefore, you can only earn one of five possible grades for somebody in this class:

A (90.0 – 100)

B (80.0 – 89.9)

C (70.0 – 79.9)

D (60.0 - 69.9)

F (60.0 and below)

Final grades will not be rounded up.

1. Workshop Materials –

Workshop will function as an important element in many of our class sessions. At the start of the semester, I will provide a timetable so that you know when your poetry is scheduled for workshop. You will each be put into a workshop group: Alpha or Beta. Everyone will have the opportunity to be workshopped six times, once for each of the six poems you will write.

Starting with Week Five of the class, we will begin workshopping new drafts of your work.

No later than 24 hours prior to your workshop, you will be required to post a copy of your poem to the appropriate Discussions page on Canvas; your poem should be posted as a Word document attachment (no PDFs, please), so that everyone can easily download the poem and print it out for class. Discussions of your poetry cannot take place *unless* everyone has received and read your work ahead of time.

Unless we move to remote instruction, we will not use Canvas as a place for written critique or peer review. Instead, you should write your feedback on the printed poems to return to your classmates at the end of each workshop.

Please, note: I reserve the right to pull any submission for workshop from discussion, if I deem the draft to be unsuitable (either because of subject matter, insufficient evidence of work, or lack of compliance with the course’s expectations and guidelines).

1. Reading –

Reading and writing go hand in hand. Every class will be spent discussing some kind text. Always bring the assigned texts to class (these include published texts, your peers’ work, and copies of your own work). Failure to perform this basic requirement will result in a lower participation grade.

1. Revisions –

Revision is a central tenet of this course and of the writer’s life in general. Editing is when the writer alters just a few words, some punctuation; it is the work of cleaning up a draft and is often the final stage in the revision process. Conversely, revision may include altering the poem’s point of view, its use of figurative language, its sentence structure, even the argument the text is making. Revision is the act of re-*envisioning* the entire poem and often involves making massive, systemic changes to every line—even every word—in the draft.

When you receive feedback in workshop, the point of that feedback is to help you revise your poems. When you receive feedback from me in individual conferences, the point of that feedback is to help you revise your poems. When you submit your work for assessment, I expect to see evidence of significant revision, and the grading rubric reflects this expectation. In my experience, those students who choose not to revise their poems are also choosing not to do well in this course.

1. General Discussions –

I understand that some of you may find public speaking difficult. Please keep in mind, however, that learning is not supposed to be an entirely comfortable process. Each week in class, I will keep track of when you speak and how often; these weekly participation elements are weighted and add up to 50% of your final grade.

I will grade both your contributions to the book discussion and to the workshop as separate participation elements.

* If you say nothing: 0 points
* If you make 1 helpful contribution: 60 points
* If you make 2 helpful contributions: 70 points
* If you make 3 helpful contributions: 80 points
* If you make 4 helpful contributions: 90 points
* If you make 5 or more helpful contributions: 100

Keep in mind that participation is a matter both of quantity and quality.

Finally, remember that—while I don’t have an attendance requirement in the course—you will earn a zero for your book discussion, workshop participation, and Canvas drafts, if you are absent from class. Numerous absences will result in low participation grades, making it mathematically difficult (if not impossible) to pass ENGL 4110. Of course, being absent from class will also affect how much you learn and the degree of progress you make in your written work.

1. Individual Conferences –

I do not give feedback via email, because then there’s no possibility for dialogue; conversation is an essential part of the revision process. Therefore, I encourage you to meet with me frequently throughout the semester in individual conferences. Conferences will function as an important part of your development as a writer and can help to improve your class participation grade.

Whenever your poem is critiqued in workshop, try to schedule a follow-up appointment to discuss the work with me.

Under the Announcements section on Canvas, I have posted an announcement that contains the current office hours sign-up sheet. As you contact me with your appointment requests, I will update that schedule. This way, you can double-check the page, if you are ever uncertain about your appointment date or time.

On the morning of your individual conference, please email me a Word document containing the draft you wish to discuss. I will print out copies of the draft so that we can look at the poem together, when you come to meet with me in my office.

1. **Late Work –**

Your final portfolio must be uploaded to Canvas by the start of class on its due date. Late work will be penalized. A portfolio submitted after the date and time specified in this portfolio will be marked down 5 points.

A portfolio that is more than 3 days overdue will receive an automatic F (scored as a number grade of “0”), which will be factored into your overall grade for the semester. So, for instance, the portfolio is due on a Monday at 3:30 pm. It must be submitted before the following Thursday at 3:30 p.m., or it will earn a “0.”

It is your responsibility to keep track of deadlines and to submit work on time. If you begin to struggle academically, be proactive about addressing the problems. This should include meeting with me for advice and mentorship; I can help you determine whether you’ve irrevocably hurt your chances of passing the course and can advise you about possible next steps to take.

1. A Note About Technology –

It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with Canvas. All assignments for this class are to be submitted electronically; it will be your job to make sure that work has uploaded correctly and promptly. I will not assess hard copies of any assignment. Technological difficulties will not be considered an acceptable excuse for late work.

1. **Canvas & Emails** –

Please, get into the habit of checking Canvas and your emails every day. If there are class or scheduling changes, I will post notifications on Canvas, frequently sending out messages through that site. Preparing for workshop will also require you to visit Canvas.

I provide all grades and written comments electronically. Once I have assessed an assignment, please, be sure to click the appropriate link on the Canvas gradebook, so that you can download my graded rubric and feedback on your poems. With each new assignment, I look for evidence that you have read and synthesized previous critiques into your new work.

When you need to contact me, your first option will be email. When you email me, **please use your UNT email address**, which contains identifying information that will allow me to know *who is emailing me*.

When you email me, or any of your other professors, treat the correspondence as a professional scenario. Start the email with a polite salutation (i.e. “Dear Dr. Dubrow”). And end the email with a formal conclusion *and your name* (i.e. “Best wishes, Jane Doe”). Try to be as concrete and clear as possible, write in full sentences, be polite and respectful, and proofread your email before hitting SEND.

I am prompt about responding to emails. But, in general, I do not to answer emails from 10 p.m. to 10 a.m. Please, keep this timeframe in mind when writing to me with time-sensitive questions.

Finally, if I have cause to send you an email because I am concerned about your performance in this course, please, respond to my correspondence promptly and appropriately. Timely, clear communication is essential in such matters and can make the difference between success and failure. And telling me that you “never check” your UNT email account is neither a persuasive explanation nor a good excuse.

1. **Appropriate Behavior** –

At all times in this class, I ask for mature and respectful behavior from everyone. The following behavior is considered inappropriate:

* Sleeping in class.
* Letting your phone ring.
* Answering your phone.
* Texting. Using your phone at all (unless given permission).
* Working on your computer (unless given permission).
* Removing your shoes and/or socks. Removing other garments that might lead you to expose areas of skin inappropriate for a classroom setting.
* Arriving after class has begun. Leaving before class has ended.
* Leaving and returning numerous times.
* Neglecting to bring the assigned materials. Neglecting to follow instructions. Neglecting to follow along with or to contributor to class discussions.

UNT defines disruptive behavior as “behavior that interferes with the learning and teaching environment and/or the administrative student services function of the university.”

Failure to behave appropriately will result in a significantly lower grade for the semester. Disruptive behavior—impacting either my teaching, your peers’ learning, or the positive dynamics of the class—can cause you to fail the course.

1. **Academic Dishonesty: Plagiarism & AI**

I will only accept and grade writing that you have produced yourself. I will not accept work that uses any kind of AI technology. Use of AI technology is considered a particularly egregious form of plagiarism. I will use Turnitin and other screening applications when I assess your final portfolio. Any final portfolio that uses AI technologies will receive an F (scored as a number grade of “0”).

UNT takes plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty very seriously. Engaging in plagiarism can result in failure of this course; it can also lead students to lose their funding or even to be expelled from the university.

I will gladly discuss with you what is considered plagiarism. Please, feel free to schedule a meeting, should you be uncertain about how to avoid plagiarism. If I think that you have submitted plagiarized materials, I will notify you my concerns via email. According to university policy, “If the student does not respond to the instructor’s written communication within five (5) days of the instructor sending the email, the instructor may assess academic penalties in-line with the suspected academic dishonesty.” You will then be required to meet with me so that we can discuss the matter. After we meet, I will decide on next steps. I will also forward my concerns and plan of action to the Office of Academic Affairs.

The English department has authorized faculty to fail students for an assignment or for the whole course, if we assess that a student has engaged in plagiarism. Every student has the right to appeal a faculty member’s decision within 5 days; if you wish to appeal a faculty member’s decision, you should send your written appeal to the Assistant Chair of the English department.

Plagiarism wastes your time and mine. Choosing not to do your own work robs you of the very reason to be in college: to learn, to grow both intellectually and emotionally, and to push yourself to achieve more than you might have dreamed yourself capable of accomplishing. Using AI to do your work is disrespectful of me, of your own potential, and of the planet (AI is having a severe impact on the environment as it expends extraordinary amounts of natural resources). If you do not think you will be able to produce your own writing in this course without using AI, then this class is not a good fit for you and you should withdraw from it.

Finally, please note that AI tools write extremely bad poems. Using an AI tool will not earn you a higher grade or help to advance your learning in this course. Furthermore, because this course is built on the necessity of revision work, you will end up having to revise all your poems, regardless of whether you wrote them yourself or if you generated them using AI. Revising AI-composed poems will be a miserable, fruitless experience. This is because attempting to infuse soul, creativity, and originality into a piece of writing that has been made by a machine is an impossible, thankless undertaking. If you don’t wish to produce your own writing in this class, then ENGL 4110 is not a good fit for you.

1. **ADA 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 Accommodation (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 see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at http://www.unt.edu/oda. You may also contact them by phone at 940-565-4323.

1. **And, Finally, a Comment About Community** –

The creative writing classroom is meant to be a community based on trust, respect, and a shared belief in the value of art and artmaking. Such a community is the result of hard work, empathy, thoughtfulness, generosity, but also rigor. Ideally, it is a place where people feel comfortable sharing new, unpolished work. We must all strive to make this a supportive space, where everyone feels physically safe, a place where everyone is encouraged to be intellectually and emotionally brave.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

# **Week One (8/18): *Introduction***

# Introduction of Syllabus, Handouts, and Workshop schedule.

* In-Class Exercise: Writing a Syntactical Imitation of Bob Hicock’s “Alzheimer’s” (20 minutes to write & post to Canvas).

**Week Two (8/25): *Review & The Wild Iris***

# Read for Class: all of *The Wild Iris.*

* **3:30 – 4:15:** Review craft of writing images, using the five senses, and constructing image pots.
* **4:15 – 4:30:** Break.
* **4:30 – 5:15:** Discussion of *The Wild Iris,* focusing on (1) inventory of objects, (2) central themes, (3) keystone poems.

# **5:15 – 5:30:** Break.

# **5:30 – 6:20:** Activities.

# Watch interview with Louise Glück:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3kQGM_KhHQ>

# In-Class Exercise: Writing a Glück-Inspired Poem of Scent (20 minutes to write & post a rough draft to Canvas).

* Discussion of exercise + closing thoughts.

**Week Three (9/1): *Labor Day, NO CLASS***

**Week Four (9/8): *Review & Here, Bullet***

# Read for Class: all of *Here, Bullet.*

* **3:30 – 4:20:** Review the process of working in the lyric mode.
* **4:15 – 4:30:** Break.
* **4:30 – 5:15:** Discussion of *Here, Bullet,* focusing on (1) inventory of objects, (2) central themes, (3) keystone poems, and (4) questions for the poet.

# **5:15 – 5:30:** Break.

# **5:30 – 6:20:** Activities.

* Watch interview with Brian Turner

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GVCdtR1Il9k>

# In-Class Exercise: Singing Songs (20 minutes to write & post a rough draft to Canvas).

* Discussion of exercise + closing thoughts.

**Week Five (9/15): *Zoom Q&A with Brian Turner, & Workshop***

# Reread for Class: all of *Here, Bullet.*

Please, note: On this day, part of class will be held on Zoom (everyone bring your computer to a different place in the building), so that we can meet with Brian Turner. After the Zoom meeting, we will all return to the classroom. Here’s the Zoom link:

[**https://unt.zoom.us/j/89226924523**](https://unt.zoom.us/j/89226924523)

* **3:30 – 4:30:** Meet with Brian Turner on Zoom.
* **4:30 – 5:00:** Debriefing about talk with Brian Turner.
* **5:00 – 5:15:** Break.
* **5:15 – 6:20:** Round robin pairs workshops (6 minutes / poem).

# **\*\*\*\*Workshop: Poem #1, Group Alpha (inspired by *The Wild Iris*)\*\*\*\***

🡪 Please include content information at the top of your draft: a brief list of subjects—good, bad, and neutral—that are covered in your poem.

**Week Six (9/22): *Review, Native Guard, & Workshop***

# Read for Class: all of *Native Guard.*

* **3:30 – 4:15:** Discussion of *Native Guard,* focusing on (1) inventory of objects, (2) central themes, (3) keystone poems.
* **4:15 – 5:00:** Activities
* Watch interview with Natasha Trethewey

# <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhFl7dGy3Jo>

# In-Class Exercise: Writing a Specular Poem (20 minutes to write & post a rough draft to Canvas).

* Discussion of exercise.
* **5:15 – 5:30:** Break.
* **5:30 – 6:20:** Round robin pairs workshops (6 minutes / poem).

# **\*\*\*\*Workshop: Poem #1, Group Beta (inspired by *The Wild Iris*)\*\*\*\***

🡪 Please include content information at the top of your draft: a brief list of subjects—good, bad, and neutral—that are covered in your poem.

**Week Seven (9/29): *Review, Native Guard, & Workshop***

# Reread for Class: all of *Native Guard.*

* **3:30 – 4:00:** Review strategies for writing in fixed and received forms.
* **4:00 – 4:15:** Break.
* **4:15 – 5:00:** Activities.

# Watch interview with Natasha Trethewey

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CbBR_CXxZjY>

# In-Class Exercise: Writing a Pantoum (20 minutes to write & post a rough draft to Canvas).

* Discussion of Exercise.
* **5:00 – 5:15:** Break.
* **5:15 – 6:20:** Round robin pairs workshops (6 minutes / poem).

# **\*\*\*\*Workshop: Poem #2, Group Alpha (inspired by *Here, Bullet*)\*\*\*\***

🡪 Please include content information at the top of your draft: a brief list of subjects—good, bad, and neutral—that are covered in your poem.

**Week Eight (10/6): *Temper & Workshop***

# Read for class: all of *Temper.*

* **3:30 – 4:15:** Discussion of *Temper,* focusing on (1) inventory of objects, (2) central themes, (3) keystone poems.
* **4:15 – 4:40:** Activities
* In-Class Exercise: Writing a Bachman Imitation (20 minutes to write & post a rough draft to Canvas).
* Discussion of Exercise.
* **4:40 – 4:50:** Break.
* **4:50 – 6:20:** Small group workshops (10 minutes / poem).

# **\*\*\*\*Workshop: Poem #2, Group Beta (inspired by *Here, Bullet*)\*\*\*\***

🡪 Please include content information at the top of your draft: a brief list of subjects—good, bad, and neutral—that are covered in your poem.

**Week Nine (10/13): *The Wounded Line & Workshop***

# Read for class: Introduction to Jehanne Dubrow’s *The Wounded Line: A Guide to Writing Poems of Trauma* (excerpt posted on Canvas).

* **3:30 – 4:15:** Discussion of *The Wounded Line.*
* **4:15 – 4:30:** Break.
* **4:30 – 5:00:** Activities.

# In-Class Exercise: Writing Grief, Loss, or Trauma (20 minutes to write & post rough draft to Canvas).

* Discussion of Exercise.

# **4:30 – 4:45:** Break.

* **5:00 – 6:20:** Small group workshops (9.5 minutes / poem).

# **\*\*\*\*Workshop: Poem #3, Group Alpha (inspired by *Native Guard*)\*\*\*\***

# 🡪 Please include content information at the top of your draft: a brief list of subjects—good, bad, and neutral—that are covered in your poem.

**Week Ten (10/20): *The Animal Is Chemical & Workshop***

# Read for class: all of *The Animal Is Chemical.*

* **3:30 – 4:15:** Discussion of *The Animal Is Chemical,* focusing on (1) inventory of objects, (2) central themes, (3) keystone poems, and (4) questions for the poet.
* **4:15 – 4:40:** Activities
* In-Class Exercise: Writing a Bar-Nadav Imitation (20 minutes to write & post rough draft to Canvas).
* Discussion of Exercise.
* **4:40 – 4:50:** Break.
* **4:50 – 6:20:** Small group workshops (10 minutes / poem).

# **\*\*\*\*Workshop: Poem #3, Group Beta (inspired by *Native Guard*)\*\*\*\***

🡪 Please include content information at the top of your draft: a brief list of subjects—good, bad, and neutral—that are covered in your poem.

**Week Eleven (10/27): *Zoom Q&A with Hadara Bar-Nadav, & Workshop***

# Reread for class: All of *The Animal Is Chemical.*

Please, note: On this day, the first half of class will be held on Zoom (everyone bring your computer to a different place in the building), so that we can meet with Hadara Bar-Nadav. After the Zoom meeting, we will all return to the classroom. Here’s the Zoom link:

[**https://unt.zoom.us/j/84042577581**](https://unt.zoom.us/j/84042577581)

* **3:30 – 4:30:** Meet with Hadara Bar-Nadav on Zoom.
* **4:30 – 5:00:** Debriefing about talk with Hadara Bar-Nadav.
* **5:00 – 5:15:** Break.
* **5:15 – 6:20:** Round robin pairs workshops (6 minutes / poem).

# **\*\*\*Workshop: Poem #4, Group Alpha (inspired by *Temper*)\*\*\*\***

🡪 Please include content information at the top of your draft: a brief list of subjects—good, bad, and neutral—that are covered in your poem.

**Week Twelve (11/3): *Romantic Comedy & Workshop***

# Read for class: all of *Romantic Comedy.*

* **3:30 – 4:15:** Discussion of *Romantic Comedy,* focusing on (1) inventory of objects, (2) central themes, (3) keystone poems, and (4) questions for the poet.
* **4:15 – 4:40:** Activities
* In-Class Exercise: Writing a Hall Imitation (20 minutes to write & post a rough draft to Canvas).
* Discussion of Exercise.
* **4:40 – 4:50:** Break.
* **4:50 – 6:20:** Small group workshops (10 minutes / poem).

# **\*\*\*Workshop: Poem #4, Group Beta (inspired by *Temper*)\*\*\*\***

🡪 Please include content information at the top of your draft: a brief list of subjects—good, bad, and neutral—that are covered in your poem.

**Week Thirteen (11/10): *Zoom Q&A with James Allen Hall, & Workshop***

# Reread for class: all of *Romantic Comedy.*

Please, note: On this day, the first half of class will be held on Zoom (everyone bring your computer to a different place in the building), so that we can meet with James Allen Hall. After the Zoom meeting, we will all return to the classroom. Here’s the Zoom link:

**https://unt.zoom.us/j/87921332180**

* **3:30 – 4:30:** Meet with James Allen Hall on Zoom.
* **4:30 – 5:00:** Debriefing about talk with James Allen Hall.
* **5:00 – 5:15:** Break.
* **5:15 – 6:20:** Round robin pairs workshops (6 minutes / poem).

# **\*\*\*\*Workshop: Poem #5, Group Alpha (inspired by *Romantic Comedy*)\*\*\*\***

🡪 Please include content information at the top of your draft: a brief list of subjects—good, bad, and neutral—that are covered in your poem.

**Week Fourteen (11/17): *Ask Me Anything About Poetry/Publishing/Grad School & Workshop***

# For Class: Bring your remaining questions about the craft of poetry as well as any questions you might have about how to get published, how to apply to graduate school, etc.

* **3:30 – 4:15:** Q&A
* **4:15 – 4:30:** Break.
* **4:30 – 5:15:** Full-class workshop (10 minutes / poem).
* **5:15 – 5:30:** Break.
* **5:30 – 6:20:** Full-class workshop (10 minutes / poem).

# **\*\*\*Workshop: Poem #5, Group Beta (inspired by *Romantic Comedy*)\*\*\*\***

🡪 Please include content information at the top of your draft: a brief list of subjects—good, bad, and neutral—that are covered in your poem.

# **Week Fifteen (11/24): *Thanksgiving Break, NO CLASS***

# **Week Sixteen (12/1): *Workshop & Treats***

# Treats! General revelry!

* **3:30 – 3:45:** Complete Course Evaluations.
* **3:45 – 4:00:** Questions about final portfolios.
* **4:00 – 5:00:** Round robin pairs workshops (6 minutes / poem).
* **5:00 – 5:15:** Break.
* **5:15 – 6:15:** Round robin pairs workshops (6 minutes / poem).
* **6:15:** *Goodbyes.*

# **\*\*\*Workshop: Poem #6, Groups Alpha AND Beta (inspired by *The Animal Is Chemical*)\*\*\*\***

🡪 Please include content information at the top of your draft: a brief list of subjects—good, bad, and neutral—that are covered in your poem.

# **Week Seventeen (12/8 – 12/12) – *Finals Week, NO CLASS***

HW Due: **Upload Final Portfolio to Canvas by Monday, December 8 at 3:30 p.m.**

**PLEASE NOTE:**

**This syllabus is subject to change.**