

University of Texas El Paso
Poetics & Performance Course Syllabus

Course Number & Instructor Information:

Creative Writing: Poetics & Performance

Instructor: Roberto Santos, M.F.A.

CRN: 16194

MW | 1:30-2:50

E-mail: rasantos3@utep.edu

Office: Library | Office Hours: 3:30-4:30

Required Texts:

Course Reader and Performance Videos (provided to you by the instructor).

Course Description & Grading:

Poetics and Performance is a comprehensive course that explores the theory and techniques behind creating written art and engaging performances. Students will examine contemporary examples by writers and performers, analyze their approaches, and gain a deep understanding of language, rhythm, voice, and stage presence. Through writing assignments, in-class performances and feedback, and opportunities to practice at community events, students will develop their own poetic voices. Topics covered include poetics fundamentals, performance techniques, narrative crafting, audience engagement, collaboration, and ethical considerations in performance art. By the end of the course, students will have refined their writing skills, expanded their creativity, and developed the ability to create impactful performances.

Grading Scale:

A= 90-100

B= 80-89

C= 70-79

D= 60-69

F= below 60

Assignment Values (Total: 100 Points)

Workshops: 10 Points

Class Participation: 5 Points

Legendary Performance

Discussion Leader: 5 Points

Etudes: 20 Points

Live Performance: 20 Points

Final Portfolio: 40 Points

Discussion (5 Points): Each student will lead one discussion based on a legendary performance of their choosing. The goal of the student should be to facilitate a healthy class talk about aspects related to the quality of the performance. In other words, discussion leaders must aim to do more than summarize; they must focus on and inspire discussion about the techniques and skill the performer employs. Discussion leaders must creatively attempt to involve the entire class in the discussion by asking the group questions, using online materials, providing handouts, or anything useful for achieving the goals of leading the discussion.

Workshop (10 Points): All students will have various opportunities to receive direct feedback on their writing. The workshop sessions are listed in the course syllabus. Any time a student does not submit a workshop entry, is not present on the day their work is to be discussed, or does not comment on the works of others will lose points in the course.

Focus Group Workshops: We will occasionally hold simultaneous workshops during class time. In this type of workshop, writers will read their poems to small groups of peers and receive verbal and handwritten feedback based on the presentation of their work. After receiving feedback, the writers will rotate and read to the next group.

Etudes (20 pts.): By the end of the semester, students will turn in 4 poems (5 pts. each) on topics of their choice, though the instructor may provide certain parameters and guidelines that frame the assignments. Some of these assignments will be completed in class, while others will be completed outside of class.

Live Performance (20 Points): This open mic event is your opportunity to shine, share your voice, and demonstrate the skills you've honed throughout the semester. It's a chance to connect with an audience on a personal level and leave a lasting impression with your creative work.

Assignment Lengths: Each poem should be 1-2 pages long.

Assignment Formatting Guide: Include name, and class time in the top left-hand corner of the first page. Each poem should have a title. Do not center your poems.

Final Portfolio (40 pts.): Student portfolios may include revised writings that they have created during the semester, or may include completely new writings they are especially passionate about. They should employ poetic techniques and skills learned during the semester. All students must submit their portfolio in a folder with the following contents: A one-page reflection of their writing that addresses their intentions for the portfolio, as well as some commentary that speaks to the evolution of their writing during the

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semester. All final versions of their poetry.

Class Policies:

Attendance: Students are expected to be present and prepared to participate at each class meeting. After their second absence, they will lose one point per additional absence. The best way to receive a good grade in the course is to be present every day.

COVID-19 Precaution Statement: Students are reminded to stay home if they have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. If they have tested positive for COVID-19, prior to, after, and/or during their time enrolled in their course(s), they are highly encouraged to report their results to covidaction@utep.edu as well as to let the office know at ppp@utep.edu.

Plagiarism: "Plagiarism" means the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it in one's academic work offered for credit, or using work in a paper or assignment for which the student had received credit in another course without direct permission of all involved instructors. Any student caught plagiarizing or cheating will be reported to the Academic Dean, will receive a zero on their assignment, and will lose credibility as a writer in the class. In order to avoid the temptation to plagiarize, students should start their assignments early.

Contacting the Instructor: Students may meet with the instructor during the posted office hours, and before or after class upon request (if time permits). Students may also e-mail the instructor about issues that are relevant to the course, and the instructor will do their best to respond within 24 hours. Be sure that the e-mail subject line indicates the student's name, subject, and the time the class meets (the instructor does not open emails with blank subject lines).

E-mail Address: It is the responsibility of students to check their UTEP email account frequently because the instructor will use it to contact them with important class information and updates. If students need help with their email, they should contact Technology Support at, 915-747-5000.

Saving Documents: A student losing or misplacing their work is no reason for a deadline extension. Students will be responsible for their own work and for backing it up in other places. For example, students save documents in multiple locations like flash drives, cloud systems, external hard drives, or e-mail.

Students with Disabilities: Students with a disability that requires additional accommodations should notify the instructor so that adjustments can be made.

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Creative Writing Spring Calendar:**Week 1: Aug 28th - Sept 1st**

Meet & Greet Poems | Etude #1: Write About Yourself

Overview of Poetics and Performance Course | Etude #1 Due

Week 2: Sept 4th - Sept 8th

Labor Day Holiday (No class)

Narrative Voice - Sonia Sanchez | Nas

Week 3: Sept 11th - Sept 15th

Originality and Creativity - The Last Poets

Etude #2: Imagery & Description

Week 4: Sept 18th - Sept 22nd

Characterization - Jean Toomer | Slick Rick

Dialogue - Kendrick Lamar | Eminem | Etude #2 Due

Week 5: Sept 25th - Sept 29th

Def Poetry Jam Performances: What Makes a Strong Poetry Performance?

Def Poetry Performance Analysis

Week 6: Oct 2nd - Oct 6th

Pacing & Flow - Busta Rhymes | Linebreaks

Pacing & Flow w/ Mickey Factz

Week 7: Oct 9th - Oct 13th

Imagery and Description - Gloria Anzaldúa | Queen

Theme - Juan Felipe Herrera | Ms. Lauryn Hill | Etude #3: Theme

Week 8: Oct 16th - Oct 20th

Emotional Impact - Daniel Beaty | Bob Marley

Language and Style - Wu-Tang Clan | Etude #3 Due

Week 9: Oct 23rd - Oct 27th

Stage Presence w/ Chilla Jones

Etude #4: Write for the Stage | Tyler the Creator

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Week 10: Oct 30th - Nov 3rd (Fall Drop/Withdrawal Deadline)

Writing & Performance Workshop Group 1 | Michael Jackson
Editing and Revising | Etude #4 Due | Danez Smith

Week 11: Nov 6th - Nov 10th

Writing & Performance Workshop Group 2 | Jimi Hendrix
Finding Inspiration and Breaking Writer's Block: Exercises

Week 12: Nov 13th - Nov 17th

Writing & Performance Workshop Group 1 | Elizabeth Acevedo
Microphone Control | Hip Hop Superstars on Arsenio Hall Show

Week 13: Nov 20th - Nov 24th

Writing & Performance Workshop Group 2 | Andrea Gibson
Thanksgiving Holiday (No class)

Week 14: Nov 27th - Dec 1st

Writing & Performance Workshop Group 1 & 2
Writing & Performance Workshop Group 1 & 2 | Preparation For Open Mic

Week 15: Dec 4th - Dec 8th

Rehearsal for Open Mic | Kendrick Lamar
Live Open Mic Performance: Barbed Wire Open Mic Series

Week 16: Dec 11th -15th

Dec 13th @ 4:00 pm - 6:45 pm: Final Assignment Submission (these are the pieces you performed at the open mic) & Self Evaluation