English 4350.001- Studies in Poetics & Poetry | Spring 2016
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Phone: 361-825-3627
Office hours: MW—3:30-5:30 & T/Th – 2:15-3:15 or by Appointment

Course Meets
Mon/Weds – 2:00-3:15 p.m., Early Childhood Development Center, 219C

Required Texts and Materials


A Poetry Writer’s Notebook: digitally-generated.

Course Design and Objectives
This course is a study of topics in the poetics beginning with the Anglo American tradition and including traditions that grew out of a dynamic cultural diversity that continues to shape literary thought. We will study published and well-established poets from the 19th to the 21st century—their original work and thoughts on poetry's evolution, relevance, and the creative process. You will also practice the craft of poetry by producing original poems, in form and innovation of form. The theme of the course is a query on why poetry matters in this unrepeateable world we inhabit. How does poetry reflect on and contribute to the dynamic forces that shape our societies and our personal lived realities? In what ways do the poets address and explore some of our major individual and social concerns and experiences? How can poetry matter to you?

Student Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate an understanding of the connections between English and American poetry and poetics written by poets from the 19th-21st in a personal academic notebook containing heuristic responses to poetics written by poets in the period, personal responses to poetic theory, and explications of poems written by the poets studied.

- Employ a variety of writing-to-learn techniques in a personal academic notebook.

- Demonstrate analytical skills in reading and writing through completion of a course project and presentation.

- Demonstrate knowledge of form and technique through crafting original poetry.
**Course Requirements and Grade Distribution**

Grades will be determined according to the following percentages for each component of the course requirements:

- Professionalism: 10%
- Poetry Notebook: 30%
- Original Poetry Portfolio: 30%
- Poetics Project: 20%
- Class Presentation: 10%

**Electronic Poetry Notebook (30%) will contain:**

You will be required to keep a personal electronic notebook. This is a personal learning tool, but you should use the following general guidelines. Since different students have different learning preferences, I want to offer you a *minimum* amount and type of activity to complete in your notebook. I encourage you to see these features of the class as a place for you to work out your ideas informally, free from the constraints of a finish-quality, graded paper or fully developed poem. *Everything you bring to class for discussion and peer review must be typed,* either displayed on your laptop or printed out from your electronic notebook.

1. **Poetry Exercise Entries:**

Each week we will be reading work by a well-known poet and studying a particular form or forms. I will give you some guidance with poetry prompts, and you will attempt to replicate the assigned form, such as the ballad, sonnet, ghazal, pantoum, etc. I don’t expect your exercises to be fully developed or polished. They are meant as starting points to develop more fully for your poetry portfolio. Towards this end, we will have poetry review workshops approximately once a week, in groups. I will distribute Poetry Response Guidelines for these reviews.

2. **Reader’s Responses (R’s):**

A reader’s response is pretty much what its name suggests: you (the reader) *respond in writing* to a selected reading out of your own experience and knowledge (and course materials). As you examine the syllabus of readings, you’ll see that we will be reading something for practically every class. Of all those assignments, I’d like you to pick *six* of the readings of your own choosing and write an *informal* response to each of the six. A response should be substantial enough to actually convey something of your reaction to the reading, or portion of the reading, you selected. I will suggest due dates for this activity throughout the semester. Most successful responses are 1-3 pages typewritten (roughly 250-750 words). You’ll be expected to complete six (6) responses this semester.

3. **Explication (X’s):**

An *explication* is the product of a *close reading* of a literary text (in our study this semester, a poem) in which you explain how it works to achieve that meaning or effect by its use of poetic
techniques. Again, as in your reader’s responses, I don’t want to make a hard and fast rule about length. I’ll expect four (4) explications to be in your journal/notebook. I will suggest due dates for this activity throughout the semester. Most successful explications are 1-3 pages typewritten (roughly 250-750 words). You’ll be expected to complete six (6) explications this semester.

Original Poetry Portfolio (30%):

You will write and fully revise at least 10 poems, each one attempting to follow form and technique that we’re studying in class. So expect to write at least one poem every other week. You will receive comments and feedback from me, and have time to revise. You’ll want to include all drafts of your poems in your final poetry portfolio, and a cover letter.

Poetics Project (20%):

Students will create a project, which focuses on the poetics and poetry of one poet, school, or region active in the past 50 years. Projects will include a variety of media, including academic papers, web sites, etc. Student will also include an original poem influenced by this project. All project portfolios will be negotiated with me in advance and in consultation with class members to ensure a wide coverage of the field.

Class Presentation (10%): Students will present their poetics project to the class, along with one original poem that was influenced by the poet, school, or movement presented. Each class member will respond to their peers’ presentations with the aim of helping the student develop his or her project more thoroughly.

My Course Policies

Professionalism: (10%)

Your professional conduct is an urgent part of what will help you and our community of learners in this course successful. In other words, you are one of the parts that make the whole. Your professional contribution to our community of learners requires your attendance, daily preparation, participation, and interaction. Participation in physical and virtual class discussions is an important part of this course. This course sees professionalism as the ways you come prepared, contribute to/engage in the processes of reading, writing, collaborative work, online and face-to-face discussions and inquiry, peer-draft reviewing, revising, and critical thinking.

You need to plan to attend every class, be in class on time, and stay until the end of class. Bring your poetry notebook--your reading notes--and be prepared to stay engaged by talking, listening, and taking notes. No cell phones shall be visible or audible during class period (unless you have a child, elder, or other family member with special needs, under your care, in which case you may have your phone on “vibrate”). I urge you to utilize time management! Use a planner, and schedule time and space to read and write with this course as a guide, and develop your skills as a creative writer. Discover your best and favorite physical environments, rituals, and
accoutrements for your own most efficient, focused reading and writing. The old Procrastination Devil is a smooth operator. Be a step ahead of him/her.

**Blackboard Policy**

You are responsible for checking our course on Blackboard every day. Check Announcements, for daily assignments and messages from me, and for weekly updates on readings due for upcoming class meetings. The BB app for smartphones is available for free.

**Establish Partnerships and Communicate:** Make a pact with at least two colleagues in your group to stay in contact about the course in the event of one’s absence. You are encouraged to take responsibility for each other and for information missed. If you are absent, make sure a colleague picks up necessary handouts, worksheets, and takes careful notes and gathers information for you. Again, always check Blackboard.

**E-Communication Policy**

- The best way to contact me is through my email address: robin.carstensen@tamucc.edu.
- I will respond to professional emails that include your subject and class section in the Subject Heading, address me by my professional title, and offer your signature.
- I will respond to email within 24 hours between 9 a.m.- 9 p.m, M-F.
- Though I do respond to e-mails from students who have very specific questions, I never respond to tweets, instant-messages, badly misspelled, and vague, unprofessionally addressed e-mails or text- messages, such as “hey, slept thru alarm. what’d i miss?”
- If you need an appointment with me outside of my office hours, please ask me after class or email me.

**Absence Policy:** It is impossible to earn an A after three absences, and very unlikely to earn a B after seven absences. So, try to save your absences for unexpected illnesses and crises (i.e, don’t use them all up recuperating from all-night festivities). Typically, an “A” student exemplifies outstanding community professionalism and self-initiative.

**Late work Policy:** In the case that a document is turned in or posted late with no prior arrangement with me, that document’s grade will be lowered ten percentage points for each class meeting that the student fails to turn it in. If the student has made arrangements with me prior to class, due to job, sports team travel or family crisis, late work may be accepted with no grade penalty.

**Extra Credit:** I encourage you to attend literary events, performances, and lectures within and around the campus community. To that end, I award you extra credit for attending a literary, creative, and/or performance-based event, in full, and typing at least a two-page detailed reflection, using literary concepts and vocabulary that you are learning in class. I announce these events on Blackboard and in class, and welcome your own announcements of such events hosted by any student organizations and extracurricular groups in which you are active.
Grading Standards

A (90%-100%): Outstanding work. An A document superbly addresses all components of the assignment. It clearly and logically expresses and develops an idea for a particular audience in an interesting way. A writing is highly polished and generally contains no errors in the use of English.

B (80%-89%): Very good work. A B document does a better than average job of addressing all components of the assignment. It expresses and develops an idea in a clear, logical way, and it is well adapted to the needs of its intended readers. B writing contains few or none of the common errors in the use of English. The professional appearance of B work is generally neat and polished.

C (70%-79%): Competent work. A C document manages to address most of the components of the assignment and develops an idea for its intended readers, but does little to create a positive or lasting impression on them. C writing avoids serious errors in the use of English. The professional appearance of C work is acceptable but unremarkable and needs revision, polish, or redesign.

D (60%-69%): Unsatisfactory work. A D document is flawed by one or more of the following: insufficient attention to the assigned task and its audience, poorly developed ideas, inaccurate information, errors in the use of English.

F (50%-59%): Unacceptable work. An F document is flawed by one or more of the following: failure to accomplish the assigned task and adapt to its audience, failure to develop an idea, serious errors in the use of English language.

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Policies | Student Resources

Academic Advising

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

Classroom/Professional Behavior

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the
Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

In-class Conduct
- In general, treat each other and the instructor with respect and follow standards of common courtesy. Here are a few specifics:
- Please place all cell phones or other electronic communication devices out of sight (in a bag, purse, pocket) while in class. You may think quietly texting someone is not distracting to the instructor or fellow students, but it is.
- Do not use your time in class to work on assignments for other classes.
- Do not talk or make excessive noise while the instructor or another student is speaking to the class as a whole. (This includes typing on the keyboard or clicking the mouse.)
- When group work is assigned in class, you must work in a group, not as an individual.
- During group work time, please stay on task and work cooperatively with other group members.

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism
The University will not tolerate plagiarism or any other form of intellectual or academic dishonesty. Violations of academic honesty will be processed under the Procedure for Academic Misconduct Cases 13.02.99.C3.01 (see http://ses.tamu.edu/grievances.html and the Student Code of Conduct http://judicialaffairs.tamu.edu/assets/2013-2014StudentHandbook.pdf). All cases of academic misconduct are recorded in the student’s file. Consequences are determined by the faculty member and/or the Academic Integrity Hearing Panel. It is sometimes difficult to understand what plagiarism actually is. Students sometimes commit unintentional plagiarism (not citing sources properly, for example), because they are unaware of the standards that apply. Plagiarism includes:
- using the work of another as your own,
- downloading or purchasing ready-made essays off the web and using them as your own,
- using resource materials without correct documentation,
- using the organization or language of a source without using quote marks and proper citation, or
- turning in a researched paper without citing sources in an appropriate documentation style.

Be aware that there are many ways to plagiarize. English 1301 and 1302 courses and the Writing Center at CASA will review rules of academic citation. Information academic citation is available at the Purdue University’s OWL: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/ and/or from our local Writing Center at CASA.

Dropping a Class
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best
course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. Please be aware that you are allowed 6 drops in your entire undergraduate career, so these decisions must be made carefully. **April 8th** is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

**Grade Appeals Process:** Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, cl.a.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean. The first step is a meeting with the instructor.

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**Student Resources**

**Students with Disability and Veterans**

Notice to Students with Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom, or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance.

**The Center for Academic Student Achievement (CASA):** The Writing Center of CASA provides free writing instruction to any student interested in improving his/her writing abilities. Tutors will assist you with all aspects of writing. The Writing Center’s purpose is not to correct or proofread your drafts but to help you learn strategies that good writers use during the processes of writing. You may visit the Center for assistance with a writing project for any of your classes. It is located in the Glasscock Building (825-5933).

**University Counseling Center**

We all encounter stress, problems, and difficult decisions in our daily lives. Sometimes, these problems may seem overwhelming or it might be difficult to talk about certain issues with your friends or family. The University Counseling Center is available for all students enrolled at TAMUCC. Students seek counseling for a multitude of reasons and the University Counseling Center offers individual therapy, group counseling, psychiatric services, psychological testing,
consultation, outreach services, alcohol and drug education and prevention programs, and personal skills training. If you are in need of counseling services or just someone to talk to, please call or visit the University Counseling center at (361) 825-2703 in the Driftwood Building. Visit: http://counseling.tamucc.edu for more information.

**Reminder to English Majors:** As part of the English undergraduate capstone course (ENGL 4351), all English majors are required to submit a portfolio of writings in different discourse genres that they have completed for their college classes. To help you prepare for this assignment, you should **keep a copy** of all essays, research papers, literary analyses, creative and report writing, etc., so that you will have an ample selection from which to choose when the portfolio comes due.

For the Schedule, see Blackboard Reading and Assignment Schedule, updated weekly. See Announcements for daily updates.

**Schedule of Major Assignments and Due Dates Here:**

Week 1

**January 20** Course introductions.
Reading Assignment and materials—1.
Sign up for Round 1 of the Poetry Discussion and Peer Review.

Week 2

**January 25:** Suggested poetics and materials—2.
Bring your notes for Round 1, Poetics Discussion
**January 27:** Begin Round 1, Poetics Discussion and Peer Review 1.

Weeks 3-8: **Reading and Discussion Sessions on Mondays.**
**Discussion and Poetry Peer Reviews on Wednesdays.**
Begin Round 2 Sessions when Round 1 has been completed (meaning each student has facilitated at least one discussion).

Week 9: **No Workshops for Spring Break: March 14-18.**

Weeks 10-14: **Reading and Discussion Sessions on Mondays.**
**Discussion and Poetry Peer Reviews on Wednesdays.**
Begin Round 3 sessions when Round 2 has been completed (meaning each student has facilitated at least twice).

**Week 15: Begin Final Project Presentation**
April 25th and April 27th

**Monday, May 2:** Last Class Day: Poetry Portfolios Due
(May 4th is Reading Day):
**Weds, May 11th:** Final Exam/Presentations from 1:45-4:15