

**English 4110-001**  
**Advanced Poetry Workshop**  
**Fall 2017**

Professor: Jehanne Dubrow  
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Meeting Time: M 3:30 – 4:50 pm  
Classroom: Auditorium 202  
Office Hours: W 12:00 – 4:00 pm  
& by appointment

**1) COURSE DESCRIPTION –**

Welcome to English 4110! By now, all of you have studied poetry in 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 is difficult, asking that you push yourself both creatively and intellectually. Using six debut collections as models for our own work, we will address concepts of diction, the line and line break, figurative language, image, rhyme, meter, and narrative. Each of the assigned texts has been published within the past five years; therefore, our class will be able to reflect on some of the current trends in contemporary poetry. My hope is that your writing will reflect our close study of these new collections—books written by young, promising poets who are just beginning their careers.

**2) REQUIRED TEXTS –**

- *Safe Space*, Jos Charles
- *Seam*, Tarfia Faizullah
- *Driving without a License*, Janine Joseph
- *Four Reincarnations*, Max Ritvo
- *Cannibal*, Safiya Sinclair
- *Night Sky with Exit Wounds*, Ocean Vuong

**3) EVALUATIONS—**

Your final grade will be calculated using these percentages:

**Written Materials: 60%**

- Batch A (multiple drafts of either Poem #1 or Poem #2 + revision note) = 20%
- Batch B (multiple drafts of either Poem #3 or Poem #4 + revision note) = 20%
- Batch C (multiple drafts of either Poem #5 or Poem #6 + revision note) = 20%

**Class Participation: 40%**

- Workshop = 15%
- Literature Discussions = 15%
- Book Facilitation = 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 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.

#### **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 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.

## 9) DISCUSSION FACILITATION—

Each person in the class will be responsible for one “discussion facilitation.” Students will work in small groups, leading the class in an examination of the published text. You will provide a detailed handout of the assigned book, which will serve as a study guide for your peers.

## 10) CONFERENCES—

Students should meet with me in conference 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 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.

## 11) 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.

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.

### **12) 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 Tuesday at 3:30 pm. must be submitted before the following Sunday at 3:30 p.m., or it will earn a “0.”

### **13) 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.

### **14) 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.

I provide all grades and written comments electronically. Once I have assessed an assignment, please, be sure to click the appropriate link on the Blackboard 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 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 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.

### **15) INAPPROPRIATE OR DISRUPTIVE 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.

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 Blackboard).

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

### **16) 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.

**17) 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: August 28 – September 1

*Tuesday*

- Introduction of Syllabus, Assignment Guidelines, Workshop Schedule.

*Thursday*

- Read for Class: Max Ritvo's *Four Reincarnations*.
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### Week Two: September 4 – 8

*Tuesday*

- Workshop: Poem #1 (inspired by *Four Reincarnations*)

*Thursday*

- Workshop: Poem #1 (inspired by *Four Reincarnations*)
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### Week Three: September 11 – 15

*Tuesday*

- Workshop: Poem #1 (inspired by *Four Reincarnations*)

*Thursday*

- Read for Class: Janine Joseph's *Driving without a License*.
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### Week Four: September 18 – 22

*Tuesday*

- Workshop: Poem #2 (inspired by *Driving without a License*)

*Thursday*

- Workshop: Poem #2 (inspired by *Driving without a License*)
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### Week Five: September 25 – 29

*Tuesday*

- Workshop: Poem #2 (inspired by *Driving without a License*).

*Thursday*

- Read for Class: Ocean Vuong's *Night Sky with Exit Wounds* (Group #1 Facilitation).
  - HW Due: **Group #1 will prepare and facilitate discussion of *Night Sky with Exit Wounds*.**
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**Week Six: October 2 – 6**

*Tuesday*

- Workshop: Poem #3 (inspired by *Night Sky with Exit Wounds*).
- HW Due: **Upload Batch A to Blackboard by Tuesday at 3:30 p.m.**

*Thursday*

- Workshop: Poem #3 (inspired by *Night Sky with Exit Wounds*).
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**Week Seven: October 9 – 13**

*Tuesday*

- Workshop: Poem #3 (inspired by *Night Sky with Exit Wounds*).

*Thursday*

- Read for Class: Safiya Sinclair's *Cannibal* (Group #2 Facilitation).
  - HW Due: **Group #2 will prepare and facilitate discussion of *Cannibal*.**
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**Week Eight: October 16 – 20**

*Tuesday*

- Workshop: Poem #4 (inspired by *Cannibal*).

*Thursday*

- Workshop: Poem #4 (inspired by *Cannibal*)
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**Week Nine: October 23 – 27**

*Tuesday*

- Workshop: Poem #4 (inspired by *Cannibal*).

*Thursday*

- **NO CLASS: PROFESSOR WILL BE OUT OF TOWN FOR POETRY EVENT.**
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**Week Ten: October 30 – November 3**

*Tuesday*

- Read for Class: Jos Charles's *Safe Space* (Group #3 Facilitation).
- HW Due: **Group #3 will prepare and facilitate discussion of *Safe Space*.**
- HW Due: **Upload Batch B to Blackboard by Tuesday at 3:30 p.m.**

*Thursday*

- Workshop: Poem #5 (inspired by *Safe Space*).
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**Week Eleven: November 6 – 10**

*Tuesday*

- **NO CLASS: PROFESSOR WILL BE OUT OF TOWN FOR POETRY EVENT.**

*Thursday*

- **NO CLASS: PROFESSOR WILL BE OUT OF TOWN FOR POETRY EVENT.**
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**Week Twelve: November 13 – 17**

*Tuesday*

- Workshop: Poem #5 (inspired by *Safe Space*).

*Thursday*

- Workshop: Poem #5 (inspired by *Safe Space*).
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**Week Thirteen: November 20 – 24**

*Tuesday*

- Read for Class: Tarfia Faizullah's *Seam* (Group #4 Facilitation).
- HW Due: **Group #4 will prepare and facilitate discussion of *Seam*.**

*Thursday*

- **NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING.**
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**Week Fourteen: November 27 – December 1**

*Tuesday*

- Workshop: Poem #6 (inspired by *Seam*).

*Thursday*

- Workshop: Poem #6 (inspired by *Seam*).
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**Week Fifteen: December 4 – 8**

*Tuesday, last day of class*

- Workshop: Poem #6 (inspired by *Seam*).
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**Week Sixteen (Finals Week): December 11 – 15**

*Tuesday*

- HW Due: **Upload Batch C to Blackboard by Tuesday, December 12 at 3:30 p.m.**