

ENGLISH 3150-003
INTERMEDIATE POETRY WORKSHOP
SPRING 2020

Professor: Jehanne Dubrow
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Meeting Time: Tuesday 2:00 – 4:50 pm
Classroom: Language 322
Office Hours: Wednesday 2:00 – 6:00 pm
& by appointment

1) 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 a variety of 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.

2) REQUIRED TEXTS –

- *The Poetry Home Repair Manual: Practical Advice for Beginning Poets*, Ted Kooser
- Poetry handouts, provided as links on Canvas

3) EVALUATIONS –

Your final grade will be calculated using these percentages:

Written Materials: 60%

- Batch A (multiple drafts of Poem #1 + revision note) = 20%
- Batch B (multiple drafts of either Poem #2 or Poem #3 + revision note) = 20%
- Batch C (multiple drafts of either Poem #4 or Poem #5 + revision note) = 20%

Class Participation: 40%

- Workshop = 15%
- Reading Discussions = 15%
- Individual Conference (deadline: by Week Eight of the semester) = 5%
- Attendance = 5%

4) 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.

5) 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 students will know when their poetry is scheduled for workshop.

Starting with fourth week of class, we will move from a round-robin workshop (for which everyone should bring in a hard copy of a draft of their first poem) to the more traditional workshop model.

Here's how the traditional workshop model will be run: 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.

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 the discussion. Feedback includes line edits as well as a full paragraph of professional, constructive feedback that includes praise as well as useful questions for the poet. Be sure to sign your name to your comments and to approach the work respectfully and thoughtfully.

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).

6) 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 class participation grade.

7) REVISION –

Revision is a central tenet of this course and of the writer's life in general. 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.

8) 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 effortless 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.

9) INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES –

All students are **required to have at least one individual conference with me** by Week Eight of the semester. Attending this individual conference (and coming prepared to do serious work) is worth 5% of your final grade. If you do not meet with me in conference by Week Eight, you will earn a zero for this requirement.

Beyond that one required conference, I urge all students to meet with me individually throughout the semester. Whenever you wish to schedule an appointment, come put your name on my office hours sign-up sheet; you may schedule appointments as far in advance as you would like. Please, come to conferences prepared, bringing 2 typed copies (one for you and one for me) of written 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.

10) 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 (which is equivalent to four 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. Please, note that any student who leaves class early—because other commitments or priorities have arisen—will be marked as absent for the day.

Attendance is 5% of your final grade. Throughout the semester, you can determine what your attendance score will be, using this information:

- Up to **1 absence**: 100 points
- **2 absences**: 80 points
- **3 absences**: 70 points
- **4 absences**: 60 points
- More than **4 absences**: automatic failure of this course

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

Sometimes, after students miss a class, they'll ask me if they have "missed anything." Professors often sigh when they hear this question. If you wonder what you might have missed, as a result of an absence, please, review the course outline in the syllabus.

11) LATE WORK –

Assignments must be uploaded to Canvas 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 Tuesday at 2:00 pm. must be submitted before the following Sunday at 2:00 p.m., or it will earn a "0."

It is your responsibility to keep track of deadlines and to submit assignments 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.

12) 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.

13) CANVAS & EMAIL –

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 my previous critiques into your new work.

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 exchange. 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 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.

14) 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. Neglecting to participate in in-class writing prompts and other generative exercises.

UNT defines disruptive behavior as “behavior that interferes with the learning and teaching environment and/or the administrative student services function of the university” (please, see the brochure titled “Responding to Disruptive Student Behaviors” and UNT’s “Code of Student Conduct”—links posted on Canvas).

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.

15) 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.

16) 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 and often vulnerable 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 (1/14/20)

- Introduction of Syllabus, Handouts, and Workshop schedule.
 - Read in Class: Kumunyakaa's "Facing It" and Snider's "Why My Father Smells Like the Night" (handout).
 - In-Class Exercise: A Room in New York...Describing What You See.
 - In-Class Exercise: Because He Wore Brut...Describing What You Smell.
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Week Two (1/21/20)

- Read for Class: *A Poetry Home Repair Manual* (Chapter 1 – A Poet's Job Description)
 - Spotlight Poem: "Fire Burning in a Fifty-Five Gallon Drum" (pp. 6 – 7).
 - In-Class Exercise: Next Time You'll Notice...Describing an Ordinary Moment.
 - Round-Robin Workshop: Poem #1.
Everyone should bring in a hard copy of a draft of their first poem.
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Week Three (1/28/20)

- Read for Class: *A Poetry Home Repair Manual* (Chapter 2 – Writing for Others).
 - Spotlight Poem: "A Rainy Morning" (p. 15).
 - In-Class Exercise: You Have Seen How...Describing an Ordinary Action.
 - Round-Robin Workshop: Revision of Poem #1.
Everyone should bring in a hard copy of the revision of their first poem.
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Week Four (2/4/20)

- Read for Class: Read for Class: *A Poetry Home Repair Manual* (Chapter 3 – First Impressions).
 - Spotlight Poem: "Rattlesnake" (p. 32).
 - In-Class Exercise: I Found...Describing an Ordinary Animal.
 - Workshop: Poem #2.
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Week Five (2/11/20):

- Read for Class: *A Poetry Home Repair Manual* (Chapter 4 – Don’t Worry About the Rules).
 - Spotlight Poem: “Aquarium” (p. 36).
 - In-Class Exercise: We Find Them There...Describing a Tiny Scene.
 - HW Due: **Upload Batch A to Canvas by Tuesday at 2:00 p.m.**
 - Workshop: Poem #2.
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Week Six (2/18/20):

- Read for Class: *A Poetry Home Repair Manual* (Chapter 5 – Rhyming, Ham Cubes, Prose Poems).
 - Spotlight Poem: “Looking at a Dead Wren in My Hand” (p. 53).
 - In-Class Exercise: I Love Your...Praising Something Tiny.
 - Workshop: Poem #2.
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Week Seven (2/25/20):

- Read for Class: *A Poetry Home Repair Manual* (Chapter 6 – Writing About Feelings)
 - Spotlight Poem: “Fish” (pp. 59 – 60).
 - In-Class Exercise: No One Wants to Lift It...Writing a Particular Feeling Through Images.
 - Workshop: Poem #3.
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Week Eight (3/3/20):

- Read for Class: *A Poetry Home Repair Manual* (Chapter 7 – Can You Read Your Poems Through Your Poems)
- Spotlight Poem: “In the Nursing Home” (p. 62).
- In-Class Exercise: I Saw You...Writing a Particular Feeling Through Comparison.
- Workshop: Poem #3.

*****DEADLINE: To get credit for an individual conference (5% of final grade), you must have attended an individual conference by the end of this week in the semester.*****

Week Nine (3/10/20): *Spring Break, NO CLASS*

Week Ten (3/17/20)

- Read for Class: *A Poetry Home Repair Manual* (Chapter 8 – Writing from Memory).
 - Spotlight Poem: “Parents” (p. 78).
 - In-Class Exercise: I Felt...Writing a Tiny Memory.

 - Workshop: Poem #3.
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Week Eleven (3/24/20)

- Read for Class: *A Poetry Home Repair Manual* (Chapter 9 – Working with Detail).
 - Spotlight Poem: “Neighbors” (p.98)
 - In-Class Exercise: Now They Are Waving...Writing the Specific & Idiosyncratic.
 - HW Due: **Upload Batch B to Canvas by Tuesday at 2:00 p.m.**

 - Workshop: Poem #4.
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Week Twelve (3/31/20):

- Read for Class: *A Poetry Home Repair Manual* (Chapter 10 – Controlling Effects).
 - Spotlight Poem: “The Story of Lava” (p. 122).
 - In-Class Exercise: In His Cloudy Hands...Writing Toward Unique Word Choices.

 - Workshop: Poem #4.
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Week Thirteen (4/7/20):

- Read for Class: *A Poetry Home Repair Manual* (Chapter 11 – Fine-Tuning Metaphors and Similes)
 - Spotlight Poem: “Breakage” (p. 127).
 - In-Class Exercise: It’s Like...Writing Similes.

 - Workshop: Poem #4.
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Week Fourteen (4/14/20):

- Read for Class: *A Poetry Home Repair Manual* (Chapter 12 – Relax and Wait).
 - Spotlight Poem: “November” (p. 134).
 - In-Class Exercise: It Is...Writing Metaphor.
 - Workshop: Poem #5.
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Week Fifteen (4/20/20)

- Read & Print Out for Class: “A Small Needful Fact” (link on Canvas).
 - Print Out & Bring to Class: One copy of a recent newspaper article about a serious and urgent piece of news that matters to you (article should come from *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, or *The Dallas Morning News*).
 - In-Class Exercise: Fit to Print...Writing About Current Events.
 - Workshop: Poem #5.
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Week Sixteen (4/28/20)

- Workshop: Poem #5.
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Week Seventeen – *Finals Week, NO CLASS*

- HW Due: Upload Batch C to Canvas by Tuesday, May 5 at 2:00 p.m.