

English 5380: Poetry and Personal Poetics

Instructor:	Dr. Polette
Term:	Spring 2018
Credits:	3 hours of graduate credit
Day & Time:	Tuesdays, 6:00 – 8:50 p.m., Hudspeth Hall #200
Office Hours:	T/R 9:00 - 10:20 a.m., T/R 12:00 - 1:15 p.m., T 4:00 - 5:50 p.m.
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Required Texts

- *A Poetry Handbook: A Prose Guide to Understanding and Writing Poetry* by Mary Oliver, ISBN 978-0-15-672400-5
- *Ten Windows: How Great Poems Transform the World* by Jane Hirshfield, ISBN 978-0-385-35105-8
- *Leaping Poetry: An Idea with Poems and Translations* by Robert Bly, ISBN 0-8070-6393-2
- *The Poet's Word* edited by Reginald Gibbons, ISBN 0-226-29054-9
- *The New World* by Keith Polette, ISBN 978-1-947271-04-3
- *A Book of Luminous Things* edited by Czeslaw Milosz, ISBN 978-1-947271-04-3

Purpose

This course is designed to help you:

- become an independent and critical thinker, writer, and learner;
- gain a working knowledge of the various manners and modes of poetry and poetics;
- learn to read and comprehend poetry on an “anagogical” level;
- become acquainted with the various dynamics — aesthetic, psychological, social — force that contribute to the shaping of poetry;
- develop a statement of personal poetics.

The required texts will serve as the foci of the course, since you will be reading them carefully, thoughtfully, and analytically; in addition, ***you will be responding to each text in two ways:***

- 1) submit a summary of what you have read for the week; the summary should present the thesis for each section of the text you are summarizing and a list of bulleted items that convey the essential content of each section,
- 2) **and** 3 page response essay (replete with a clear, thesis statement); the response should be a mini-essay that enables you to articulate what you discovered in your reading, what associations you made while and after reading, what questions you have about the reading, what issues the reading brought up for you, what you agreed with (and why), what you disagreed with (and why), what delighted you (or surprised, or perplexed, or confused, or piqued your curiosity, etc.) and why.

Assignments

- Text summary/responses worth 50 points each
- Poetic writing activities worth 50 points each (**NB:** Poetic writing activity directions, examples, and assessment forms will be distributed throughout the semester.)
- A final project: poetry portfolio and reflective/explanatory essay worth 300 points

NB: Failure to turn in the final project will result in a grade of “F” for the entire course.

Grading Scale

A=90-100% (excellent), B=80-89% (superior), C=70-79% (competent), D=60-69% (less than competent), F=0-59% (failing).

Plagiarism

If you obtain work from someone else and submit it as your own; if you use any material from another source in your work and do not give direct credit to your source; or if someone with whom you are working creates/writes any part of the work for you, you are

plagiarizing. Acts of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are disallowed and will be dealt with according to UTEP's policy.

Attendance

Because the lion's share of what you will learn in this course will result from your active involvement in each of class activity, you must attend every class. As such, missing 2 classes will cause you to lose one letter grade (from your overall grade for the course); if you do not wish to lose a letter you, you may complete an additional assignment; the assignment is due on the last day of class. If you miss 3 class periods, regardless of the reasons, you will disqualify yourself from being able to pass this course (a grade of "F" will be recorded). If you attend every class, without being late and without leaving early, 25 points (not 25 percentage points) will be added to the total points (not percentage points) you have earned for the semester. You do not need to call me if you are going to be absent. There are no excused absences (with the exception of absences that result from required to attend an official UTEP function). It is, moreover, your responsibility to sign the attendance sheet for each class.

Outside assignment for missing 2 classes:

Go to the web site NPR.ORG, and choose a program from the TED Radio Hour. Write a 2 page summary of the program. Write a 3 page essay in which you discuss how the ideas in the program intersect with what you are learning in this class. **Hand in:** a print copy of the summary, the essay, and an assessment form. You must earn a grade of C or better on the assignment for it to ameliorate the loss of a letter grade due to your absence from class.

If you experience a serious problem during the semester, one that will affect your attendance or your grade, please let me know well before the end of the semester.

- a) It is your responsibility to keep track of the number of your absences and to complete and hand in the outside assignment (as outlined in the above paragraph) if you choose not to lose a letter grade or grades from your overall grade for this class.
- b) There are no excused absences (with the exception of absences due to being required to attend an official UTEP function).

- c) If you experience a significant problem during the semester, one that will affect your attendance or grade, please let me know well before the end of the semester so that you and I can take steps to address the problem - especially if the problem will have a potentially adverse affect on your grade.
- d) Late arrivals or early departures disrupt the concentration of those of us who are working; please arrive on time and stay for the entire class. Chronic late attendance (and/or early departures) will result in the loss of points from your total accumulation of points. Class will begin promptly at 6:00 p.m.
- e) Turn off cell-phones, smart-phones, ipads, tablets, computers, and all other electronic devices before class begins. Do not use electronic devices, unless instructed to do so, during class.
- f) Do not leave class to make or receive a phone call (unless it is an emergency); do not work on assignments for other classes during class. If you do text, make or receive a phone call, and/or work on other assignments, you may be asked to leave; half an absence will be recorded for you for that day.
- g) Attend to personal needs before or after class, not during class. Do not bring food or drink (with the exception of water) to class.
- h) Because many discussions will take place during our class meetings, please be sure to listen (and please refrain from talking) when other people are discussing class-related issues.
- i) Do not work on assignments or activities for other classes during class.
- j) Since this class takes place in the evening, please organize yourself so that you are energetically engaged in the class from start to finish.
- k) There will be a class break from 7:25 - 7:40 p.m.; electronics may be used during the break.

Assignments

- a) All out of class assignments must be typed: 12 point serif font, double-space, one inch margins. Also, make and keep a photo-copy of every assignment you hand in so that you will always have a copy.
- b) Place 2 copies of every assignment in a manila folder; put your name on the tab of the manila folder; include a copy of the appropriate assessment form.
- c) *Failure to hand in two copies of an assignment will result in the loss of 1 letter grade; failure to hand in a copy of the correct assessment form will result in the loss of 1 letter grade.*
- d) Keep all returned assignments until the end of the semester. This way you will always know what your grade is for this class: add all the points that you earned and divide by the sum of the total points possible.

NB: Before you hand in written work, take it to a qualified source for suggestions regarding revising and editing. *Pay careful attention to the grading criteria for standard academic writing and to the assessment forms for each assignment.*

Late Work

Late assignments lose one letter grade per day (not class meeting, but day). An assignment is late if a hard copy is not in the class set of assignments that are with me when I leave campus. If you miss class the day an assignment is due, send it to class with someone else. An assignment that is late should not be put in my mailbox in the English Department Office in Hudspeth Hall or left outside my office door, but should be given directly to me. **NB:** Late assignments will not be accepted after three days past the original due date.

EXPECTATIONS: Academic Writing

Because this is a graduate-level English class, you should possess those skills that are necessary for you process information — textual and nontextual — effectively; you should also possess those writing skill that are necessary to express your thoughts in clear, cogent, and effective language.

Which is to say, you:

- should be able to develop your thoughts in a written form that is clear and cohesive;

- should be able to support general assertions with facts, examples, and illustrations;
- should be able to present a clear thesis statement in academic essays;
- should develop only one idea per paragraph; should have a clear and specific topic sentence for each paragraph;
- should be able to create a sense of logical coherence in your writing;
- should be able to connect sentences, one to another, inside a paragraph; an idea presented in one sentence should be carried over into the next sentence – and into the next;
- should be able to use effective transitional devices in order to move from one topic, or idea, to another;
- should be able to construct clear, concise, and varied sentences;
- should be able to connect your paragraphs and sentences by using transitional devices; and should be able to use standard punctuation, mechanical constructions, and spelling.

If you do not possess such skills, or if you are not sure how to construct academic prose (see the grading criteria), I strongly advise you to get assistance from a qualified source and to put together an immediate, proactive plan that will help you become a stronger writer.

CRITERIA FOR ACADEMIC WRITING

I am listing the criteria that I will utilize to evaluate the effectiveness of your academic written discourse, eg., academic essays. If you have any questions about any of the criteria, please let me know.

Development

1. Support insightful, original, and general ideas and assertions with facts, examples, illustrations, &/or explanations.
2. Present and develop only one idea per paragraph.
3. Use clear definitions where needed; especially for abstract words like “creativity,” “imagination,” “critical thinking,” “thinking skills,” “literacy,” etc.
4. Assertions and ideas are supported with examples; those examples are developed with explanations.

5. Follow all the directions for the assignment. **NB:** *Projects, assignments, and written products that do not correspond to the written directions will not receive a passing grade.*

Organization

1. Each paragraph has a clear topic sentence.
2. Each topic sentence presents one idea to be developed; each topic sentence incorporates words from the quotation that precedes it.
3. Each paragraph has an example from class that illustrates the idea in the topic sentence (the example must correspond that the appropriate chapter).
4. Writing displays a clear sense of order among the sentences within each paragraph. Avoid “idea gaps”; that is, don’t move from idea to idea (sentence to sentence) without supplying connections.
5. A clear and effective discussion relates the example to the idea in the topic sentence. Each discussion describes the importance of each example.

Wording

1. Use simple, energetic language in sentences that are clear and direct. Use figurative language where appropriate.
2. Avoid using passive voice (unless there’s a reason).
3. Create sentence variety (don’t construct sentences the same way).
4. Use important words and concepts consistently and clearly.

Cohesion

1. Use transitional words and phrases in and among paragraphs and sentences.
2. Use parallel constructions correctly.
3. Use pronouns correctly: be sure every pronoun has a clear antecedent.
4. Don’t shift from past to present tense.
5. Introduce all quotations and outside material; give page number and source.

Sentence Structure, Punctuation, and Spelling

1. Avoid run-on sentences.
2. Avoid sentence fragments.
3. Avoid convoluted sentences: sentences that contain too many disparate ideas, or sentences that are so long that the reader gets lost in them.
4. Use proper punctuation: comma, semi-colon, apostrophe, quotation marks, etc.
5. Make sure words are spelled correctly.

Manuscript Form

1. Have one-inch margins; number the pages at the bottom (center). Use double-spacing.
2. Use twelve-point font. Use a font that has serifs. Eg, the font, Times, has serifs; the font, Arial, does **not** have serifs.

ASSISTANCE

I will be glad to help you electronically; you may send me questions about your work and/or about your grades. You can also obtain help — online — from the Writing Center in the UTEP Library.

Additionally, if you experience a significant or catastrophic event this semester, one that will impair your ability to complete some or many of the modules in this course, contact me as soon as possible and inform me, so that I can help you effectively deal with the situation.

Finally, if you require any special accommodations for your participation in the course, please inform me as soon as possible – also please provide the requisite documentation.

The syllabus may be amended at my discretion for pedagogical purposes and/or for time constraints.

Week One: January 16

- Introduction to poetry and poetics
- Writing Activity
- Essay: “Chinese Boxes and Puppet Theaters” by Charles Simic (will be distributed in class)
- Poetry: Emily Dickinson (will be distributed in class)
- Discussion

Week Two: January 23

- **Read:** *A Poetry Handbook* by Mary Oliver
- **Turn In:** Summary & Response to *A Poetry Handbook*
- Discussion
- Poetic Writing

Week Three: January 30

- **Read:** *Ten Windows*, chapters 1-3 by Jane Hirshfield
- **Turn In:** Summary & Response to *Ten Windows*, chapters 1-3
- Discussions

Week Four: February 6

- **Read:** *Ten Windows*, chapters 4-6 by Jane Hirshfield
- **Turn In:** Summary & Response to *Ten Windows*, chapters 4-6
- Discussion
- Poetic Writing

Week Five: February 13

- **Read:** *Ten Windows*, chapters 7-10 by Jane Hirshfield
- **Turn In:** Summary & Response to *Ten Windows*, chapters 7-10
- Discussion

Week Six: February 20

- **Read:** *The New World* by Keith Polette
- **Turn In:** Response to *The New World*: discuss how the poems in *The New World* intersect with or exemplify any ideas that Jane Hirshfield discusses in chapter 3 of *Ten Windows*.
- Discussions
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Week Seven: February 27

- **Read:** *Poets' Perspectives*, chapters 1-10
- **Turn In:** Summary & Response to *Poets' Perspectives*, chapters 1-10
- Discussion
- Poetic Writing

Week Eight: March 6

- **Read:** *Poets' Perspectives*, chapters 11-19
- **Turn In:** Summary & Response to *Poets' Perspectives*, chapters 11-19
- Discussions

Week Nine: Spring Break**Week Ten: March 20**

- **Read:** *Poets' Perspectives*, chapters 20-24
- **Turn In:** Summary & Response to *Poets' Perspectives*, chapters 20-24
- Discussion
- Poetic Writing

Week Eleven: March 27

- Reflection: poetry and poetics (bring to class the texts we have read thus far)
- Discussions
- **Read:** An article of your choice from:
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/learn/essays>

Week Twelve: April 3

- **Read:** *Leaping Poetry* by Robert Bly
- **Turn In:** Summary & Response to *Leaping Poetry*
- Discussion
- Poetic Writing

Week Thirteen: April 10

- **Choose a poet who interests you; give a 20 minute presentation on her/his poetics.**
- Discussions

Week Fourteen: April 17

- **Choose a poet who interests you; give a 20 minute presentation on her/his poetics.**
- Discussion
- Poetic Writing

Week Fifteen: April 24

- **Read:** An article of your choice from:
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/learn/essays>
- **Turn In:**
- Discussions

Week Sixteen: May 1

- Discussions
- Bring all poems you have been working on to class.
- Bring all the texts we have read this semester to class.

Week Seventeen (Finals Week): May 9, 7:00 – 9:45 p.m.

- Poetry readings & discussion
- Portfolio and Essay due.

_____ 45-50 — A The summary is clear and complete. The response essay is clear, complete, well-organized; it contains examples/illustrations; the discussion of ideas is insightful. Useful citations are present. Each ¶ has a clear topic sentence that presents one idea to be developed. Topic sentence is followed by a restriction/transition sentence(s). An example/illustration is included. A cogent discussion and quotation relates the example to the idea in the topic sentence. Each paragraph is clearly focused. Wording is clear in sentences that are precise. Abstract terms are defined and used effectively. Effective syntax throughout. Cohesion is clear; transitions are effective. No mechanical errors present; departures from convention appear intentional and are effective

_____ 40-44 — B The summary is effective, though not as clear and complete as an “A” summary. The response essay is generally clear, complete, well-organized; it contains examples/illustrations; the discussion is generally insightful. Useful citations are present. Each ¶ has a clear topic sentence that presents one idea to be developed. Topic sentence is followed by a restriction/transition sentence(s). An example/illustration is included. A cogent discussion and quotation relates the example to the idea in the topic sentence. Each paragraph is focused. Wording is clear in sentences that are precise. Abstract terms are generally defined and used effectively. Effective syntax throughout. Cohesion is clear; transitions are effective. Very few mechanical errors present.

_____ 35-39 — C The summary is adequate, though it fails to include some pertinent elements of the text’s content. The response essay needs stronger organization, contains a few examples/illustrations. Discussions are weak or absent. Citations are present, though not as useful as they need to be. Each ¶ has a clear topic sentence that presents one idea to be developed. Topic sentence is followed by a restriction/transition sentence(s). An example/illustration is included. A discussion may not effectively relate the example to the idea in the topic sentence. Each paragraph is somewhat focused. Wording is generally okay; sentence variety may not be present. Abstract terms are sometimes defined and used effectively. Syntax may need revision. Cohesion is in need of further work; transitions somewhat effective. Some mechanical errors present.

_____ 30-34 — D Summary fails to include essential elements of the text’s content. The response essay is generally not clear and is in need of significant development. Few citations. Each ¶ may be in need of a stronger topic sentence. Topic sentence is often not followed by a restriction/transition sentence(s). An example/illustration is generally not included. A discussion may be missing. Each paragraph needs revision. Wording is generally okay; sentence variety may not be present. Abstract terms are not defined and are not used effectively. Syntax needs revision. Cohesion is in need of further work; transitions are missing. Many mechanical errors present.

_____ 0-29 — F Summary is missing or wholly ineffective. The response essay is not clearly organized, has little to no development. Few or no citations. Each ¶ needs topic sentence. Topic sentence is not followed by a restriction/transition sentence(s). An example/illustration is not included. A discussion may be missing. Each paragraph needs substantial revision. Wording is not effective; sentence variety not present. Abstract terms are not defined and are not used effectively. Syntax needs revision. Cohesion is in need of further work; transitions are missing. Myriad mechanical errors.

Poetry Portfolio Assignment

- Create a poetry portfolio by including the rough drafts, revisions, and final drafts of the poems you have written this semester.
- Clearly label the phase of each poem: eg., “rough draft,” “revision,” “final draft”. Place them, stapled together in this order: final draft on top, revisions beneath the final draft, and rough draft beneath the revisions. Include the assessment form for each poem.
- Choose 3 poems to read on the last night of class; also create a powerpoint of each poem so that we may see the text as you read it.

Reflective Essay

Write a 8 page essay in which you discuss the poetry portfolio. Consider discussing: the processes by which you created the poems; what you discovered about yourself as a poet; what you discovered about the nature and manners of poetry; how your thoughts about poetry have changed (and what precipitated the changes); the nature of poetics. In your essay, be sure to make ample references to the texts we have read this semester. [More details will be given once the class meets.]