

English 92
Reading and Writing Poetry

Stanford University – Winter 2016
Tu/Th 11:30-1:20pm
Office Hours: TBA
Office: Margaret Jacks #211
Instructor: Michael Shewmaker
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*A Poet is, before anything else, a person
who is passionately in love with language.*
-W.H. Auden

Course Description

This is an introductory course designed to help you become better readers and writers of poetry. We will read and discuss works by established poets and apply what we have learned to discussing your own poems in a workshop setting. You will learn to read as a writer—to consider the purposes behind the decisions that a poet makes. We will also talk more generally about poetry. We will examine questions like: Why should you write poetry in the first place? Who should you write for? What can poetry achieve that other artistic mediums cannot? What makes a poem? What makes a poem effective? Above all, though, the aim of this course is to open a door for you that will always remain open no matter what endeavors you choose to pursue in the future.

Required Materials

Western Wind: An Introduction to Poetry, 5th Edition, Eds. Mason and Nims
The Practice of Poetry: Writing Exercises from Poets Who Teach, 1st Edition (1992), Eds. Behn and Twichell
Supplemental Handouts

Grading

Participation	20%
Poetry Exercises	15%
Poems for Workshop	20%
Final Portfolio	40%
Attend Readings	5%

Participation (20%)—A workshop is only valuable if its participants are present and engaged. I cannot stress this enough. The success of this course is largely dependent on you. You will share your work and critique the work of your peers. Every voice is necessary and will be respectfully considered. You will gain what you give. Out of respect for your peers' work, you will be expected to be prepared for all workshops. Your participation also requires you to provide your peers with written comments for each of their submitted poems.

Poetry Exercises (15%)—You will complete one exercise of your choice per week from *The Practice of Poetry*. These exercises are separate from the poems considered in our workshop and will be handed in to me at the end of each week.

Poems for Workshop (20%)—You will have the opportunity to workshop three poems over the course of the quarter. I prefer that the poems workshopped be written during the term. You will be responsible to bring copies for me and your peers the week prior to your workshop. We will make a schedule before the workshop component of our course and you will know well in advance when you are expected to bring in a poem.

Final Portfolio (40%)—The culmination of our course, your final portfolio will consist of six poems, two of which must be revisions. I prefer that those revisions be of poems that went through our workshop. You will also write a brief 2-3 page preface discussing your work and your experience of the course.

Attend Readings (5%)—While I encourage you to attend as many readings as possible, you will be required to attend at least three readings sponsored by the Creative Writing Program. You can find information about upcoming readings on the creative writing website (<http://creativewriting.stanford.edu/event-list>).

Attendance

Because this course is largely discussion based, your attendance is vital. You will be allowed **two unexcused absences**. Any additional absence will result in your final grade being dropped by an entire letter (A+ will become a B+, etc.). Five absences will result in a failing grade for the course.

Students with Documented Disabilities

Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, URL: <http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/oea>).

Honor Code

The Honor Code is the University's statement on academic integrity written by students in 1921. It articulates University expectations of students and faculty in establishing and maintaining the highest standards in academic work:

The Honor Code is an undertaking of the students, individually and collectively:

1. that they will not give or receive aid in examinations; that they will not give or receive unpermitted aid in class work, in the preparation of reports, or in any other work that is to be used by the instructor as the basis of grading;
2. that they will do their share and take an active part in seeing to it that others

as well as themselves uphold the spirit and letter of the Honor Code.

3. The faculty on its part manifests its confidence in the honor of its students by refraining from proctoring examinations and from taking unusual and unreasonable precautions to prevent the forms of dishonesty mentioned above. The faculty will also avoid, as far as practicable, academic procedures that create temptations to violate the Honor Code.

4. While the faculty alone has the right and obligation to set academic requirements, the students and faculty will work together to establish optimal conditions for honorable academic work.