Do you hate poetry? Does it terrify you? It doesn’t have to be so scary. Here you will learn all the skills you need to become an expert poetry reader and even a poetry-lover. Dazzle your friends, impress your parents, and amaze yourself. In this class, you will learn to read poetry in the material form of individual volumes. This class will teach you how to hone your close reading analysis skills and to develop a vocabulary for reading poetry and poetic forms. We will look at how reading poetry changes when you encounter a poem in the context of a volume of poetry rather than in an anthology, on the web, or in a magazine. We will also learn to analyze poetic forms like the sonnet, the villanelle, and we’ll even spend a week learning to read the poetics of rap. We will cover poetic volumes from Emily Dickinson’s mid-19th-century handmade fascicles through Claudia Rankine’s mixed media 2014 *Citizen: An American Lyric*; this large historical scope will allow us to get a sense for the shifting developments in poetic form (and the historical contexts of its production) throughout the twentieth century. So you’ll not only learn to wow your friends with your poetry expertise, but you’ll also learn a lot about twentieth-century history. After this course, you will be a careful and knowledgeable poetry reader—able to interpret poetic texts and their material and historical contexts.
Required Texts for the Course:
(Available at the TAMUCC Bookstore or Purchased Online)

(To Be Downloaded and Printed from our course Blackboard site)
W.B. Yeats, *The Tower* (1928)
Hart Crane, *The Bridge* (1930)
Gwendolyn Brooks, *A Street in Bronzeville* (1945)
Langston Hughes, *Montage of a Dream Deferred* (1951)
Sylvia Plath, *Ariel* (1965)
Elizabeth Bishop *Geography III* (1976)

Additional readings will be posted on the course website or handed out in class.

Assessment:
Your final grade for this course will be determined by the following breakdown of the percentage weighting of each course component:

- Close Reading Practice Posts: 10%
- Close-Reading Argument (3-4 pages) Paper: 20%
- Extended Close-Reading Argument (5 pages) Paper: 30%
- Final Exam: 25%
- Class Participation: 15%

Assignments:

*Postings to Course Website:* This semester you will practice and develop your close-reading skills by submitting numerous short responses via discussion posts to the course website. These short (1 page) responses will sometimes be directed by more specific instructions (i.e. you will respond to a question or prompt that I post) and will always be submitted as part of the “Forums” feature of our website, making them accessible to me and to your peers. These short writes encourage you to write-to-learn and the emphasis is placed on the process of engaging with course readings and with the responses of your peers to the materials. They will all be graded on a √ (for fulfilling the expectations of the assignment), √ + (for exceeding expectations through an exceptionally thoughtful and interesting response), or a 0 (for failing to post a response or for posting a response that fails to fulfill the expectations of the assignment). If you receive a √ or √ + on all three of the postings, then you will be awarded full credit for this 10% of your final grade. Each posting assignment will specify more precisely the expectations for successful completion in that particular case. Late responses (after the
due date and time but within 24 hours) will receive \( \frac{1}{2} \) credit. Any response posted later than 24 hours after the due time will not be read and will receive a 0.

**Close-Reading Argument Paper (3-4 pages) (Due Friday March 10):** This paper assignment will ask you to build upon the shorter web-page postings to develop a sustained close-reading of one of poems that we’ve read by this point in the term. In this paper, you will develop a persuasive argument about your chosen poem using specific evidence from the text. You should have genuine questions about the poem you select—questions that you would like to answer through the writing process (i.e. questions that you can’t answer immediately, questions that you have to look closely at the poem and work through to come to a conclusion about). The aim of this assignment is for you to formulate an interesting, debatable argument about a single poem. You should support your argument with ample specific evidence from the poem and convincing analysis of that evidence. This paper should have a clear thesis statement and should develop its main argument through close analysis of textual evidence over the course of the three to four pages. Additionally, as part of the paper’s analysis, you should address both the content and the form of the poem. In other words, you should discuss both the images and themes that the poem takes up as its topic and formal features like rhyme, meter, repetition, the presence of a speaker and or addressee, etc. You don’t need to include every single one of these features and should instead focus on the elements of the poem that enhance your argument and that you find most interesting about the poem. An assignment sheet with more specific guidelines, advice, expectations and grading criteria will be handed out in class.

**Extended Close-Reading Argument Paper (5 pages) (Due Sunday April 30):** This paper will be an extension of the earlier paper and you will build on the skills you practiced in that earlier paper (you cannot write on the same text that you chose for the first paper assignment). The aim of this assignment is for you to formulate an interesting, debatable argument about a single poem and to connect that argument in a meaningful way to the larger volume in which that poem appeared. When talking about the volume context, you can address the cover/dust-jacket design, the order in which your poem appears, the relationship amongst a group of poems within the volume, the way in which the poem you’re focusing on connects (or resists) larger themes and trends in the volume, etc. An assignment sheet with more specifics will be handed out in class.

**Final Exam:** 1st part will be 3 short close-readings of poems from volumes we’ve read in the course, 2nd part will be a longer essay responding to one of a selection of pre-circulated topics/prompts/sets of questions.

**Participation:** Your participation grade will be based on your active engagement with class materials, your frequent and thoughtful contributions to class discussions of all shapes and sizes, your active listening to your classmates and to me, your productive work in frequent in-class small group activities, your reflections upon and completion of the assigned reading, and your coming to class prepared (with materials, thoughts, questions, and assigned work) every day. In order to engage actively with these texts and to promote lively discussions, you will need to prepare diligently for class each day—I encourage you to thoroughly mark up your texts (write all over them, use post-it notes, keep a reading journal on a separate page if you prefer), flag key passages that interest you, jot down questions as they occur to you, and come to class ready to discuss and to contribute questions and themes, passages, and patterns that you find particularly intriguing and worth talking about. For our frequent Blackboard readings (i.e. the electronically circulated ones), you will need to print them out, follow all the instructions for marking up your texts as above, and bring them to class with you in order to effectively participate on those days.
As you will see, I keep records of participation every single class meeting so that these grades are fair and able to be documented: I keep a huge spreadsheet of each day’s grade (assessed using a 4 point grading scale from 4 (an A for outstanding, engaged, thoughtful participation) to a 0 (total non-participation)) and the semester’s participation grade is an average of all of these daily marks (thus local highs and lows get evened out). Also, participation in this course can also extend beyond the boundaries of the classroom and efforts to engage more fully with the reading and writing in the course during office hours also contributes to good participation (I also record frequent office hours attendance and will bump up one or more of the daily marks to reflect this alternative, valuable form of engagement). I will give everyone mid-term participation grades so that you can see how you are doing in this area of the course. If you are concerned about your ability to effectively participate, please come and talk with me in office hours and we can develop strategies to improve your active participation.

You are responsible for obtaining all of the class readings for the course (including printing out any electronic resources assigned and accessible through Blackboard), for reading them carefully prior to class, and for bringing them to class with you as we will work actively with the assigned readings every single class session. If you do not bring your reading materials assigned for a given class meeting to class with you, then you will receive a zero for that day’s participation. We will work actively with the texts every single day and thus you need to have them with you in order to actively contribute and even to keep up with our discussions.

Please turn off all cell phones before class begins. No electronic devices—including computers—are to be used during class sessions. If you have your cell phone or any other electronic device out during class, you will receive a zero for that day’s participation.

Attendance Policy and Lateness: This course will be very discussion-intensive—so if you miss a class meeting, you are missing a lot any day that you miss. But obviously I understand that life sometimes gets in the way and so you may have two absences with no penalty. For each absence after the first two, your course grade drops 1/3 of a letter grade (i.e. from B to B-). So please use those two permitted absences wisely, they are to be used for times when you absolutely cannot make it to class (illnesses, family or personal emergencies, planned trips, etc.) and not for sleeping in, work for other courses, etc. Being more than fifteen minutes late to class constitutes a full absence and each day that you are even slightly late will deduct from that day’s participation grade. Please be right on-time to class every day as we will start promptly at 3:30 pm.

Late work: Late assignments will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for each 24 hour period that they are late (i.e. if it was due on Wednesday at 4 pm it will be marked 1/3 grade down if it is turned in after then but before Thursday by 4 pm; if it is turned in after 4 pm on Thursday, it will be marked down an additional 1/3 of a letter grade and so on). Please make every effort to have all your assignments in on time! I do not accept papers or read drafts over email.

The 24-Hour Rule: Please wait 24 hours after I return your graded paper before you come to discuss that paper with me. If you would like to discuss your paper with me, please come to my office hours or schedule an appointment (I often require several days notice if you need to make an appointment outside of office hours). Please come prepared with a short paragraph write-up of your response to my comments on your paper.
Academic Integrity:
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Violations of academic integrity include cheating, plagiarism (failure to acknowledge via appropriate citation the sources for written, visual, on-line, and other sorts of material), fabrication, illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity, and multiple submissions (e.g., submitting the same or substantially the same paper for two or more courses without prior approval of all instructors). Any assignment found to violate the TAMUCC guidelines for academic integrity will receive a zero grade and will be reported to the college dean and the Office of Student Affairs in accordance with university policy. Please read “Academic Integrity” guidelines carefully and ask me if you have any questions: these guidelines are posted at http://catalog.tamucc.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=177#Academic_Integrity

Classroom/Professional Behavior
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

The Writing Center
You will be doing a lot of writing in this course and the TAMUCC CASA Writing Center is an excellent resource to help you. The Writing Center offers one-on-one tutoring sessions with experienced student writers to help you with a whole range of skills—getting started, building arguments, grammatical issues, organization, and many more—and I highly recommend using this resource. They offer appointments (easy to schedule with their online system) and also walk-ins during their open hours. See their website for more details: http://casa.tamucc.edu/wc.php

Disabilities Accommodations:
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 at (361) 825-5816

Religious Observances:
If a class meeting conflicts with a religious holiday, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we can make alternate arrangements. In most cases, I will ask you to turn in your assignment ahead of your scheduled absence, but, in accordance with the TAMUCC policy on Religious/Academic conflicts, your absence will not affect your grade in the course.

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.

**Grade Appeals Process:**
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures (available at http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf). For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

**Statement of Academic Continuity:**
In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane, if classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi, this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

**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 or wise. 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. Friday April 7th is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

**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.

**Communication:**
The best way to get in touch with me outside of class and office hours is by email. During the semester, I check my email regularly every weekday. I probably will not be able to respond as promptly on weekends or late at night (I will most likely not respond on the same day if you email after 6 pm). Email is a great way to ask a question, share a comment, or make an appointment to talk in person. If you have a long, complicated question, please come visit during office hours or make an appointment so that we can talk it over in person. All conversations about grades and comments on written work should take place in person.

I will email the class if class should be cancelled due to extreme winter weather or other emergency, or if I want to circulate course information to the class so please check your own email regularly.
If you must miss a class, please do not email me asking what you missed. It is your responsibility to check in with a classmate to find out what was covered and to obtain the notes from that day. You
should exchange email addresses with at least two of your classmates so that you can contact them if you have to miss class.

Name: 

Email: 

Name: 

Email: 

I reserve the right to make minor changes and to adjust this syllabus if necessary for the improvement of the course.
Weekly Schedule: All Readings are due on the date that they appear

Week 1:
W Jan 18: Introduction – What is Poetry? In class: “He Fumbles at Your Soul” by Emily Dickinson. “This Is Just to Say” by William Carlos Williams. (No readings to be completed before this class).

Week 2:
M Jan 23: The usefulness of anthologies: a short overview of the history of poetic forms (Readings posted on Blackboard)
W Jan 25: More on Poetic Forms and Playing with Meter (Blackboard Readings)

Week 3:
M Feb 6: Reading Rap as Poetry & Close-Reading Argument Paper assigned. (Blackboard Readings)
W Feb 8: Writing about Poetry (Critical Essays on Blackboard)
Sunday February 12th: 1st Close Reading Practice Post due by Midnight

Week 4:
M Feb 13: Alternate Volumes: Emily Dickinson’s Fascicle 17 (Blackboard)
W Feb 15: W.B. Yeats, The Tower (1928) (Selections Posted to Blackboard)

Week 5:
M Feb 20: H.D., Sea Garden (1916)

Week 6:
W Mar 1: T.S. Eliot, The Waste Land (1922) and Drafts and online materials & 1 page analysis of your assigned section of the Drafts due in class

Week 7:
M Mar 6: Hart Crane, The Bridge (1930)
W Mar 8: Hart Crane, The Bridge (1930)

Friday March 10th: Close-Reading Argument Paper (3-4 pages) due by Midnight on Blackboard.

Week 8:
M Mar 13 & W Mar 15: No Class for Spring Break

Week 9:
M Mar 20: Gwendolyn Brooks, A Street in Bronzeville (1945)
W Mar 22: Gwendolyn Brooks, A Street in Bronzeville (1945)

Week 10:
M Mar 27: Langston Hughes, Montage of a Dream Deferred (1951)
W Mar 29: Langston Hughes, Montage of a Dream Deferred (1951)
Week 11:
W Apr 5: Sylvia Plath, *Ariel* (1965)

Week 12:
M Apr 10: Elizabeth Bishop *Geography III* (1976)
W Apr 12: Elizabeth Bishop *Geography III* (1976)

Week 13:
M Apr 17: Claudia Rankine, *Citizen: An American Lyric* (2014), I - IV

Week 14:

Week 15:
Extended Close-Reading “Reading Between the Covers” paper Due (5 pages) due to Blackboard by Midnight Sunday April 30th.

M May 1: Course Wrap-up and Final Exam Review.

Final Exam: Monday May 8th from 1:45 – 4:15 pm.