

English 3150-02
Intermediate Poetry Workshop
Spring 2017

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Meeting Time: W 6:30 – 9:20 pm
Classroom: Auditorium 218
Office Hours: T 4:00 – 8:00 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 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.

REQUIRED TEXTS –

- *A Poetry Handbook*, Mary Oliver
- *180 More: Extraordinary Poems for Every Day*, edited by Billy Collins.

EVALUATIONS—

Your final grade will be calculated using these percentages:

Written Materials: 50%

- Batch A (Poem #1) = 10%
- Batch B (Poem #2 & Poem #3) = 20%
- Batch C (Poem #4 & Poem #5) = 20%

Class Participation: 50%

- Workshop = 25%
- Reading Discussions = 20%
- 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 3 classes (or three 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**: 80%
- **3 absences**: 60%
- More than **3 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 Wednesday at 6:30 pm. must be submitted before the following Monday at 6:30 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.

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.

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 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: January 18

- Introduction of Syllabus, Handouts, and Workshop schedule.
 - In-Class Exercise:
 - Writing a poem from scent.
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Week Two: January 25

- Read for Class:
 - *A Poetry Handbook*: Introduction, Getting Ready, Reading Poems, Imitation.
 - *180 More*: Read #001, #002 (Olds, Delanty).
 - Workshop:
 - Poem #1
 - HW Due:
 - Read & comment on poem drafts.
 - In-Class Exercise:
 - “Beginning with Another Poet’s Words” Exercise.
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Week Three: February 1

- Read for Class:
 - *A Poetry Handbook*: Sound.
 - *180 More*: Read #021, #153 (Daniels, Padgett).
 - Workshop:
 - Poem #1
 - HW Due:
 - Read & comment on poem drafts.
 - In-Class Exercise
 - “Repeating and Repeating” Exercise.
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Week Four: February 8

- **NO CLASS: PROFESSOR WILL BE OUT OF TOWN AT PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE.**
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Week Five: February 15

- Read for Class:
 - *A Poetry Handbook*: More Devices of Sound.
 - *180 More*: Read #053, #058 (Atwood, Kooser).
 - Workshop:
 - Poem #2
 - HW Due:
 - Read & comment on poem drafts.
 - **Upload Batch A (revision of Poem #1) to Blackboard by 6:30 p.m.**
 - In-Class Exercise
 - “A Soft or Sharp-Sounding Poem” Exercise.
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Week Six: February 22

- Read for Class:
 - *A Poetry Handbook*: The Line.
 - *180 More*: Read #063 (Murphy).
 - Workshop:
 - Poem #2
 - HW Due:
 - Read & comment on poem drafts.
 - In-Class Exercise
 - “Sentence vs. Line” Exercise.
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Week Seven: March 1

- **MIDTERM CONFERENCES: Students will sign up for meetings ahead of time and will meet with Professor during scheduled class time.**
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Week Eight: March 8

- Read for Class:
 - *A Poetry Handbook*: Some Given Forms
 - *180 More*: Read #057, #154 (Davis, Pastan).
 - In-Class Exercise:
 - “Writing a Villanelle” Exercise.
 - Second half of class: **Melissa Kwasny Poetry Event (reading & book signing at 8 pm, Sage Hall 116).**
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Week Nine: March 15

- **NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK!**
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Week Ten: March 22

- Read for Class:
 - *A Poetry Handbook*: Verse That Is Free.
 - *180 More*: Read #080, #082 (Matthews, Stern).
 - Workshop:
 - Poem #3
 - HW Due:
 - Read & comment on poem drafts.
 - In-Class Exercise:
 - “Description that Mirrors its Subject Matter” Exercise.
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Week Eleven: March 29

- Read for Class:
 - *A Poetry Handbook*: Diction, Tone, Voice.
 - *180 More*: Read #052, #147 (Olds, Addonizio).
 - Workshop:
 - Poem #3
 - HW Due:
 - Read & comment on poem drafts.
 - In-Class Exercise:
 - “Writing Low (But Beautifully)” Exercise.
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Week Twelve: April 5

- Read for Class:
 - *A Poetry Handbook*: Imagery.
 - *180 More*: Read # 090 (Doty).
 - Workshop:
 - Poem #4
 - HW Due:
 - Read & comment on poem drafts.
 - **Upload Batch B (revisions of Poems #2 & #3) to Blackboard by 6:30 p.m. (submit assignment as one document).**
 - In-Class Exercise:
 - “Writing About a Work of Art” Exercise.
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Week Thirteen: April 12

- Read for Class:
 - *A Poetry Handbook*: Revision, Workshops and Solitude, Conclusion.
 - *180 More*: #068, #069 (Sheehan, Wrigley).
 - Workshop:
 - Poem #4
 - HW Due:
 - Read & comment on poem drafts.
 - In-Class Exercise:
 - “Bad Love” Exercise.
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Week Fourteen: April 19

- Read for Class:
 - *180 More*: #056, #079 (Milosz, Lee)
 - Workshop:
 - Poem #5
 - HW Due:
 - Read & comment on poem drafts.
 - In-Class Exercise:
 - “Wring About Loss” Exercise (elegy for a person, place, thing, or abstract concept).
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Week Fifteen: April 26

- Read for Class:
 - *180 More*: Read #157, #160 (Stafford, Justice).
 - Workshop:
 - Poem #5.
 - HW Due:
 - Read & comment on poem drafts.
 - In-Class Exercise:
 - “About the Overlooked or Unappreciated” Exercise.
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Week Sixteen: May 3

- This class will be used to make up a class canceled previously for weather. **OR**, if there are no previous class cancellations, this day will be used for individual conferences instead.
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Week Seventeen (Finals Week): May 10

Monday: Final Portfolios

- HW Due: **Upload Batch C (revisions of Poems #4 & #5) to Blackboard by 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 10 (submit assignment as one document).**