

CRW 2300—Poetry Writing, Section 5311, Spring 2018

Instructor name: Alison Gaines

Course meeting time and location: Wednesday, 4:05-7:05, Matherly 151

Office Location and hours: Turlington 4317, office hours TBD and by appointment

Course website: Canvas

Instructor email: againes@ufl.edu

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Course description: The goal of this course, from my perspective, is to cultivate in you an appreciation for poetry and to help you to write and revise poems of your own. We will spend class time discussing the assigned readings and each other's work in a workshop setting. Even if you never write another poem again, the class might still help you understand and communicate with one another.

This semester I have chosen a reading list that is mostly composed of modern reimaginings of Greek myths. You can see this as the theme of the course, if you like. I think this theme encourages regeneration and at the same time introduces/reintroduces you to certain myths that, in my opinion, are good to have on hand.

General Education Objectives:

- This course confers General Education credit for Composition (C), and also fulfills 6,000 of the university's 24,000-word writing requirement (WR).
- *Composition courses* provide instruction in the methods and conventions of standard written English (grammar, punctuation, usage), as well as the techniques that produce effective texts. Composition courses are writing intensive. They require multiple drafts submitted to your instructor for feedback before final submission.
- Course content should include multiple forms of effective writing, different writing styles, approaches and formats, and methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes and contexts. Students should learn to organize complex arguments in writing using thesis statements, claims and evidence, and to analyze writing for errors in logic.
- The University *Writing Requirement (WR)* ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the

writing component of the course. This means that written assignments must meet minimum word requirements totaling 6000 words.

General Education Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication and critical thinking:

- **Content:** Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used in poetic studies.
- **Communication:** Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms. Students will participate in class discussions throughout the semester to reflect on assigned readings.
- **Critical Thinking:** Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, learning to ask their own questions and develop their own opinions on poetry.

Required Texts: You need physical copies, not e-books. Books are listed in the order that we will read them. Sometimes, I will have additional reading material that you will be responsible for printing out. Failure to do so will result in a lower participation grade.

- *Writing Poems* by Michelle Boisseau, Hadara Bar-Nadav, and Robert Wallace, 8th ed. ISBN: [9780205176052](#)
- Whiting, ed. *Traditional British Ballads*. ISBN: 0882950169
- Stallings, A.E. *Olives*. ISBN: 9780810152267
- Dove, Rita. *Mother Love*. ISBN: 9780393314441
- Gluck, Louise. *Meadowlands*. ISBN: 9780880015066
- Carson, Anne. *Autobiography of Red*. ISBN: 9780375701290

Assignments (see the end of the syllabus for grading rubrics and descriptions of each assignment):

1. The weekly poem (12, two of which are revisions)
2. Short response essays of 350 words each (7)
3. 1200 word essay: "Poetry is"
4. 1200 word essay: Taste
5. 1200 word essay: Revision letter
6. Final chapbook
7. Recitations (2)
8. Leading a class discussion

COURSE POLICIES

1. You must complete all *assignments* to receive credit for this course.
2. *Attendance:*
 - Attendance in this class is mandatory. Since our class only meets once a week, each meeting counts for a lot. If you miss one class period, you're missing a whole week. **My policy is this: if you miss more than two weeks of class, you will not pass.**
 - If you miss a class with no notice, you'll forfeit the day's participation points.
 - If you miss a class for any reason, you are expected to make up the work. Get in touch with me or with a classmate.
 - Tardiness is disruptive. If you are more than 5 minutes late, you will be docked on your participation grade for the day. Same goes for if you leave class early.
 - Absences for religious holidays, university-sponsored events, and medical issues can be excused if proper notice and documentation are given to me **ahead of time**. (Obviously illness cannot be predicted so the "ahead of time" part can't always apply there.) However, if you are finding that lots of things are coming up in your life that chronically make it difficult for you to attend class, this may not be the right time to take this class.
3. *Poem format and submission:* Poems are single-spaced, in a serif font like Times, with a heading in the top right-hand corner. **Poems are submitted on Canvas and printed out.**
4. *Essay Format & Submission:* Essays are double-spaced, in a serif font like Times, with a heading in the top right-hand corner. **Short responses are submitted on Canvas. Essays are submitted on Canvas and printed out.**
5. *Late Papers/Assignments:* You may have **one extension to an assignment** this semester, good for one week, with no penalties, as long as you contact me before the assignment is due to request it. That means send me an e-mail before deadline. As long as I have that e-mail on record, your extension will be granted.
6. *Late assignments after that extension:* If you have already used your extension, or do not contact me ahead of time for it, **your grade for the assignment will be docked 10% for each day it is late.** This is one letter grade per calendar day, not per class meeting. I won't accept an assignment more than one week late.
7. *Paper Maintenance Responsibilities:* Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.
8. *Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism.* Plagiarism violates the Student Honor Code and requires reporting to the Dean of Students. All students must abide by the Student Honor Code: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>.
9. *Accommodations:* If you have a disability or any kind of mental or physical health issue you want me to know about, please tell me about it **at the beginning of the semester**, either in person or via email. You'll find that I am an empathetic person and I want to help you do your best. However, I won't know about your circumstances unless you tell me. If you need accommodations, I need to know up front. Students who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/), which will provide appropriate documentation to give me, the instructor.
10. For information on UF Grading policies, see:
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

11. *Grade Appeals*. Students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant, in the Department office (4008 TUR). Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.
12. *Course Evaluations*. Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages asking you to go online and evaluate this course:
<https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/Default.aspx>
13. Students who face difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help may call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352) 392-1575, or contact them online: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>
14. *UF's policy on Harassment*: UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty:
<http://hr.ufl.edu/manager-resources/recruitment-staffing/institutional-equity-diversity/resources/harassment/>
15. *Policy on environmental sustainability*. I understand that paper comes from trees and that hard copies are becoming a thing of the past. However, I believe that working with hard copies of assigned reading and student work is essential to engaging with the text. **So I expect everyone to comply with this. However, I am always OK with recycled paper and/or double-sided printing.**

POLICIES SPECIFIC TO ME

- You may call me Alison or Ms. Gaines.
- No open screens in the classroom. Keep your phones, laptops, tablets, and e-readers out of sight. This means that you'll have to plan ahead and print out all the required materials for class. If you have a reason why you need to use a keyboard or screen in class, speak to me about it and I may accommodate you. Phone use during class will result in a lower participation grade.
- It is also a good idea to have a notebook and a folder dedicated to this class.
- Email etiquette: You'll need to check your UF email once a day. It is the way to get in touch with me outside of the classroom or office hours, and how I will contact you if need be. When writing to me, please do not start an email with the word "Hey." Also if you use my name, spell it correctly.
- This class is a no-judgment zone. Occasionally we will discuss personal or difficult topics, so it's important to respect each other, to listen intently, and not to talk about others' work outside the class. In that respect, this class can be compared to a visit to the therapist, or a trip to Vegas, whichever you prefer.
- If you ever want to talk more in-depth about one of your poems, or seek clarification from me, or talk about anything poetry-related, that is what office hours are for. Please come by. Feel free as well to make an appointment if my regular times don't work for you.
- In general, students have difficulty in this class if they a) don't show up to class and b) don't come prepared. If you keep up with the schedule that appears on this syllabus and don't leave everything until the last minute each week, you'll find that the content is relatively friendly.

GRADES AND ASSIGNMENTS

I hope you can appreciate the ridiculousness of the task given to me, putting a grade value on art. That said, I know you care about your GPA. Good grades in this class will be achieved through effort, responsiveness to feedback, and hearty participation in class discussions. I do not grade poems based on how much I identify with them, or how much I personally like them. The grading system is just to encourage you to put in an effort and give your poems ample time to incubate.

The weekly poem:

Each poem is worth 10 points. Your poems will receive either 5, 8, or 10 points when you turn them in. I will make written comments on them and hand them back to you the following week. Here is how I will grade the poems:

5 points	8 points	10 points
Riddled with cliché.	Has a few clichés.	Is thoughtful and avoids cliché.
Fulfills few to none of the requirements of the prompt.	Fulfills some of the requirements of the prompt.	Fulfills all the requirements of the prompt.
Shows little understanding of what a sentence is.	Has a few sentence fragments.	Uses only complete sentences (unless I specify otherwise).
No regard for spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar. Looks like it was not proofread.	Some problems with spelling, punctuation, and grammar.	Uses correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
Has no title.		Has a title.
Has many formatting issues.	Has some formatting issues.	Is correctly formatted (left-justified, single-spaced, serif font, heading).

If your poem earns a 10, **this does NOT mean that there is no room for revision.** It simply means that you did everything I asked you to do.

Critical short responses:

Each week (on the weeks that a larger essay is not due), you will have a short response due by noon on the day of our class meeting. This need only be turned in on Canvas. Each short

response should be at least 350 words. Occasionally I will give you a more specific prompt, but in general, the assignment is this:

Write in-depth about one of the poems you were assigned to read. This is a way for you to show me that you're engaged with the reading outside of class discussions, and to practice critical writing in a low-stakes way. Use the vocabulary you learn in class and in the textbook. These will be due on alternating weeks throughout the semester. The feedback you receive on these should guide you in writing your longer papers.

Questions to guide these essays: What is your response to this poem? What is the predicament, or central question, of this poem? What is unique about this poem? What is the poet doing to achieve the effect that the poem has on you, the reader?

Remember to refer to certain lines or stanzas, the same way you would refer to page numbers if you were writing about a novel.

Longer essays: 1200 words each, more detailed descriptions to come.

“Poetry is.” This essay attempts to answer the very basic question of what poetry is. There can be more than one answer. What did you think poetry was before beginning this class? Has your definition changed? This may also become a discussion of the point of poetry. Why do we have it? Why do we read it? You will need to engage in the discussion of at least two specific poems by two different poets.

Taste essay. People always say “there’s no accounting for taste,” but I want you to account for yours. Write about two different poems we have read so far for this class: one you liked and one you didn’t. Explore your own biases and give reasons, or possible reasons, for the way you react.

Revision letter. You’ve chosen 8 poems to revise for your final chapbook. How did you arrive on these eight, and how did you decide what changes to make? This may also be, partly, a reflection on what you learned from this class and how your writing has changed based on what you’ve read.

Final chapbook:

At the end of the semester, you’ll choose 8 poems, minimum, to revise and make into your final chapbook. The grade will depend on how much effort you put into the poems, whether you took your time writing them, and whether your revisions were thoughtful. This needs to be a physical book with a title and your name on it. You are free to decorate as much as you want.

Leading class discussions:

Likely with one or two other students (to be assigned), you will lead a class discussion on the week’s reading. You will provide biographical information on the poet, the context of the book, and any other information that is helpful for us to understand the poems. I will provide some guidance—for instance, *Mother Love* focuses on the Persephone myth, so we will need background on that. You will then lead us in a close reading of at least one poem per person (that is, per person leading the discussion).

Recitations:

On two designated days, we will have recitations. You will recite a poem from memory, either from the textbook or other assigned reading. The poem has to be a minimum of 14 lines long. Come prepared for your recitation with a printout of the poem that you'll give to me. I'll mark it and return it. 15 points are possible. Credit is given for accuracy and delivery.

Workshops:

Here's how workshops will work. Early in the semester, we will make a workshop schedule, so you'll know on which day(s) you will be workshopped. The week before you are slated to be workshopped, you'll need to bring copies of the work for the whole class and me. This allows us to prepare comments over the course of the week. We will then spend around 15 minutes discussing your poem as a class. During workshop, the poet generally shouldn't talk—this is an opportunity to see how your poem lands with your audience, which might be different from what you expected. At the end of the discussion, the poet will have a chance to ask questions of the class, or provide any clarifications.

What to submit to workshop: you may submit whatever poem you want that you've written for this class.

Participation: Every class period I'll give you a participation grade out of 10 points. Here's how to get a good participation grade.

- Be present and on time
- Have all the required material printed out/with you
- Contribute to discussions and ask questions
- Offer helpful feedback to your peers, both written and verbal
- Be respectful of me and your peers
- Don't use your phone during class

Extra Credit:

For extra credit (the amount of which is to be decided), you may do one or several of the following:

- Attend the MFA@FLA reading series, at which my fellow MFA candidates will read their work out loud. These are usually on Thursday evenings at The Bull, 8 PM. I will apprise you with exact dates. To get extra credit, write a 300-word response to the work you heard. What struck you the most? What was it like to hear poems and short stories read out loud?
- Submit your work to a literary magazine. I will give you suggestions of good journals for you, and I'll show you how to submit. Gain credit by forwarding me the confirmation email once you've submitted.
- Give an extra recitation.

Grading Rubric for Responses and Essays:

This is how I grade both short and long essays. I am fine with the use of 1st person, but not 2nd person. Some of the writing will be self-reflection, but the majority of your critical writing will be dealing with the work of another poet. Therefore, these guidelines mostly apply to that.

Area of evaluation:	A-quality work:
Compliance/content (worth 50% of grade)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does what is asked in the assignment.• Has a thesis/main argument that is not overly broad.• Avoids excessive summary.• Shows original thought, but not simply opinion.• Fulfills word count.
Claims and evidence (worth 20% of grade)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Backs up all claims with evidence.• Correctly cites sources in-text, with line numbers (if a poem) or page numbers (if a longer work).
Organization (worth 15% of grade)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses paragraphs, and generally sticks to one claim or idea per paragraph.
Mechanics (worth 15% of grade)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates correct spelling, grammar, has no sentence fragments, and no 2nd person.• Correctly spells author's name and does not misgender them.

SCHEDULE: subject to change

Date	On the agenda	Read for today	Write for today
January 10	Introduction to the course and each other, first exposures to poetry, ballads and oral tradition.	None	None
January 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share instructional poems with a partner. What is a ballad? • Discuss romantic and tragic ballads. Discuss short responses and address common issues. • Sign up for leading discussions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus • Textbook chapters 1&2 • <i>Traditional British Ballads</i>, Introduction, Romantic Ballads, and Tragic Ballads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poem 1, Instructional • Short response 1
January 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share ballad-like poem with a partner. • Discuss historical and supernatural ballads (Sir Patrick Spens, The Unquiet Grave especially). • Introduce “Poetry Is” essay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Traditional British Ballads</i>, Historical Ballads and Supernatural Ballads • Textbook chapters 3&4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poem 2, Ballad or ballad-like poem • Short response 2
January 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recitations. • Student-led discussion on Stallings and the first half of the book. • Reminder, first long essay due next class. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Olives</i>, sections I and II • Textbook chapter 5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poem 3, Persona • Short response 3
February 7:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-led discussion on Stallings and the second half of the book. • Workshop dress rehearsal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Olives</i>, sections III and IV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poem 4, Ekphrastic • “Poetry is”

February 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-led discussion on Dove and Persephone. • Workshop 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mother Love</i>, Foreword, sections I, II, and III • Williams, “This Is Just to Say” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poem 5, “This Is Just to Say” imitation • Short response 4 • Mark up the workshop poems (this week and every week following)
February 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-led discussion on Dove and the second half of the book. • Workshop 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mother Love</i>, section IV to the end • Textbook chapter 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poem 6, Anti-sonnet • Short response 5
February 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-led discussion on Gluck and Odyssey. • Workshop 3 • Bring a revision next class • Introduce taste essay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Meadowlands</i> through “Siren” on p. 27 • Textbook chapter 7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poem 7, Dialogue • Short response 6
[March 7: spring break]			
March 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-led discussion on second half of <i>Meadowlands</i>. • Workshop 4 • Taste essay due next class. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Meadowlands</i> through the end • Textbook chapter 8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poem 8 (Revision 1) • Short response 7
March 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-led discussion on Carson and Stesikoros/Geryon. • Workshop 5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Autobiography of Red</i>, through section XIX, p. 62, including all the introductory matter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poem 9, Ode • Taste essay

March 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-led discussion on the second half of <i>Autobiography of Red</i>. • Workshop 6 • Introduce final assignments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Autobiography of Red</i>, through the end • Textbook chapter 9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poem 10, <i>Autobiography of _____</i> (poem from the point of view of one of the characters in a myth, not necessarily the Geryon myth) • Short response 8
April 4	Workshop 7 Supplemental readings, TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook chapter 10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poem 11 (Revision 2)
April 11	Workshop 8 Supplemental readings, TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook chapter 11 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poem 12, Wild Card
April 18:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recitations. • One-on-one (with a partner) workshopping of chapbook. 		Bring in draft of your chapbook to share with a classmate.
April 25: last day	Final reading and party.		Final chapbook and revision letter.

POINT BREAKDOWN OF THE CLASS

Assignment	Points possible	Quantity	Total points possible	%age of final grade
Recitations	20	2	40	4
Weekly poem	10	12	120	12 (1% each)
Leading class discussion	60	1	60	6
Short response essays	15	7	105	10.5 (1.5% each)
Longer essays	100	3	300	30 (10% each)
Final chapbook	150	1	150	15
Participation	15	15	225	22.5 (1.5% each)
Total			1000	