Catalog Entry

Reading and Writing Poetry (3-0) Intensive study, reading and practice in the various forms and approaches within poetry writing, including workshop discussion of individual student poems. Prerequisites: CRW 3362 with a grade of "C" or better and departmental approval.

Course Description

"Is it romantic to imagine poetry accomplishing anything in a world of happenings?" Don Share, poet and editor of *Poetry Magazine*, asks in relation to W.H. Auden's oft-quoted, yet misunderstood line: "poetry makes nothing happen." The question of poetry's "use" in a society plagued by inequality, indifference and inaction has long been discussed by poets, readers and scholars alike. In this course, while discussing elements of craft such as imagery, prosody and figurative language, we will also examine and experiment with poetry's power as an instrument for social justice and service. For this purpose, we will read poetry that's undeniably committed to action, and that can model your take on poetry that serves as a vehicle for social change. The course will feature lecture, class discussions, and workshop components.

Course Outcomes

Throughout this course, students will

- Recognize and apply literary devices used in poetry.
- Read and discuss poetry in relation to the thematic frame of the course.
- Provide and receive professional criticism of peers' poetry submissions.
- Produce a final portfolio with a critical preface and four poems.

This course is also designed to promote your overall success, inside and outside the classroom. The coursework will help you improve in key areas such as communication, confidence, and critical thinking.

Course Materials & Technology Requirements

The majority of all course materials are available through Blackboard. On Week 9, we will read *City Without Altar* (2022) by Jasminne Mendez, available through Noemi Press, Best World Books and Amazon.

Ensure your UTEP email account is working and that you have internet access and a stable web browser. Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox are the best browsers for Blackboard; other browsers may cause complications. When having technical difficulties, update your browser, clear your cache, or try switching to another browser. You will need to have access to a computer/laptop.

The following software is recommended: Microsoft Office and Adobe Acrobat Reader. Check that your computer hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course. If you do not have a word-processing software, you can download Word and other Microsoft Office programs for free via UTEP's Microsoft Office Portal. Click the following link for more information about Microsoft Office 365 and follow the instructions.

If you encounter technical difficulties beyond your scope of troubleshooting, please contact the UTEP Help Desk as they are trained specifically in assisting with technological needs of students.

Course Assignments

CRW 3372 is graded on a scale of 0-1000. The course assignments are outlined below. Please note that specific instructions will be provided on Blackboard, and in class.

Syllabus Scavenger Hunt: You will participate in a scavenger hunt designed for you to get familiar with the syllabus at your own pace. This activity will also ensure you navigate Blackboard and get comfortable with this learning management system. Due date: Tuesday, January 23 by start of class. *30 points*

Reading Journals (RJs): The purpose of this weekly assignment is to process the material by yourself to then engage in conversation with your classmates and instructor. To write mindful reading journals please read the materials carefully before class, think about what you read and how it made you feel, then answer the prompts as best as you can—there are no right or wrong answers (only unsubstantiated ones!). There are two types of RJs:

> **RJ BB (Blackboard)** due on Tuesdays by 3 pm, to be posted on Blackboard.
>
> **RJ TK (Talk)** due orally during class on Tuesday or Thursday; to account for your participation on these weeks, you should sign the RJ TK Participation Tracker sheet by the end of class.

Participating during class regardless of RJ TKs also ensures the class is dynamic. *Ongoing, poor class participation* when RJ TKs are due will result in requiring all RJs be posted to Blackboard. *140 points/ 7 RJs= 20 points each*

Creative Exercises (CEs): You will address specific prompts provided by the instructor. The purpose of these exercises is to apply/test concepts related to the writing of poetry or short stories, and to generate material that will be workshopped and included in your final portfolio. Due dates vary.*175 points/ 7 CEs=25 points each*

Small Group Workshop: You will participate in small group workshop where you'll share your work with 2-3 classmates. Week 10. *140 points*

Class Workshop: You will participate in class workshops toward the end of the semester where you'll share your work with classmates and receive feedback. Week 11-13. *280 points*

Grade Distribution

1000-900 = A

899-800 = B

799 -700 = C

699- 600 = D

599 and below = F

Literary Event: The Department of Creative Writing organizes several literary events throughout the semester; this is also the case of other departments and local organizations interested in fostering literacy in El Paso and surrounding areas. Please attend one literary event—either at the university or in the community—and write a 100-word reflection on your experience. I will announce scheduled events throughout the semester in class or through Blackboard; please share events with the class as well. If you can't attend any events due to extenuating circumstances, please contact me as soon as possible so we can discuss options to earn this credit. *30 points*

Poetry Factory: You will participate in a class reading of the poems produced during the semester (time and location TBD). Alternatively, you can submit an individual video/audio file that features you reading your poem out loud, due on Tuesday, May 7 by 11:59 pm. *45 points*

Final Portfolio: You will produce a final portfolio that contains a critical preface and the work you generated during the semester. Due date: Wednesday, May 10 by 11:59 pm. *160 points*

Classroom Policies

Attendance: Attending class is mandatory, and it will be recorded through a sign-in sheet distributed in class, starting Week 2. Students are allowed to miss four classes without penalty; every additional absence will lower the final grade by one letter grade. If more than 4 classes are missed without communicating with the instructor, the student might be dropped from the course. Students are responsible for signing in and keeping track of their absences. *Please notify me as soon as possible* if you encounter extraordinary circumstances that affect your ability to attend class.

Preferred Mode of Address: The Department of Creative Writing at UTEP supports students' right to define their identity in terms of name, pronoun, and mode of address. This class will provide each student the opportunity to let their preference be known and will support and respect that preference. Should you need to discuss this issue with your instructor in private, you are encouraged to make an appointment early in the semester.

Communication: Maintaining constant, open lines of communication between students and instructors is key to a productive and enjoyable learning experience. For this reason, it is vital that you communicate with me as soon as

possible about extenuating circumstances that affect your performance. I'm committed to help you navigate the course and succeed, but you have to reach out and keep me updated.

There are several ways in which communication will take place:

Email: Contact me at **anarvaez2@utep.edu** using your UTEP email. My response time for emails sent Monday through Friday 12-5pm is 48 hours; for emails sent on weekends, I will respond until the next day of business (i.e. Monday). Please **do not** use Blackboard messages. Note: As a UTEP alumna, I used to have a student email with the domain @miners.utep.edu, which was recently erased; however, to prevent any issues, the first time you write to me, please type my email as given and don't rely on the automatic feature of the electronic directory.

Announcements: I will send weekly communications through the Announcement tool in Blackboard. Please check your UTEP email often for that is where Blackboard announcements are sent instantly. You can also read my announcements by going to "Announcements" on Blackboard's left-side menu.

Office Hours: There are no set hours, so please schedule an appointment through email with at least one week of notice, and state your preference (virtual or in-person). The best time for me to meet in person is on Mondays after 1 pm at my office in University Towers 510 F; virtually, I can meet on Mondays and Wednesdays, after 1 pm as well.

Assignment Feedback: I will provide you with personalized commentary—written or recorded—on selected assignments through Blackboard, so make sure to check "My Grades." My response time for grading and feedback is within 1 week for short assignments and up to 2 weeks for longer assignments.

Late Work: I do not accept late work, unless there are extenuating circumstances, and only if the student contacts me through email within 48 hours before or after the assignment deadline.

Please keep in mind that technology is fallible, like all things man made. For this reason, avoid posting or uploading assignments at the last minute. As stated previously, if you encounter technological issues, please contact UTEP's Help Desk as soon as possible. If the issue is not fixed, then email the assignment as an attachment to anarvaez2@utep.edu to protect your grade.

Withdrawals: Each semester has a drop date beyond which an instructor can no longer drop a student with a "W." Students who fail to fulfill assignments after the drop date must necessarily receive an "F." However, in the event of exceptional circumstances, and with the approval of the instructor of the course and the academic dean, a grade of "W" may be obtained. The student is responsible for supplying written documentation to support the request for a "W." Acceptable reasons for a "W" include: personal or family emergencies, death of a family member, military leave, or an exceptional work schedule that prevents you from completing the course. Before you decide to withdraw from the course, please contact your academic advisor to discuss this option, and don't hesitate to contact me as well for

input.

The responsibility to withdraw from the course is yours; I will not automatically withdraw you if your performance is unsatisfactory. Please notify me as soon as possible if you encounter extraordinary circumstances that affect your ability to attend class. **Course drop deadline is Thursday, March 28, 2024.**

Format: All assignments will be turned in through Blackboard in 12-point Times New Roman or a font of similar size, and with your name and title of your poem on the upper left corner. You may use single or double space for your poems (we'll discuss why this is important). When naming files, I suggest you follow the following to keep track of your assignments: first name_CRW 3372__ICA 1. For example: Alessandra_CRW3372_ICA 1.

Please note that while assignments will be submitted electronically to Blackboard, I will also request a print copy of some CEs to ease physical discomforts associated with the use of the computer screen and keyboard. I ask for your understanding. In turn, I know printing credits are limited (more importantly, our tree population is being decimated), so I will limit this request as much as possible. There will be a combination of icons—🖨️📌—at the bottom of CEs to notify you of this requirement.

Quality: While this is a writing class where creative pieces are produced, and credit is given for turning these and other assignments on time, evident lack of effort and/or failure to follow guidelines will affect your grade.

Workshop Etiquette: You should take the literary critic role seriously, as your classmates' poems are highly personal pieces that deserve your careful reading, time and respect. If these are observed, then the critique of your work should never be taken personally. I will keep an eye on overly negative, aggressive critique, which is quite a rare occurrence, so please enjoy sharing your work and receiving feedback.

Netiquette: Your conduct during class should always be respectful and professional towards your instructor and classmates alike. For that reason, a professional tone should extend to *all* the writing you do for this class (posts and emails included). Therefore, please consider the template below when addressing me or your classmates through email or Blackboard, and don't forget to include a subject when writing an email.

Hello or Dear [name of recipient; address me as Alessandra or Professor/Ms. Narváez Varela],

Write the content of your email here. Make sure you proofread for proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Try to use formal, professional language.

Sincerely or Best [the sign off is up to you as long as you signal it is the end of your message],

Your name

For more suggestions to communicate successfully and professionally in an online setting, please go to Blackboard>Weeks>Week 2

Tech Etiquette: As a courtesy to your classmates and instructor, please refrain from using cell phones, tablets, laptops, etc. for recreational purposes while class is ongoing. Creative writing courses are taught in small classrooms, not in large auditoriums where non-academic use of technology goes unnoticed.

COVID-19 Precautions: Please stay home if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to report your result to covidaction@utep.edu so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help with communication with your professors. The Student Health Center is equipped to provide COVID-19 testing.

University Policies and Services

University Writing Center (UWC): I encourage you to make use of the UWC during the planning, drafting, and/or revising phases of writing any assignment in this class. The trained writing consultants can help give you a fresh perspective on ideas and help you with things like correctness, formatting, etc. The UWC is located on the main floor of the library, to the right of the elevators and computer lab.

Academic Integrity: An act of plagiarism (or other form of academic dishonesty) will result in an 'F' for the course, and may include other University disciplinary action, such as suspension or expulsion. You should become familiar with the ethical guidelines for conduct spelled out in the Student Affairs section of the Handbook for Operating Procedures. Additionally, please be aware that you may not submit work for this class that was produced for another class. You must produce your own original work in this class and appropriately identify and portion of your work which is collaborative with others, borrowed from others, or which is your own work from other contexts. Always cite your information. If you have doubts as to whether or not you are using your own or others' work legally and ethically, ask me or stop by the UTEP Writing Center. Follow this primary principle: Be upfront and honest.

> **ChatGPT Use:** Because of the rapid pace of change represented by ChatGPT and similar programs, it is necessary to set clear standards regarding their use in a creative writing class: *all* assignment submissions *must* constitute original pieces of writing composed by the student-author *without* the assistance of AI text generators. However, I recognize ChatGPT can be a valuable generative tool, so using AI as a starting point will be an option on Week 8. With this exception, it's vital that students rely on their original ideas, process and creativity to generate creative work. The same policy applies to reading journals.

ADA: The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. Students who become pregnant or have parenting responsibilities may also request reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. The UTEP Center for

Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) will process requests for accommodations based on a disability, pregnancy, or parenting. Contact the Center for Accommodations & Support Services (CASS) at (915)747-5148, email them at cass@utep.edu.or or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal. The CASS office is located in Room 106, Union East. Students are responsible for presenting the instructor with any CASS accommodation letters and instructions.

Military Student Success Center: If you are a military student (veteran, dependent, active), consider visiting the Military Success Center at Library Room 205 or online at https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/mssc/. Please inform me if you need special accommodations. If you make me aware of a complication, I will work to assist you or put you in contact with university staff who are trained to assist you.

Creative Writing Undergraduate Advising and Resources Webpage: Click here to find information about registration, advising, Wellness and Support Services, as well as Health and Covid-Related Services.

Calendar

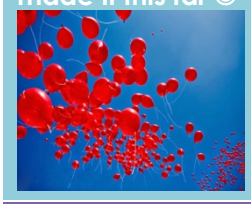
This calendar is subject to change. Attend class and check Blackboard for changes of readings or due dates.
Reading key: **BB=**Blackboard; **ICA=**In-Class Assignment

Week 1: Welcome! & Poetry's Use	
Tue 1/16	CRW 3372's Meet and Greet **Read** Syllabus **Explore** Blackboard
Thurs 1/18	• "Poetry: Who Needs It?" (William Logan) • "Poetry Died 100 Years Ago This Month" (Matthew Walther) • "I Can't Answer These Texas Standardized Questions About My Own Poem" (Sara Holbrook)
Week 2: Reading Poetry & Political Poetry	
Due by Tue 1/23 @ 3 pm	○ **RJ 1 BB (Blackboard)** ○ **Syllabus Scavenger Hunt** ○ **Extra Credit** To find these assignments: Go to Blackboard> Weeks> Week 2
Tue 1/23	**Read** • "Literalists of the Imagination" (Matthew Zapruder) • "Poetry" (Moore) • "How to Read a Poem" (Edward Hirsch) • "It Was the Animals" (Natalie Diaz)

Thurs 1/25	**Read** • "Poetry Like Bread: Poets of the Political Imagination" (Martín Espada) • "Ode to a Soccer Ball Sailing Over a Barbed-Wire Fence" (Martín Espada) **Consider** Social/political topic to explore throughout semester.
Week 3: Political Poetry CONT'D	
Due by Tue 1/30 @ 3 pm	**RJ 2 BB**
Tue 1/30	**Read** • "Poetry Is Not a Luxury" (Audre Lorde) • "Power" (Audre Lorde) **Submit** **CE 1** (end of class)
Thurs 2/1	**Read** "The Body Politic" (Steve Kowit) **Upload by start of class** Published poem relating to one of topics you want to explore.
Week 4: "Awful" Poems & The Balance of Imagist and Abstract Language	
Tues 2/6	**Read** • "Awful Poems" (Steve Kowit) • "Images" (Kim Addonizio and Dorianne Laux) • "Dim Lady" (Harryette Mullen) **Prepare** **RJ 3 TK**
Thurs 2/8	**Read** • "We Are Not Responsible" (Harryette Mullen) • "Elliptical" (Harryette Mullen) • "The Coronel" (Carolyn Forché)
Week 5: Can political poetry be about love?	
Due by Tues 2/13 @ 3 pm	○ **CE 2** ○ **RJ 4 BB**
Tues 2/13	**Read** • "KR Talk: Jericho Brown" • "Prayer of the Backhanded"(Jericho Brown) • "Love in a Time of Climate Change" (Craig Santos Perez) • "Wade in the Water" (Tracy K. Smith)
Thurs 2/15	**Watch** "Skinhead" (Patricia Smith)

Week 6: Connection and disconnection—Poems & Songs	
Due by Tues 2/20 @ 3 pm	○ **CE 3** ○ **Bring** print CE 2 or CE 3
Tues 2/20	**Read** • Prosody handout • "Sagas of the Accidental Death (September 14, 2013)" (Patricia Smith) • "This is America" (Childish Gambino) **Prepare** **RJ 5 TK**
Thurs 2/22	**Read** • "Citizen Illegal" (José Olivarez) • "The Terrorist Shaved His Beard" (Christopher Soto) • "Profanity" (Safia Elhillo)
Week 7: Student Presentations	
Due by Tues 2/27 @ 3 pm	○ **CE 4** ○ **RJ 6 TK** (presentation=credit)
Tues 2/27	**Prepare** To discuss your prosodic experiments and decisions. 9 students present (5 mins each)
Tues 2/29	9 students present (5 mins each)
Week 8: Cuss Words, AI and Bilingualism in Poetry	
Tues 3/5	**Read** • "Reader Discretion Advised" (Clare Luchette) • "Sinner" (Aldo Amparán) • "More Than One Man Has Reached Up My Skirt" (Natalie Scenters-Zapico
Thurs 3/7	Research
Spring Break: March 11-March 15	
Week 9: Documentary & Ekphrastic Poetry in *City Without Altar*	
Due by Tues 3/19 @ 3 pm	○ **CE 5** ○ **RJ 7 BB Part I**
Tues 3/19	**Read** • "From Reznikoff to Public Enemy: The poet as journalist, historian, agitator" (Philip Metres) • "The Trump-Era Boom in Erasure Poetry" (Rachel Stone) • *City Without Altar* (Jasminne Mendez)
Due by Tues 3/19 @ 3 pm	**RJ 7 BB Part II**

Thurs 3/21	**Read** • "Your Guide to Ekphrastic Poetry (it's Fantastic!)" (Christina M. Rau) • *City Without Altar* (Jasminne Mendez)
Due on Fri 3/22 @ 11:59 pm	**Poem** for small group workshop
Week 10: Workshop Guidelines & Small Group Workshop	
Due by Tues 3/26 @ 3 pm	**CE 6**
Tues 3/26	**Small Group Workshop:** oral feedback only Workshop Rules & Guidelines: Class Discussion
Thurs 3/28	Research
Course Drop Deadline: Thursday, March 28	
Due on Fri 3/29 @ 11:59 pm	**Poem** for Class Workshop
Week 11: Class Workshop	
Tues 4/2	**Class Workshop:** 3 poems
Thurs 4/4	**Class Workshop:** 3 poems
Week 12: Class Workshop	
Due by Tue 4/9 @ 3 pm	**Feedback**
Tue 4/9	**Class Workshop:** 3 poems
Thurs 4/11	**Class Workshop:** 3 poems
Week 13: Class Workshop	
Due by Tue 4/16 @ 3 pm	**Feedback**
Mon 4/16	**Class Workshop:** 3 poems
Wed 4/18	**Class Workshop:** 3 poems
Week 14: Revision + Final Portfolio + Submitting Poems	
Due by Tue 4/23 @ 3 pm	**Feedback**
Tues 4/23	**Read** • "Scissors & Gluesticks: Re-Visioning the Poem" (Laurie Kutchins) • "Two Wrongs Make a Right: Revision through Recycling" (Scott Wiggerman) • "Shapeshifting Poems: The Power of Transformation" (Lisa D. Chávez) **Prepare** Start revision of poem in class
Thurs 4/25	**Read** "Game Changers: Literary Magazines as the Gateway to Your Career" (Laura Maylene Walter) **Upload by start of class** Website of literary magazine
Week 15: Revision Presentations + Class Debrief	
Due by Tues 4/30 @ 3 pm	**CE 7**
Tues 4/30	**Discuss**

	Final Portfolio Requirements **Prepare** Discuss revision with small group
Thurs 5/2	**Poetry Factory 11.0**
Congratulations! You made it this far ☺ 	**For Syllabus Scavenger Hunt Last Question due Tues 1/23 by 3 pm** **What did the chair say when it left the room?** ***SILLA!*** **Some bilingual humor for you: silla (chair) sounds very similar to see ya!**
Week 16:	
Final Portfolio & Individual Video/Audio due Tuesday, May 7 at 11:59 PM	