

**English 3150-004**  
**Intermediate Poetry Workshop**  
**Fall 2016**

Professor: Jehanne Dubrow  
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Meeting Time: MW 2:00 – 3:20 pm  
Classroom: AB 202  
Office Hours: MT noon – 2 pm  
& by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION –**

Welcome to English 3150! By now, many of you may be familiar with the structure of creative writing classes and are on your way to becoming proficient in the practice of the workshop. This course will build upon previous training, asking that you hone your skills not only as writers but also as readers and scholars of poetry. Looking at both creative and critical texts, we will address important concepts such as diction, the line and line break, figurative language, image, rhyme, meter, and narrative. Throughout this class, you will focus on producing entirely brand-new poems that engage directly with the published texts we are studying; you will also perform close readings of poems, in your work as literary critics.

**REQUIRED TEXTS –**

- *The Poetry Home Repair Manual: Practical Advice for Beginning Poets*, Ted Kooser
- *The Sounds of Poetry: A Brief Guide*, Robert Pinsky
- *The Making of a Poem: A Norton Anthology of Poetic Forms*, eds. Mark Strand and Eavan Boland

**EVALUATIONS—**

Your final grade will be calculated using these percentages:

**Written Materials:**

**70%**

- Final portfolio (introduction of 500 words, six polished poems) = 50%
- Two close readings of published poems (1000 words/each) = 20%

**Class Participation:**

**30%**

- Workshop = 15%
- Literature Discussions = 10%
- Attendance = 5%

## **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.

In thinking about your goals for this class, you can keep these characterizations of each grade level in mind:

### ***A-level (excellent work)***

The work complies fully with the assignment instructions. Work is very polished, well-conceived, and original. Voice is well-established, point of view is consistent, and the pieces always avoids abstractions, using sensory details and images instead. Sentence structure is varied, imaginative, and creatively worded.

### ***B-level (good work)***

For the most part, the work complies with the assignment instructions. The work is polished in places, solidly conceived, and contains some moments of originality. Voice is on its way to being well-established, point of view is mostly consistent, and the piece generally avoids abstractions, using sensory details and images instead. Sentence structure is often varied, imaginative, and interestingly worded.

### ***C-level (average work):***

Occasionally, the work complies with the assignment instructions. The work is quite far away from being polished; the writing is still attempting to find ways to address subject matter in an original way. Voice is not yet established, point of view is inconsistent, and/or the piece often falls into abstraction rather than using sensory details and images. Sentence structure is occasionally varied, imaginative, and engagingly worded.

### ***D-level (below average work):***

The work seldom/never complies with the assignment instructions. The work is extremely unpolished; the work may need to be reconceived in order to effectively address subject matter. Voice is very inconsistent, point of view is unreliable, and the piece is mostly abstract rather than rooted in sensory details and images. Sentence structure is unvaried, seldom imaginative, or engagingly worded.

***F-level (failing work):***

The work does not comply with the assignment instructions in any way. The work is unreadable and needs to be reconceived. Voice is inconsistent, point of view is unreliable, and the piece is entirely abstract. Sentence structure is unvaried, unimaginative, and unengaging.

**WORKSHOP MATERIALS—**

Workshop will function as an important element of most class sessions. Near the start of the semester, I will provide a timetable so that all students will know when their poetry is scheduled for workshop.

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 Blackboard; your poem should be posted as a document attachment, 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.

We will not use Blackboard 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.

**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 peer's work, and copies of your own work). Failure to perform this basic requirement will result in a lower class participation grade.

**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 painless process. To give you an idea of my assessment of class participation:

- If you say **almost nothing** on most days: F-level
- If you make **1 helpful contribution** on most days: D-level
- If you make **2 helpful contributions** on most days: C-level
- If you make **4 helpful contributions** on most days: B-level
- If you make **countless helpful contributions** every day: A-level

Good participation is a matter both of quantity and quality.

## CONFERENCES—

Students should meet with me in conference throughout the semester. Please, come prepared, bringing work that you would like to discuss. Individual conferences will function as an important part of your writing process and can help to improve your class participation grade.

## ATTENDANCE—

**Absences**—It is extremely important that you show up for class. I will take attendance every day. You are permitted one absence without penalty. **Any student who misses more than 4 classes (or two weeks of class) will automatically fail this course.** And, although I recognize that emergencies do occur, all absences beyond the first one will be considered unexcused.

- Up to **1 absence**: 100%
- **2 absences**: 90%
- **3 absences**: 80%
- **4 absences**: 70%
- More than **4 absences**: automatic failure of this course

**Tardies**—Promptness is essential. Three tardies will equal one absence.

## LATE WORK—

Assignments must be uploaded to Blackboard by the start of class on their due dates. Late work will be penalized. Work submitted later in the day or after class is considered overdue and will be **marked down 5 points**. An absence from class is not a justification for late work.

**An assignment that is more than 5 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, an assignment due on Monday at 2:00 pm. must be submitted before the following Saturday at 2:00 p.m., or it will earn a “0.”

## A NOTE ABOUT TECHNOLOGY—

It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with Blackboard. 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.

### **BLACKBOARD & EMAIL—**

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

When you need to contact me, your first option—if you aren't able to stop by my office for a visit—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 respectful, and proofread your email before hitting SEND.

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

### **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.
- 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.

Failure to behave respectfully will result in a lower grade for the semester.

### **ACCOMMODATIONS—**

If you have documented learning differences or other challenges, please consult with me about arrangements for accommodations.

**AND, FINALLY, A NOTE 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 art-making. 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 intellectually, emotionally, and physically safe.

**PLEASE NOTE:  
This syllabus is subject to change.**

## COURSE OUTLINE

### Week One: 8/29-9/2

Monday: Introduction; Syllabus; Handouts; Workshop schedule.

- In-Class Exercise: Writing a poem beginning with a line or phrase of another poem.

Wednesday: Book Discussion

- Read for Class:
    - *Poetry Home Repair Manual* (About This Book & Ch. 1-2)
    - *Making of a Poem* (C. Forché “The Colonel,” R. Hayden “Those Winter Sundays,” and J. Wright “Lying in a Hammock...”)
  - In-Class Exercise: Writing a poem on the scaffolding of another poem.
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### Week Two: 9/5-9/9

Monday: **NO CLASS – LABOR DAY**

Wednesday: Book Discussion

- Read for Class:
    - *Poetry Home Repair Manual* (Ch. 3-4)
    - *Making of a Poem* (A. Hecht “The Book of Yolek,” M. Doty “Tiara,” and G. Schnackenberg “Supernatural Love”)
  - In-Class Exercise: Ekphrasis—writing a poem about a visual work of art.
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### Week Three: 9/12-9/16

Monday: Book Discussion & Workshop Poem #1

- Read for Class:
  - *Poetry Home Repair Manual* (Ch. 5)
  - *Making of a Poem* (H. Cole “The Roman Baths at Nîmes” and MJ Salter “Half a Double Sonnet”)
- In-Class Exercise: 14 lines of argument—writing a sonnet.
- HW Due: Read & comment on writing poems.

Wednesday: Workshop Poem #1

- HW Due: Read & comment on poem drafts.
  - HW Due: **Close Reading #1 uploaded to Blackboard.**
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**Week Four: 9/19-9/23**Monday: Book Discussion & Workshop Poem #1

- Read for Class:
  - *Poetry Home Repair Manual* (Ch. 6)
  - *Making of a Poem* (E. Bishop “One Art” and L. Gluck “Mock Orange”)
- In-Class Exercise: Writing a villanelle.
- HW Due: Read & comment on poem drafts.

Wednesday: Workshop Poem #1

- HW Due: Read & comment on poem drafts.
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**Week Five: 9/26-9/30**Monday: Book Discussion & Workshop Poem #2

- Read for Class:
  - *Poetry Home Repair Manual* (Ch. 7)
  - *Making of a Poem* (A. Rich “Diving Into the Wreck”)
- In-Class Exercise: Letters and lists—writing poems of familiar forms.
- HW Due: Read & comment on poem drafts.

Wednesday: Workshop Poem #2

- HW Due: Read & comment on poem drafts.
- HW Due: **Close Reading #2 uploaded to Blackboard.**

\*\*\* September 28, 2016 @ 8 pm: New Faculty Reading (students encouraged to attend)\*\*\*

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**Week Six: 10/3-10/7**Monday: Book Discussion & Workshop Poem #2

- Read for Class:
  - *Poetry Home Repair Manual* (Ch. 8)
  - *Making of a Poem* (J. Koethe “From the Porch” and T. Gunn “The J Car”)
- In-Class Exercise: Writing an “I remember” poem.
- HW Due: Read & comment on poem drafts.

Wednesday: Workshop Poem #2

- HW Due: Read & comment on poem drafts.
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**Week Seven: 10/10-10/14**Monday: Book Discussion & Workshop Poem #3

- Read for Class:
  - *Poetry Home Repair Manual* (Ch. 9)
  - *Making of a Poem* (C. Simic “Miracle Glass Co.” and J. Osherow “Villanelle for the Middle of the Night”)
- In-Class Exercise: Writing a poem from scent.
- HW Due: Read & comment on poem drafts.

Wednesday: Workshop Poem #2

- HW Due: Read & comment on poem drafts.
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**Week Eight: 10/17-10/21**Monday: Midterm Conferences

- Students will sign up for meetings ahead of time.

Wednesday: Midterm Conferences

- Students will sign up for meetings ahead of time.

\*\*\* October 20, 2016 @ 8pm: reading by Charles D’Ambrosio (students encouraged to attend)\*\*\*

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**Week Nine: 10/24-10/28**Monday: Book Discussion & Workshop Poem #3

- Read for Class:
  - *Poetry Home Repair Manual* (Ch. 10)
  - *Making of a Poem* (R. Hass “Meditation at Lagunitas”)
- In-Class Exercise: Writing a poem that repeats and repeats.
- HW Due: Read & comment on poem drafts.

Wednesday: Workshop Poem #3

- HW Due: Read & comment on poem drafts.
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**Week Ten: 10/31-11/4**Monday: Book Discussion & Workshop Poem #4

- Read for Class:
  - *Poetry Home Repair Manual* (Ch. 11-12)
  - *Making of a Poem* (J. Harjo “Perhaps the World Ends Here” and S. Olds “The Language of the Brag”)
- In-Class Exercise: Writing a persona poem (history, mythology, story).
- HW Due: Read & comment on poem drafts.

Wednesday: Workshop Poem #4

- HW Due: Read & comment on poem drafts.
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**Week Eleven: 11/7-11/11**Monday: Book Discussion & Workshop Poem #4

- Read for Class:
  - *The Sounds of Poetry* (Introduction, Theory, & Ch. I); read “The Snow Man” closely
- In-Class Exercise: Writing a poem on the scaffolding of “The Snow Man”
- HW Due: Read & comment on poem drafts.

Wednesday: Workshop Poem #4

- HW Due: Read & comment on poem drafts.
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**Week Twelve: 11/14-11/18**Monday: Book Discussion & Workshop Poem #5

- Read for Class:
  - *The Sounds of Poetry* (Ch. II)
  - *Making of a Poem* (G. Brooks “We Real Cool” and Y. Komunyakaa “Starlight Scope Myopia”)
- In-Class Exercise: Writing a love poem to something unlovable or unloving.
- HW Due: Read & comment on poem drafts.

\*\*\* November 15, 2016 @ 8 pm: reading by Dagoberto Gilb (students encouraged to attend)\*\*\*

Wednesday: Workshop Poem #5

- HW Due: Read & comment on poem drafts.
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**Week Thirteen: 11/21-11/25**Monday: Book Discussion & Workshop Poem #5

- Read for Class:
  - *The Sounds of Poetry* (Ch. III)
  - *Making of a Poem* (A. Tennyson “Ulysses”)
- In-Class Exercise: Writing an elegy for some kind of loss (person, place, thing, or abstract concept).
- HW Due: Read & comment on poem drafts.

Wednesday: Workshop Poem #5

- HW Due: Read & comment on poem drafts.
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**Week Fourteen: 11/28-12/2**Monday: Book Discussion & Workshop Poem #6

- Read for Class:
  - *The Sounds of Poetry* (Ch. IV)
  - *Making of a Poem* (T. Steele “Waiting for the Storm”)
- In-Class Exercise: Writing a poem in praise of something unexpected, often overlooked, or underappreciated.
- HW Due: Read & comment on poem drafts.

Wednesday: Workshop Poem #6

- HW Due: Read & comment on poem drafts.
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**Week Fifteen: 12/5-12/9**Monday: Book Discussion & Workshop Poem #6

- Read for Class:
  - *The Sounds of Poetry* (Ch. V)
  - *Making of a Poem* (Sylvia Plath “Daddy”)
- In-Class Exercise: Eco-poetry—writing a poem about a particular place, rural or urban.
- HW Due: Read & comment on poem drafts.

Wednesday: Workshop Poem #6

- HW Due: Read & comment on poem drafts.
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**Week Sixteen (Finals Week): 12/12-12/16**Monday: Final Portfolios

- HW Due: Upload final portfolios to Blackboard by 2 p.m.