

CRW 4906

Writing the Sonnet / Spring 2016

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Office hours: Monday 1 pm - 2 pm or by appointment.

It is better to present one image in a lifetime than to produce voluminous work.—Ezra Pound*“Happiness makes up in height for what it lacks in length.”*—Robert Frost*“Men use their vocal cords for speech, that is, to communicate with each other, but also, under certain conditions, a man may feel, as we say, “like singing.” This impulse has little, if anything, to do with communication or with other people. Under the pressure of a certain mood, a man may feel the need to express that mood to himself by using his vocal cords in an exceptional way. ... In no other art can one see so clearly a distinction, even a rivalry, between the desire for pattern and the desire for personal utterance, as is disclosed between instrumental and vocal music.”*

—W.H. Auden, “Music in Shakespeare”

Welcome to the advanced poetry workshop. The above quotes should give you a sense of the aesthetics behind this class on the sonnet. “Sonnet” is just a word meaning “little song” and is strongly associated with themes of love, but it has also appealed to the cerebral side of poets attracted to its compactness and its mathematical ratios. Thus it has acquired a reputation as being the perfect form for a single “thought” (what Pound called “logopoeia,” “the dance of the intellect among words”). It is also the most stylish of forms, invented by Italians and honed, in our own language, by Renaissance courtiers. The sonnet makes life more bearable by its beauty.

There should be no open screens in the classroom without my permission.

Required Texts:*The Penguin Book of the Sonnet*

40 Sonnets by Don Paterson

Archaic Smile by Alicia Stallings*Sonnets to Orpheus* by Rainier Maria Rilke

The requirements are as follows:

- 1) Attendance is mandatory. If you miss more than four classes (with or without a doctor’s note), your grade will depreciate by half a letter grade for each subsequent absence. If you are over 5 minutes late, or are missing your printed materials, I will give you only half credit for attendance that day.
- 2) You will write a sonnet every week and upload it to Canvas by Saturday at midnight. All poems must be brought to class on paper: poems shall be typed, single-spaced, in Roman 10 font, with your name on it. Comments on your classmates’ poems must include three specific questions to ask about either form or meaning.

Until further notice, you will constrain your sonnets to a tetrameter, pentameter, or hexameter line, and keep it to 14 lines. Regular rhyme is not required, although subtlety and experimentation with pararhyme and internal rhyme is something you should be developing throughout the semester.

- 3) Bring your book to class each session. When I send handouts of individual poems and essays on PDF or links via Canvas, you must print them out, read them with a pencil in hand and a dictionary at hand, and bring them to class for discussion.
- 4) You must memorize two sonnets, to be recited before spring break and on the last day of class, respectively.
- 5) Your final grade will consist of 75% attendance and participation, 25% final portfolio of at least ten sonnets.

CALENDAR

Date	In Class	For Homework
January 9-11	Introduction to class. Introduction to sonnet and types. Themes and rhetorical tropes. Diction: Antique vs. contemporary, conversational vs. literary.	Reading: Introduction and proem (pp. xxxvii-lxxvii). William Shakespeare. Prompt: 1) Choose an example from the anthology of an early sonnet (1500s, 1600s) that uses paradox. Write it out by hand; be prepared to present your choice in class. 2) Write a sonnet about “unlikely love.” Feature a paradox in it. Do not imitate early English diction; use contemporary diction.
January 16-18	Workshop paradox sonnets. Discussion of early sonnets. Conversation or call-and-response through sonnets.	Reading: Appendix (p. 337), W.H. Auden, Edwin Denby, Robert Graves Prompt: 1) Take a modern sonnet (20th century) of your choosing and write it out by hand, taking note of the differences between it and the early sonnet that you chose last week. 2) Write your own sonnet using the first or last line of your chosen model as your first line (in quotes, attributed).
January 23-25	Workshop sonnets “in conversation” with others. Discussion of diction, tone, collage.	Reading: John Keats/Amy Lowell/Thom Gunn, Edward Thomas/Derek Walcott; Ted Berrigan (cento); Robert Frost/Robert Lowell. Write out one sonnet by hand. Prompt: Write a cento sonnet (with attributions.)
January 30-Feb 1	Workshop cento sonnets. Discussion of style, decorum, and imagination.	Reading: Malcolm Lowry, Denis Johnson, T.R. Hummer, Julia Alvarez, Agha Shahid Ali, Star Black. Write out one sonnet by hand. Prompt: Write a sonnet with attention to a particular tone, based on reading models.
February 6-8	Workshop tone sonnets. Discussion of experimentation.	Reading: Marianne Moore, E.E. Cummings, John Berryman, Ted Berrigan, Anthony Hecht, Billy Collins, Anne Carson (handout), Elizabeth Bishop. Write out one sonnet by hand. Prompt: Experiment with loosening or tightening one sonnet constraint.
February 13-15	Workshop experimental sonnets. More experimental sonnets	Reading: Lady Mary Wroth, Percy Bysshe Shelley, George Meredith, Gerard Manley Hopkins, W.B. Yeats. Write out one sonnet by hand. Prompt: Short sonnet crown using a previously submitted sonnet.
February 20-22	Workshop crowns.	Prompt: Revise a previously submitted sonnet.
February 27-29	Recitations.	Reading: <i>40 Sonnets</i> by Don Paterson Prompt: Sonnet Response Paper: 750 words on one or two of Paterson’s sonnets. Revise a previously submitted sonnet.
March 6-8	Spring Break	

Date	In Class	For Homework
March 13-15	Workshop revisions. Discussion of <i>40 Sonnets</i> .	TBD
March 20-22	Workshop TBD.	TBD
March 27-29	Workshop TBD.	Reading: <i>Archaic Smile</i> by Alicia Stallings. Prompt: Sonnet Response Paper: 750 words on how the sonnet informs <i>Archaic Smile</i> .
April 4-6	No class - I am presenting at a conference and doing a reading at UCLA	
April 10-12	Workshop revisions. Discussion of <i>Archaic Smile</i> .	Reading: <i>Sonnets to Orpheus</i> by Rainier Maria Rilke
April 17-19	Workshop revisions. Discussion of Rilke.	Prepare portfolios.
April 24	Portfolios and 2nd recitations due.	

Boilerplate:

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

Additional Resources for Students: Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, (352-846-1138) <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> (Links to an external site.)

The Counseling & Wellness Center, 3190 Radio Road (352-392-1575) <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/ewe/> (Links to an external site.)

Academic Honesty

All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php> (Links to an external site.)

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the Student Honor Code. The Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism. A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

1. Quoting oral or written materials including but not limited to those found on the internet, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
2. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.
3. (University of Florida, Student Honor Code, 8 July 2011)

University of Florida students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire Student Honor Code. The University Writing Program takes plagiarism very seriously, and treats instances of plagiarism as dishonesty and as a failure to comply with the scholarly requirements of this course. You commit plagiarism when you present the ideas or words of someone else as your own.

Important tip: There should never be a time when you copy and paste something from the Internet and don't provide the exact location and citation information for the source.

If a student plagiarizes all or any part of any assignment, he or she will be awarded a failing grade on the assignment. Additionally, University policy suggests that, as a MINIMUM, instructors should impose a course grade penalty and report any incident of academic dishonesty to the Office of the Dean of Students. Each student's work may be tested for its originality against a wide variety of databases by anti-plagiarism sites to which the University subscribes, and negative reports from such sites may constitute PROOF of plagiarism. Other forms of academic dishonesty will also result in a failing grade on the assignment as a minimum penalty. Examples include cheating on a quiz or citing phony sources or quotations to include in your assignments.