

Syllabus English 302 Creative Writing: Poetry Dr. C. Crabtree

C. Crabtree 219 Briggs 3-1080 Office Hours: Monday , Wednesday. 1-2 ; 11:30 – 12:30 and 3:30-4:00 Ts. , preferably by appointment. I'm often in my office till 5 or 6 p,m. If you make an appointment, you must take these appointments seriously.

Texts: Drake, Barbara, Writing Poetry, 2nd Edition, Harcourt Brace Publishers, 1994.
250 Poems, Ed. Peter Schakel and Jack Ridl, Bedford St. Martin's, 2003.
Julia Cameron, The Artist's Way.

Prerequisite: English 205, Introduction to Creative Writing

Objectives:

Students will explore the nature of poetry and the poetic process, writing about a poem each week. Students will learn to tap into their own creative sources, learn the role of reading and critiquing the work of others in the sharpening of one's own talent, and gain the tools needed to turn out at least a few good poetic efforts. Ideally, the student will come away from the class with a sharpened appreciation of the creative process and with a heightened insight into the workings of the language, including metaphor and other types of figurative language.

Students need to understand that writing good poetry requires an understanding of what other poets have written. The understanding of language, uses of metaphor not as an "add-on" but as a way of seeing the world, and the experience the student brings to the work of writing—all these will enrich and strengthen the work the student turns out.

The first four weeks of class will involve intense study of specific poems and the technical aspects of poetry such as rhythm, metaphor, imagery, and types of poetic form, with students also receiving a writing prompt each week. After this, more class time will be spent on writing, revising, and critiquing each students' work; students must take responsibility for reading and keeping a journal on poems found in the texts, Two-hundred and Fifty Poems and Drake, Writing Poetry.

Active participation in the critiquing of others' work is required. Failure to invest in the work of others by offering respectful feedback in the small groups will affect your grade, as will generous response to the work of others.

Students' Obligations and Responsibilities:

Keep a reading journal: read six poems per week from the anthology, commenting upon them in about a paragraph. The journal allows you a range of choice in reading. This journal may also be used as your notebook. I will collect it occasionally. You will also need to keep a journal of your own thoughts, which I'll call your Personal Journal. This must be a separate, lightweight notebook of your choice, which you keep with you and write in daily. I spot check this journal, but you may fold over pages you consider private. Attend class, missing no more than three permitted classes.

Read all assigned chapters in all texts.

Turn in 15 poems or exercises, a reading journal covering six poems a week, and a Personal Journal.

Pass brief quizzes on technical details from texts, and about three informal "Response" essays.

Attend two poetry readings at local bookstores or coffeehouses.

As a class, attend the UDM version of Vagina Monologues (See me to substitute another event for this) and one other University-sponsored event.

Attend UDM Theater Company production as announced.

Museum visit or other "artist's date" events.

Respect the work of others and keep any personal information revealed or implied in class strictly confidential.

Policies and Procedures:

Attendance policy: You are allowed three cuts per semester. Attendance is critical at every stage of the course, and poor attendance will hurt your grade in several ways. "A" grades are given to students whose work shows talent, originality, and discipline (discipline involves hard work, serious revising, and attention to poetic forms where appropriate). I will give checks, check plusses, and check minuses as well as verbal comments which will keep you apprised of your progress without my having to slap a grade on your work. The actual final grade is based on class participation (10%), journals (10%), attendance at a poetry reading off campus and any required events on campus, and bookstore visit (required but ungraded), and your final poetry portfolio (80%).

I subtract 5 pts from your 15-point class participation grade for each small group missed after one permitted absence from your group meeting. Absences may also indirectly affect your grade, as will failure to turn in work. You are expected to contribute actively to the constructive critiquing of your groupmates' work.

Poems must be typed. Class exercises may be turned in hand-written. Assigned poems and exercises are due at class time or group meeting time). However, those who can get poems to me by 11:45 a.m. will have a good chance of having their work discussed in the first four weeks. For small groups, the poem is due in 7 copies at the time of the group meeting.

An additional note about grading: In a sense, it is antithetical to the poetic process for the student to work in order to get a high grade; on the other hand, it is natural for poets to hope for appreciation of their poetry. The instructor's intellectual integrity requires some rigor in the grading process. Thus, students must prepare for disappointment if they seek an "A" as the only acceptable acknowledgement that they have talent, have worked hard, or have grown a great deal.

Here is a thumbnail sketch of the way grades have been given in this class:

D Student has missed class frequently and/or failed to turn in work.

C Student has some skill or talent, but has missed class frequently, failed to revise thoroughly, and/or not contributed to the growth of classmates.

Student has grown a bit, but has not put in much effort; or student has missed three or four classes or failed to turn in assignments; or student has lots of talent but has missed several class, even if for serious personal reasons.

B Student has attended all required classes, has grown a great deal, has contributed to the growth of others and has achieved some good poetic efforts.

B+ Student has talent and skill and has achieved some very good poems, as well as contributing to the growth of others.

A top-notch student has achieved a lot, shows talent and promise, and has been in class and contributing to the work of others.

A The same as the student with an A-, but represents the instructor's judgment about

the talent and actual achievement of the student.

A Final Note to Students:

Our development as writers requires a safe atmosphere and trustworthy companions. If you do not wish to, or do not feel capable of, accepting the people in your class and the material they may choose to write about, please drop the class. Also, you must be prepared to share most of your work (see me if something very private emerges from a writing assignment which you don't wish to share with the class) and hear responses from your classmates and from me. Respect for each other is rooted both in the Mission of the University and in the creative process itself.

Week 1

Mon. Introduction to the class. Definitions of poetry. Brief writing prompt. Poems from the anthology and hand-outs. Drake, Chs. 1 and 2 for Wednesday. Memory as fodder for poetry. We'll discuss two required journals today and Wednesday.

Wed. Turn in what you wrote after Monday's prompt, both the handwritten class exercise and the typed poem. Bring 8 copies if you are willing to share it. Poems from text, your poems, and some ideas from Drake and others on the creative process. Metaphor and image in poetry.

Friday Bring your Week 1 poem, typed, with 7 copies. Avoiding or replacing clichés with fresher images. Bring in the notebooks you are using for the Reading Journal and the Poet's Pages. I will collect the Reading Journals and spot-check Poet's Pages.

Week 2

Monday Discuss poems from anthology. Poem prompt 2 in class. Drake Chs. 3 and 4 on catalogue poems and observation. Personal journal check. Reading journal pages collected.

Wednesday. Poem or completed exercise due at class time. We'll critique individual poems in class, possibly in small groups.

Friday Drake Chs. 5 and 6. Glossary of Key Terms, 349 in Drake.

Week 3

Monday Memorized poem from 250 Poems to be recited today in class. Poems from text in class. Poem prompt 3: the uses of memory. Chs 7 and 8 in Drake.

Wednesday. Poem due. Ch. 9 in Drake. Journal check.

Friday Abstract and concrete.

Week 4

Monday Poems from text. Poem prompt 4. Observation of details.

Wednesday. Poem due. Quiz on all chapters from the texts read so far (excluding individual poems unless noted), including key terms from Drake Glossary, p. 349.. Expanding your vocabulary.

Friday Small groups in class. Bring copies of your latest revised poem. Journal check.

Week 5

Monday A closer look at poetic forms. Ch. 7 in Drake reviewed.

Wednesday. Poem due (8 copies) Star my copy of your poem. Film/ talk about the creative process. Journal check.

Friday The craft of revision. Bring your best or most troublesome poem and work on revising.

Week 6

Monday Poem prompt 6. Fine tuning poems through attention to detail. Film. Journals collected today.

Wednesday. Small group meeting, Group x. Bring your poem in 8 copies for your small-group members.

Friday Small group critiquing, group Y. Group Z meets by arrangement after class.

Week 7

Monday Bring texts to class. Prepare a poem to submit to the Dudley Randall Student Poetry Competition. Poem prompt 7.

Wednesday, Friday. Small groups.

Week 8

Monday Bring texts. Thinking outside our own lives to tie them to events in history. Poem prompt 8. Journal check.

Wednesday, Friday. Small group meetings.

Week 9

Monday The uses of memory, imagination, and story poems. Poem prompt 9.

Wednesday, Friday. Small groups.

Week 10

Monday Longer poems. Poem prompt 10.

Wednesday, Friday Small groups.

Week 11

Monday Sorting out autobiographical and imaginative elements. Postmodern techniques. Poem prompt 11. Journals due.

Wednesday, Friday Small groups.

Week 12

Monday Retrospective on your work so far. Preparing for our public reading at Grounds next week. Prepare your three best efforts to read at the reading. Poem prompt 12.

Wednesday, Friday. Small groups.

Week 13

Monday Poem prompt 13. Public poetry reading at Grounds, followed by Open Mic, one night this week to be decided in class.

Wednesday, Friday Small groups.

Week 14

Poem prompt 14. Turn in your portfolio with poems and exercises. They will be returned on Wednesday. Prepare your three best efforts to read to your classmates.

Exam period as scheduled.