

Syllabus

Advanced Poetry Workshop

Required Texts:

Autobiography of Red by Anne Carson

Hoops by Major Jackson

Precipitates by Debra Kang Dean

Additional reading on course website (OnCourse)

Overview: This is an advanced craft course designed for you to assemble a toolbox of poetic forms, devices, and vocabulary. You will re-visit many of the terms and concepts we learned in Introduction to Poetry, but with greater depth and detail. I have assigned three books for depth and additional reading on OnCourse for breadth. This reading is meant to fuel your own work as well as encourage you to develop a sense of poetics (why and how you write) in an effort to help you become a “self-starter,” or a writer who produces outside of the context of the workshop.

In general, we will discuss readings on Tuesday and have a workshop on Thursday. Please come prepared—the readings done—in order to keep the discussion lively and productive.

Required work:

EXERCISES: You will be asked to complete a writing exercise each week, due always on Thursday. If you complete the exercise in good faith you will receive credit for it, if you don't you will receive a zero. So, if you turn in all exercises you receive a hundred in this portion of the grading. I don't accept late exercises.

RESPONSES: You will write an approximately 1 page response to the reading, due each week on Tuesday for which you will receive a check for seriously engaging with the assigned text by zeroing in on specific language and considering the choices the author made, a check minus for writing in general and vague language about the text, or a check plus for outstanding work that offers original insight. Each class I will pick two of you at random to read your response in order to start discussion.

PARTICIPATION IN WORKSHOP AND DISCUSSION: Mandatory. If you are not excited enough about writing to want to talk about it twice a week with fellow writers, I encourage you to find a different course. That being said, some students may experience barriers to course participation. Please come to my office hours to talk about strategies to help you fully engage in this course. Similarly to the reading responses, I am looking for serious engagement in the text, which means a willingness to be specific and concrete.

FINAL PROJECT: This will be an arena in which you respond critically to another writer's work. This final project could take the form of a 10-15 page paper on a single author or a creative project based on a poem or poet. I will discuss your project with you individually during mid-semester conferences.

PORTFOLIO: At the end of the class you will give me a portfolio consisting of 10 *significantly revised* poems. Keep copies of your first drafts with my comments.

ATTENDANCE OF TWO PUBLIC READINGS: You will attend two public readings and write a one-paragraph response to your experience. I will announce readings as the

semester progresses. You can also find a schedule of readings on the creative writing department's web site.

Workshop Procedure: At the beginning of class on Thursdays, you may distribute 16 copies of a poem to the class. These poems can be based on the exercises or not. If you chose not to turn in your exercise for workshop, please bring a single copy of your exercise for me. Photocopying costs should be calculated in figuring the cost of the course. Read and *write* comments on the poems of your peers. On the following Thursday (giving you a week to read your peers' work!), we will discuss these poems in a thoughtful, constructive way. Then you will give your written comments to the author, signed with your name. I will pick one of you to start the discussion for each poem. Try to turn in at least 8 workshop poems. If you miss class on Thursday, please make arrangements with me to turn in your exercise.

Attendance is important. If you miss two classes, I will drop your grade a third of a letter grade. If you enter class after I have taken attendance, I will count you absent. Please turn off your electronic devices and put them away *before* you enter the classroom. If I see you fiddling with a cell phone, laptop, two-way, iPod, I'll ask you to leave and count you absent.

Plagiarism you should be familiar with the school's plagiarism policy.

Grading:

- 10% Poetry Reading Attendance
- 10% Exercises
- 10% Reading Reports
- 20% Participation
- 20% Final Project
- 30% Portfolio

Schedule

Week One: What's Expected?

Tuesday (1/13): Introduction and overview. "A Ritual to Read to One Another" by William Stafford read in-class.

Thursday (1/15): Reading: "Letter to a Writer's Workshop" by Andre Dubus; "Ars Poetica: Some Recent Criticism" by James Wright; "Of Modern Poetry" by Wallace Stevens; "Ars Poetica" by Archibald Macleish (OnCourse). Write a statement of poetics/ ars poetica. Discussion of workshop procedure.

Week Two: "No Ideas But in Things"

Tuesday (1/20): Read Etheridge Knight, "Selections," and Cathy Bowman, "No Sorry" (OnCourse). First reading response due.

Thursday (1/22): List poems. Write a poem that consists of a list of objects (use the Knight's "Idea of Ancestry" and Bowman's "No Sorry" as a guide.) List of objects on your desk, to do lists, lists of family members, lists of phobias, lists of state capitals etc.

Week Three: The Image

Tuesday (1/27): *Autobiography of Red* by Anne Carson (Pages 1-75) and Donald Justice, "Mule Team and Poster" (OnCourse).

Thursday (1/29): Write a poem based on a work of art in the Fine Arts Museum. Start by simply describing the image as precisely as possible. PRACTICE WORKSHOP

Week Four: The Image

Tuesday (2/3): *Autobiography of Red* by Anne Carson (Pages 75-149), and haiku Selection (OnCourse.)

Thursday (2/5): "Biography of the Object." Based on the writing you generated in class with your object, write a verse biography of that object. FIRST WORKSHOP

Week Five: Metaphor: The Image and Meaning

Tuesday (2/10): W.H. Auden "The Shield of Achilles" and "At the Musée des Beaux Arts," Wallace Stevens "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Bird," and Raymond Patterson, "26 Ways of Looking at a Black Man." (OnCourse)

Thursday (2/12): No Class.

Week Six: Metaphor Continued

Tuesday (2/17): Robert Hayden "Selections" and "Three Parables" (OnCourse)

Thursday (2/19) Write a parable.

Week Seven: Orality and Song

Tuesday (2/24): Gayle Jones "Deep Song," Michael Harper, "Dear John, Dear Coltrane," Ezra Pound "The Seafarer," Elizabeth Bishop "One Art," Muriel Rukyser, "Effort at Speech," Dylan Thomas "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night," Donald Justice, "Villanelle at Sundown," Lucille Clifton, "Selections." (OnCourse)

Thursday (2/26): Write a villanelle using a refrain from a traditional blues song. Blues recordings are on reserve at the music library.

Week Eight: Conferences

Week Nine: Evoking Place

Tuesday (3/10): Major Jackson *Hoops* (Pages 1-54)

Thursday (3/12): Eavesdropping assignment. Pick a favorite spot in town where people do some talking. Hang out there for an hour or so, jotting down phrases you that attract your ear. Fashion them into a sonnet.

Week Ten: No class. HAPPY SPRING BREAK

Week Eleven: Evoking Place Continued

Tuesday (3/24): Major Jackson *Hoops* (Pages 54-end).

Thursday (3/26): Poetic guidebooks. Go someplace you have never been before and write a poetic guidebook entry, showing your reader around that place.

Week Twelve: Source Material

Tuesday (3/31): Debra Kang Dean *Precipitates*

Thursday (4/2): Bring a renku link

Week Thirteen: American Poetry, What the Critics are Saying

Tuesday (4/7): Lilly Library Visit

Thursday (4/9): Yusef Komunyakaa "Introduction to *The Best American Poetry* 2003," Terrence Des Press "from *Praises and Dispraises* (OnCourse) Final project proposals due (1 paragraph)

Week Fourteen: Conferences

Week Fifteen: Saying Something

Tuesday (4/21): Carolyn Forché, "The Angel of History" (excerpt), W.H. Auden "September 1st, 1939," Adrienne Rich, "The School Among the Ruins," Rita Dove, "Parsley," C.K. Williams, "The Hearth," and Martin Espada "Selections." (OnCourse)

Thursday (4/23): Poems based on newspaper articles. (I'll put some good articles on OnCourse but feel free to use any recent article you have found interesting.)

Week Sixteen: Going Forward

Tuesday (4/28): Final Project Presentations Group 1

Thursday (4/30): Final Project Presentations Group 2

Portfolios Due: 5/5 No late portfolios accepted.