

Syllabus

ENGL 243: The Mighty Contraption: an Introduction to Poetry

An online studio

Autumn 2020

TTH 2:30-4:20

5 Credits/VLPA and W

Professor Frances McCue

Contact through Canvas INBOX, not by email.

Office hours held by appointment

Course Description

What can a Poem Do? What is it good for? How might a poem change us? This introductory course in poetry presents fundamental concepts and approaches for reading, enjoying and crafting poems. We will read a lot of poems, imitate some, speculate about others and collaborate to learn more about our experiences with poems.

These are challenging times and poetry is the perfect way for us to consider what's happening around us. Poetry is a portal into an art-made experience that lets us travel through time and space and see how others have used the music of language and form to express what it means to be alive. By reading poetry by established poets, crafting our own poems, and speaking, writing, thinking, and collaborating, we will engage in dialogues over these shared experiences and hope to articulate a better future through art.

We're going to try and have some joy in our work together. Even though we are on line (not my favorite way to engage you in a fascination with poems), we are going to shake up our interactions—sometimes you will join the large group on ZOOM; other times you will work in small groups in ZOOM breakout rooms and, at times, you won't be on ZOOM at all. Instead, you'll work on Discussion Posts, watch videos and conduct some research of your own. We'll use the larger group meetings to share what we are learning. I'm going to encourage you to write poems yourself, to take risks in how you think about poetry and to come to our work together with courage and good will.

You'll follow the modules I've created and within these, you will see how the classes will unfold. Rather than setting up a plodding chronology through poetry, I've created modules around cultural themes. The poems will come from a range of time periods, styles and contexts. I'm hoping you will find all sorts of ways to connect to the poems you read—maybe through an historical event or your understanding of science or some other expertise that you have—and that you will share what you find.

In fact, our motto this term will be: **Read well, share openly and find joy and solace in poetry.**

Sound good?

Required Materials

We will be using *American Journal: Fifty Poems for Our Time*, Selected and Introduced by Tracy K. Smith. Published by Greywolf Press. Available through the University Bookstore, under this class title. If the bookstore doesn't have it, try Greywolf Press. Other required readings and media are provided through this Canvas platform.

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Course Learning Objectives

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Show evidence of analyzing text, image, media through conversation and verbal presentation.
- Create written evidence of understanding the structures, metaphoric implications and literal events within poems.
- Create descriptions, arguments and inquiries in writing and in conversation.
- Identify elements of form and craft in poetry.
- Articulate individual learning.
- Argue for the study of poetry as a critical and lifelong activity that prepares individuals to engage with a wide range of experiences, information and points of view.

Learning Practices and Assessment:

Our course will require you to read, respond and take notes on poetry that we read; participate in discussions; write your own imitations of poems; write “response papers;” collaborate on a final project.

1. **Participation. (10 points.)** Participation matters to everyone. Because we’re involved in intense small and large group discussions and writing labs, active participation is crucial. Read your assignments BEFORE the due date, take substantial notes in class, jot ideas outside of class, talk to your classmates, work well in a group. Do the assignments that aren't graded; these will count towards your participation mark. **If you miss class, do not email me. Please do not ask what you "missed." Consult your classmates instead.**

2. **Three One-Page Response Papers. (20 points each, totaling 60 points).** These papers are single-spaced, no more than one page, 12 point Times New Roman, delivered on Canvas. The point of these papers is for you to drive your own responses to the reading. I will use the papers to steer class discussion. The papers also give you practice in fashioning short essays that display critical thinking about the literature we are reading. Think of these as the "middles" of longer essays. You won't need formal introductions or conclusions. Rather, you will create a question that you will attempt to answer. A good response paper chooses a question that is not answered with Yes/No, and that provokes thinking rather than delivering a complete answer. Here's an example: How does an indigenous, nature-saturated world interact with the urban landscape in Joy Harjo's poem “Anchorage?” instead of: Is there an indigenous influence in the poem “Anchorage?” (Yes/No). A rubric will include how well you: 1) focus on the particular work assigned; 2) create a substantive question that your paper **begins** to answer but may not resolve (think of it as a mini paper without a thesis, introduction or conclusion); 3) avoid answering yes or no questions or assuming things like "The poet is trying to..." or "The poet is showing that..." or "The poet intends..", or uncovering some sort of secret "deeper meaning;" 4) write in third person, not first person and do not use the term "The Reader" (this will give your writing more directness and clarity); 5) avoid mechanical errors. **Papers may not be turned in late, early or via email. Submit on Canvas only.**

3. **Three “imitation” poems that you write. (10 points each, totaling 30 points.)** Along the way, you will choose poems from our reading and write your own version/improvisations of them. I'll cue you in Canvas about how to choose poems and what you might do in creating your own

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versions. You will not be graded on the artistic merit of your poems. Your attempts will garner full points as long as it's clear what you are imitating.

3. Discussion posts (8 posts at 5 points, totaling 40 points). Along the way, you will have discussion posts to make and responses to other people's posts. These will be detailed in particular assignments

4. Four Reading Quizzes. (4 quizzes at 5 points each, totaling 20 points.) Quizzes will be given during class times. You will need access CANVAS during the class period when each quiz is assigned. If you miss class on a quiz day, you won't get credit for the quiz. Each quiz will ask 5 simple multiple choice questions about the images, craft and speculations and/or observations raised in class. If you read all of the poems with attention and you view all videos and participate in discussions, you will be well prepared for the quizzes.

4. One Group Project. (Your individual participation will show evidence of the writing equivalent of a Five to Seven Page Paper. All five participants will receive the same grade. 40 points.)

This project may be presented as a **ten minute video**, a **fifteen minute podcast**, a **dramatic script of 20 pages** or a **collaborative paper of 25 pages**.

The project will focus on one poet of your group's choice. Your group will have five people, including you. With your group members, you will: 1) select at least ten poems by the poet and Provide a substantial analysis of the craft, imagery and metaphoric implications of the poems; 2) research and include biographical material about the poet; 3) Embed quotes from at least three critical sources (essays or reviews in magazines/literary journals) to enhance your analysis; 4) Draw a conclusion that gives the project a through-line and use that conclusion to frame your presentation; 5) Add a bibliography that contains all sources you used; 6) Attach evidence of the research and drafts that you created during the course of the project. You will submit the link to your project on Canvas, along with attachments required.

Projects may not be turned in late, early or via email. Submit on Canvas only. The rubric will include how well you: 1) create a strong inquiry and description of the poet's work by showing how craft, imagery and metaphoric concerns play out in the poems; 2) contextualize and include biographical material; 3) explore critical materials about the poet's work and include at least three quotes from three sources; 4) draw a conclusion or through line in the framing of your project; 5) include a bibliography in MLA format; 6) add evidence of the work you contributed to the group project.

Grading Summary: Points total 200: Participation 10; Response papers: 60; Your poetic imitations: 30; Discussion Posts 40; Reading Quizzes: 20; Final Project 40.

Grades

A	100 %	to 94.0%
A-	< 94.0 %	to 90.0%
B+	< 90.0 %	to 87.0%
B	< 87.0 %	to 84.0%
B-	< 84.0 %	to 80.0%
C+	< 80.0 %	to 77.0%

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C	< 77.0 %	to 74.0%
C-	< 74.0 %	to 70.0%
D+	< 70.0 %	to 67.0%
D	< 67.0 %	to 64.0%
D-	< 64.0 %	to 61.0%
F	< 61.0 %	to 0.0%

If you require accommodation owing to a disability immediately contact the Disabilities Resources for Students Office (DRS) in Schmitz Hall 448 (206-548-8924; uwdss@u.washington.edu) or the Disabilities Services Office (DSO) at dso@u.washington.edu. *It is your responsibility to notify me in writing and in advance of any accommodations to be arranged by either the DSO or DRS office and—should forms be involved—to deliver those to me in person during office hours, with time enough to allow for us to arrive at a mutual understanding of the means by which those accommodations are best met.*

Do not plagiarize. Plagiarism includes lifting material from the web, collusion, and the use of sources without citation. If you have any questions regarding what constitutes plagiarism, consult me. All sources must be documented, and papers are to be the result of your own labor.

This syllabus is subject to change. You are responsible for keeping up with any modifications to schedule or assignments.

Required Technology

You will need to make use of the following technology:

- Reliable Internet access.
- Computer specifications adequate for using the Canvas LMS hosting your course. This Canvas page can help you with this and other general questions: <https://guides.instructure.com/m/67952>
- Audio speakers or headphones for listening to course videos and other files with audio.
- A webcam or video camera for submitting at least one video assignment.
- A word-processing program, such as Microsoft Word.

Recommended

I suggest you use your UW Google Drive for compiling a Portfolio of academic work, and add to it the major assignments from this course. See [Google Drive / IT Connect](#) site for instructions on how to set up a Drive folder. This will allow you to have back up copies and offer you a portfolio to use for future use.

Course Navigation

- You can access course content through various pathways.
- Click "Modules" in menu at left to display the comprehensive, sequential list of course resources and activities. From this Modules display, click on the module item or resource you wish to view.

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- Click "Home" to return to the starting page. By clicking on a Module icon from Home, you will be taken to that module's links.
- Click the Next or Previous buttons at the bottom of each page to move to the next or previous page in the module sequence.

General Discussion Forum

The [General Discussion Forum](#) is for use by students throughout the quarter to post their questions or comments about the course, including questions about course materials, assignments, learning objectives, or other course content. Feel free to respond to the comments of your fellow students. (To communicate privately with me, your instructor, please use the Canvas INBOX.)

Always keep your posts respectful and constructive. For guidelines about effective posting, see this Netiquette page: <https://uwodashboard.pce.uw.edu/sr/netiquette.asp>

Course Modules and Student Workflows

This course consists of five modules, which you and your fellow students will complete in the same time-frame.

For the course's due dates, consult the Course Calendar, or, alternatively, the click "Syllabus" in menu on Canvas.

Although you can move back and forth among the modules and activities, assignments must be completed by their due dates, and I recommend you complete assignments in the recommended sequence.

Academic Dishonesty and Student Conduct

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty means, among other things, plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting someone else's work as your own; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

You are expected to contribute in this online course in the same responsible, respectful way as you would in a classroom-based course. See the Student Conduct Code for further information: <http://www.washington.edu/cssc/student-conduct-overview/student-code-of-conduct/>