

# CRW3375: POETICS - "KEEPING OUR BELONGING"

*Professor Sasha Roque Pimentel  
The Department of Creative Writing  
The University of Texas at El Paso  
Fall 2021 / (19488)*

## Accommodations and Support Services During COVID-19 and for Other Reasons

If you are worried about being in this classroom—if you are worried about being in a class that meets face-to-face because of the pandemic, whether now, or later, please let me know in private, during my office hours if you prefer not to write it, or via email. I will do everything in my power to help you protect your safety, and the safety of your family.

### *Testing Positive for COVID-19*

**If you or a member of your household test positive for COVID-19, if you have come in contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, or you suspect a positive exposure to COVID-19, please do not come to class. Please do not come to campus.**

For the safety of our campus community, it is very important to inform the University when you are ill. If you have tested positive or have been exposed to an individual who tested positive for COVID-19, please inform UTEP EH&S at [COVIDaction@utep.edu](mailto:COVIDaction@utep.edu).

Though you need not disclose your specific health concerns to me, if for COVID-19 or any illness I can support you in this course with extensions, or forms of make-up work, etc. please let me know, and I will do all that I can so that you can take care of yourself and your family/household, and still succeed in this course.

### *Center for Accommodations and Support Services*

If at any point, and for any reason, you feel you have reasons to require accommodations for your own safety during our ongoing pandemic, or for any other learning or health reason, please contact [CASS](#) (UTEP's center for Accommodations and Support Services). The CASS office can protect you so that you receive the accommodations you need from all your teachers ([CASS@utep.edu](mailto:CASS@utep.edu), 915-747-5148).

Please also contact the CASS office if you or any of your family members have medical or physical issues that might make you particularly vulnerable to infection, and ask them to help you protect yourself.

Please note that the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) is using a new Software System called AIM (CASS Portal). This portal provides you with access to letters of notification and the ability to fill out your CASS forms and requests.

Please contact CASS at [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu) or by phone at (915)747-5148 for additional information.

### *UTEP's COVID-19 Testing Centers*

- Free on-campus antigen testing is available for all enrolled UTEP students who are currently attending classes (face to face or remote).
- No appointment is necessary, although preregistration online is required at [medicatconnect.com](https://medicatconnect.com).
- Bring your Miner Gold Card OR student ID number AND a photo ID.
- When you arrive at the Student Health and Wellness Center, please wait outside and call 915-747-5624 to be allowed in through the center's back entrance.
- Click [here](#) for more information about student on-campus testing at UTEP.

Walk-up testing is also available. Students, employees and the general public can pull up to the City of El Paso's COVID-19 Mega-Testing Site on UTEP property **at 3333 N. Mesa at Kern Drive**. This public site includes two dedicated priority lanes for Miners and their household members, as well as lanes for the general public.

- The city's mega drive-up testing site at 3333 N. Mesa will be open from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., Monday-Saturday. **The only entrance to the site will be from Sun Bowl Drive at Kern Drive**. The site includes two dedicated priority lanes for UTEP students, employees and their household members in the same vehicle.
- Walk-up testing will be available near the entrance to the building on site.
- A valid Miner Gold Card is required to access the UTEP lanes.
- Miners can choose from nasal or saliva PCR tests; results will be available within 24-48 hours.
- Pre-register at [this link](#) to save time.
- Please report a positive COVID-19 test to [covidaction@utep.edu](mailto:covidaction@utep.edu) so our COVID Action Team can follow up with you.

### *COVID-19 Vaccinations through UTEP*

Getting a COVID-19 vaccination is one of the best ways to protect yourself and others during the pandemic. UTEP has teamed up with University Medical Center to offer free, convenient on-campus COVID-19 vaccination clinics this fall for students and employees. Students who participate in the clinics will receive incentives and giveaways!

Here's what you need to know:

- The first clinics will be offered from **9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Wednesday, Aug. 23-25, 2021, at the Undergraduate Learning Center**. Participants will have the opportunity to receive the second COVID-19 vaccine three weeks later.
- No appointment or pre-registration is necessary.
- Students who participate in the vaccine clinics at UTEP or get a COVID-19 vaccine elsewhere between Aug. 23 and Oct. 31, 2021, will receive several incentives,

including **\$25 in Miner Bucks after each shot (up to \$50 total)**, a **“Miners Take Care of Miners” T-shirt**, and **other free giveaways**.

- If you live in a campus residence hall and get vaccinated, **UTEP will pay \$550 of your rent** for the semester.

To learn more about other free COVID-19 vaccination options available in the area, visit [epcovidvaccine.com](http://epcovidvaccine.com).

### *COVID-19 Precaution Statement from the Office of the Provost*

#### **COVID-19 PRECAUTION STATEMENT**

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 results to [covidaction@utep.edu](mailto: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.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission wear face masks when indoors in groups of people. The best way that Miners can take care of Miners is to get the vaccine. If you still need the vaccine, it is widely available in the El Paso area, and will be available at no charge on campus during the first week of classes. For more information about the current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit [epstrong.org](http://epstrong.org).

### **Course Meetings**

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- Mondays & Wednesdays, 12:00pm - 1:20pm Mountain Standard Time
- Undergraduate Learning Center, Room 338

### **Course Description**

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The United States as a collective identity was “born in genocide” (Martin Luther King, Jr.), its structural powers asymmetric and forged through slavery, imperialism, state-sponsored massacre, and racial subjugation. How do contemporary Black poets, Indigenous poets, and poets of color sing from such history into our present, a time of heightened white supremacist propaganda and racialized violence? How to speak, as poets, of our own known histories if they have been turned from popular cultural narratives into erased ahistories? How to write through how our bodies become entangled with the impositions that racialization makes on sex and gender, and how our geographies are nationalized and bounded? How do poets, who write in song, and with the democratic impulses of poetry, write against racism, linguistic supremacy and provisional belonging? How to claim, and reclaim, through the plasticity of poetic form, a language of rights, a language of self-seen history, and a language of belonging?

In this course, we'll survey the recent poetic works of writers such as Raquel Salas Rivera, Natalie Diaz, Carl Philips, Sonia Sanchez, Deborah A. Miranda, Claudia Rankine, Danez Smith, Jake Skeets, Aracelis Girmay, Monica Youn, Layli Long Soldier, Rick Barot, Patricia Smith, Franny Choi, Michael Torres, and more poets. We'll listen to their calls of sight and song, how these poets respond to racism in the United States, and how in poetry we can flex the form to stretch perception and understanding.

Because this is a Poetics course, a study of the theories, techniques, and methods of making poetry, we'll study the poetic techniques and methods of the poets above, in addition to nonfiction readings of theory, criticism, and historical context. Throughout the course, we'll also practice the techniques these poets employ ourselves, into our own poems, through exercises of poetic études, and workshops. Finally, students in this course will also be asked to attend virtual/physical poetry readings, and to create a group-based community intervention that uses poetry as an act of service for our community.

### Professor's Contact Information

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Prof. Sasha Roque Pimentel, MFA  
 srpimentel@utep.edu  
 (915) 747-6810 (for voicemail only)



### *Fall 2021 Office Hours*

Because of the rise of the Delta variant during our current COVID-19 pandemic, in order to be able to safely meet one-on-one, I will be running my office hours virtually, through Zoom. (My physical office would not allow for a safe one-on-one meeting with enough space to socially distance.)

- Wednesdays, 2:00pm - 3:30pm MST and by appointment, through Zoom.
- Please use this meeting link and password:
  - *Meeting link:*  
<https://utep-edu.zoom.us/j/85610289456?pwd=V1RrLzVVSsm80RjEvTmпуVlF2SWN1UT09>
  - *Meeting password:*  
 Poetry1!

Much like physical office hours, I'll be "there" on Zoom every Wednesday at 2:00pm MST. If at any point I won't be able to make it to my office hours, or I'll be late, I will send an announcement through Blackboard.

Please note that I'll use the "waiting room" feature in Zoom, so if I don't answer your attendance right away, it's because I'm with another student, but I'll conference with you and let you into the conference room as soon as I'm done with my other meeting. On days when I have prescheduled appointments during these office hours, I'll list them in the chat function, so you'll know my schedule that day.

## Books and Supplies

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### *Required Readings*

Please buy the following books by the *week before* the dates we're scheduled to discuss them, so you'll have enough time to read them.

Because students who work for the university aren't paid until October 1st, **we will not read any of the books below until October 18, 2021**, so that you might have enough time to buy these books through affordable sellers, and include time for free shipping.

1. Rick Barot, [\*The Galleons\*](#) (electronic Kindle version available for about \$9.99)
2. Natalie Diaz, [\*Postcolonial Love Poem\*](#) (electronic Kindle version available for about \$9.99)
3. Raquel Salas Rivera, [\*while they sleep \(under the bed is another country\)\*](#) (electronic Kindle version available for about \$4.99)
4. Jake Skeets, [\*Eyes Bottle Dark with a Mouthful of Flowers\*](#) (electronic Kindle version available for about \$9.99)
5. Patricia Smith, [\*Incendiary Art\*](#) (electronic Kindle version available for about \$16.73)

You don't need to have a Kindle tablet to read a Kindle text; you only need to download the Kindle app on any computer, tablet or phone.

I will supply all other readings (poems, essays, interviews and essays on craft, videos and images) via downloadable PDF documents, or as internet links, on Blackboard.

**For our environment, and in order to maintain social distancing without physical contact, the materials of this course will be distributed electronically, through Blackboard and computer screens, and in a "paperless," no-contact way.**

Please feel free to bring your own computers/tablets/phones on which to view course documents, or please use [UTEP's Mobile Print app](#) or UTEP's other printing resources [here](#) if you prefer to bring printed documents for your own use.

### *Required Software/Applications*

In addition, you'll need to use the following free software/applications:

- A PDF reader:  
You'll use this to view course materials. If you don't have one already, you can download Adobe Reader for free: <http://get.adobe.com/reader>.
- A PDF writer.  
Most word processing programs can save documents directly to PDF format (save as > PDF). But if you don't have one already, you can download Primo PDF for free: [http://download.cnet.com/PrimoPDF/3000-18497\\_4-](http://download.cnet.com/PrimoPDF/3000-18497_4-)

[10264577.html?part=dl-10264577&subj=dl&tag=button](https://zoom.us/j/10264577?part=dl-10264577&subj=dl&tag=button)

- Zoom, a free teleconferencing program, if you'll want to attend my virtual office hours.  
Zoom can work on a PC, a mac, tablets or cell phones. You can download it here: <https://zoom.us/download>

All course documents will be in .pdf format. You must be able to access this course on Blackboard, through my.utep.edu, and through the internet, on a weekly basis.

## Grading and Requirements

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Your final grade will be dependent on your successful completion of the following course requirements:

### *Participation (10% of your final grade)*

I ask you to participate in every workshop, and as much as possible in every class discussion, to show how you are thinking through our course materials, and your own, and your colleagues' work.

### *Poems and Workshops (25% of your final grade)*

You will write three poems in the practical study of poetics. Each poem should be written as an étude, or artistic study of the assigned readings, towards creative writing prompts that will accompany those readings. Through the process of writing each of these poems, you'll try to master, as all poets at all stages of their career do, musical skills, imagistic precision, and wrestling tension and emotion inside a poem.

These poems are an opportunity for you to push yourself in poetry in ways you may not otherwise try.

We will read, and critique, and through each of our own contexts and our course's context understand your poems through workshop sessions during our regular course meetings.

Please turn in your poems for each workshop on time, **the week before you are scheduled to workshop**, to ensure a class workshop. I can't accept late poems for these workshops, out of consideration to your peers, who need time to be able to read them and prepare before workshop. If at any point you miss a class workshop of your poem however, whether due to absence or tardiness in turning in your work, I will always gladly privately workshop your poem through my office hours.

Each poem will be graded as simply "Pass" (100 pts) or "Fail" (0 pts), for a semester total of 300 pts. If you turn in a poem draft on time, you will receive full credit for that poem, unless in extraordinary rare circumstances (i.e.: you've written very few lines that don't take any of the course's writing prompts into consideration).

Your participation in class workshops is also part of this course requirement.

*Final Creative Portfolio (15% of your final grade)*

Finally, I'll ask you to revise the three poems you drafted and workshopped this semester, based on your learning of course concepts and feedback, into a final creative submission. Please turn in those revisions as a creative Final Portfolio at the end of the semester. You need only turn in your final drafts of the poems, and such revision should reflect your practical understanding of central concepts such as image, line, language, sound, etc.

This portfolio is due as a PDF document at the end of the semester.

*A Multimedia Poetic Investigative History (30% of your final grade)*

Like the poets we'll study this semester, I'll ask you to investigate a part of U.S. history in such a way that it turns you towards a multimedia poetics. Though your creative portfolio can become part of, or speak towards this investigative history, this is a separate course requirement.

I'll give more details on this throughout the semester, but as part of this project, I will ask you to: conduct oral histories; research a topic of raciality or ethnicity that interests you in the United States, or in another country or place with which you identify; gather historical documents in various media supporting this topic, and present these to the class; write a preface in prose examining the possibilities and the limitations of this topic; and compose and workshop (in groups and in-class) and revise a longer "working" poetic piece that interrogates your topic.

Please turn in your poetic drafts for this investigative project **the week before you are scheduled to workshop.**

The various components will be due throughout the semester, but I will also ask you for a final online portfolio, with links to your research media, at the end of the semester.

*Poetry Teaching Lesson (10% of your final grade)*

I'll also ask you to present an in-class lesson on any point of craft, or technique, you'd like to focus on for one of our major texts (listed above).

Your lesson date will be determined by which book you choose to present and teach from. I ask you to format this presentation in whatever format is best for you (whether teaching from the lectern, or by projecting a short video lesson, etc.) of about 7-10 minutes. You can present your lesson individually, or you can choose to work/present with your colleagues who are also due to present on that book, whatever you believe is best for your learning and teaching style, and for your own sense of safety.

*Attendance of a Literary or Creative Event (10% of your final grade)*

We are writers; thus, we are members of community. Please attend any virtual or physical event that centers any form of literature or art (including the visual arts, music, dance, etc.). As I hear of any events, I'll announce them in class. Please feel free to also let the class know if you know of any literary and/or creative events this fall.

To receive credit for this course requirement, simply email me at the end of the semester to let me know what event you attended.

## Grading Scale

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A: 90-100%  
 B: 89-80%  
 C: 79-70%  
 D: 69-60%  
 F: 59% and below

## Turning in Poems

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This is a literature course for professional, practicing writers and as such, we'll be conducting some workshops of your creative work. The pieces that you turn in to workshop should not be your "first" draft of that poem or prose piece. You should turn in the best possible piece you can write (having worked on that poem considerably) when a creative work is due from you because you'll get more advanced feedback. As in any form of artistry, the harder you work at each stage of the writing process, the faster and better you will learn your craft.

When I ask you to turn in a poem for workshop, please attach it to the appropriate discussion board in Blackboard as a PDF document. First, please create a new thread in the discussion board, using your first and last name(s) and the piece's title as the thread's title (e.g.: "Federico García Lorca, "Romance Sonámbulo"). Please write any prefatory contextual comments you'd like for us to know about your work, or anything that you'd like the workshop to address (optional).

## Formatting Poems

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The work should be typed, printed, single-spaced, in a single-column (unless you are purposefully writing a multiple-column poem, or a poem that is explicitly subverting traditional vertical spacing), in a single standard font, 12 pt. size. Please turn in only one poem per workshop, no more.

I ask for a PDF document because how a poem appears on the page matters as much as what it says. A PDF copy means that we'll be able to read your line lengths, lines, stanzas and whitespacing—the poem's breath—exactly as you intend. Also, our class is composed of writers from all over the world, working on different electronic devices, and a PDF document ensures compatibility so that all of your colleagues can read your work.



I'm also asking you to standardize the font and font size because that appearance must be intrinsic to the poem's form, not just through font stylization, and also because editors in the profession only accept work in a standard font and standard font size. Please include the following header for each poem:

Your full name Date  Poem Title  Poem Content
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Your prose (such as for your analytical paper) should be typed, double-spaced, in MLA style, and justified to the left-hand margin, and in a single standard font like Times New Roman, in 12 pt. size.

### **Giving Feedback**

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I ask you to take your role as a poet, and as a poetry critic, with great care, with seriousness and sensitivity. You have a responsibility, as a fellow artist, to your colleagues to not only read their work carefully, but to make constructive comments to help them express their art into a compelling aesthetic to a public audience.

Participating in giving feedback to your classmates' work will help you to read and revise your own work with more fluency and expertise, and there is always something to respond to, technically and formally, in your colleagues' writing: it's your job as a writer to find it. (It's not helpful just to tell a fellow writer that you love or like everything about their/her/his poem, as this is nice, but it isn't intuitive to the writing process, which demands much revision.)

### **Withdrawing from the Course**

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If you feel that circumstances arise so you cannot be successful in this course this semester, please withdraw from this course officially by the university's course drop deadline of October 29, 2021 so that you can receive a "W" for a grade.

But please do write/talk to me first? I will try my best to find alternative or makeup methods for you for coursework where possible.

### **Names and Pronouns**

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Many people might go by a name other than their legal name. In this class, we seek to refer to people by the names they choose. Pronouns may affirm someone's gender identity, but they could also be unrelated to a person's identity.

In this class, you are invited to share what pronouns you go by, and we seek to respect, and to refer to, people using the pronouns that they share (e.g. “he” or “she” or “they” or “ze” or any form you choose).

## The Department of Creative Writing's Statement in Solidarity Against Racial Violence

(June 15, 2020)

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*The Department of Creative Writing at the University of Texas at El Paso stands in solidarity with Black Lives Matter and issues the following statement:*

In April 1963, during the eleven days of solitary confinement for protesting for civil rights in Alabama, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, 34, began writing in the margins of a newspaper what would later be known as his "Letter from Birmingham Jail." He continued on paper towels, scraps of yellow paper, and, eventually, a writing pad his lawyers were allowed to leave with him.

"Perhaps it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say, 'Wait.' Dr. King Jr. wrote, "[b]ut when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate filled policemen curse, kick and even kill your black brothers and sisters; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six-year-old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television . . . and see ominous clouds of inferiority beginning to form in her little mental sky, and see her beginning to distort her personality by developing an unconscious bitterness toward white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five-year-old son who is asking: 'Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?'; . . .when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tiptoe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next, and are plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of 'nobodiness' — then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait."

Released just days ago, through the fisheye lens of a shaky body camera worn by the police officer who chased him, we see in Oklahoma on May 20, 2019, Mr. Derrick Scott, 42, imploring the limbs choking him, "I can't breathe, I can't breathe, please!" *Give me your hand*, a voice says, as multiple knees pin him to the grass, *don't resist, you're fine*, before he dies in their custody.

On May 25, 2020 in Minnesota, Mr. George Floyd, 46, is asking for his own breath on East 38th Street and Chicago Avenue. "Please, please, please, I can't breathe. Please, man," he asks. He is being murdered by a police officer whose knee is on Floyd's neck for five minutes while a bystander begs him and the other three officers there, "No, bro, look at him, he's not responsive right now." The word bro, brother, is an invocation of kinship, that one man on a street can be tied to another man on that street, but the murderer keeps pressing his knee against Mr. Floyd, who is restrained, unarmed and unconscious, for another three minutes and 46 seconds.

In Kentucky on March 13, 2020, Ms. Breonna Taylor, 26, is sleeping in her own apartment between shifts as an EMT when police batter her front-door with a no-knock warrant after midnight, searching for two people who were already in their custody. Ms. Taylor, in her bed, unarmed, is shot

eight times. They never find the drugs for which their warrant was signed, though they charge Ms. Taylor's boyfriend, Mr. Kenneth Walker, who, woken from his sleep, thinking the plainclothes officers were criminals, tried to defend himself from his bed with his licensed firearm. The officers charge him with first-degree assault and the attempted murder of a police officer. They fire over 20 shots. Ms. Taylor was studying to be a nurse while a pandemic surged across the globe, everywhere people's lungs filling with fluid, swelling for air. She was hoping to help them breathe.

On February 23, 2020, Mr. Ahmaud Arbery, 25, is jogging in a t-shirt and shorts, unarmed. He is exercising in his own neighborhood when the angle of the camera closes in on the long, grey curve of the road, then another truck and Mr. Arbery. The camera whizzes and shakes, but we can see a father and son raise their shotgun, handgun, and voices while Mr. Arbery struggles against his murderers, fighting not to be felled.

In our own Juárez-El Paso, on August 4, 2019, one summer ago, a man drives across the whole of Texas with a semi-automatic rifle. He leaves a manifesto saying he is shooting us by the rhetoric and command of the U.S. nation-state. Mr. Leonardo Campos Jr, 41; Mrs. Maribel Campos, 56; Mr. David Alvah Johnson, 63; Mr. Ivan Filiberto Manzano, newly 41; Mrs. Jordan Anchondo, 25; Mr. Andre Pablo Anchondo, 23; Mr. Arturo Benavidez, 59; Mr. Javier Amir Rodriguez, 15; Ms. Sara Esther Regalado Moriel, 66; Mr. Adolfo Cerros Hernández, 68; Ms. Gloria Irma Márquez, 61; Mrs. María Eugenia Legarreta Rothe, 60; Mrs. Elsa Mendoza de la Mora Márquez, 57; Mr. Juan de Dios Velázquez Chairez, 77; Mrs. Maria Flores, 77; Mr. Raul Flores, 83; Ms. Margie Reckard, 63; Mr. Alexander Gerhard Hoffman, 66; Ms. Teresa Sanchez, 82; Ms. Angelina Silva Englisbee, 86; Mr. Jorge Calvillo Garcia, 61; and Mr. Luis Alfonzo Juarez, 90 die shopping for a wheelchair, composition books, loose-leaf paper, highlighters, bread, beans, soap. On April 25, 2020, Mr. Guillermo Garcia, 36, who had been at Walmart to raise money for his daughter's soccer team, dies after fighting to breathe in the hospital for nine months. On May 25, 2020, Paul Gilbert Anchondo, whose parents Jordan and Andre had shielded him, turns one year old.

The Department of Creative Writing at the University of Texas at El Paso sees the loss of these lives—as well as those lives lost who are not yet known—as extrajudicial killings of systemic racial violence. These are deaths caused enforcing a border, shooting a gun, pressing a knee, executing a policy, uttering language, by someone who feels entitled to it, whether it be an official, officer, or a citizen. We condemn these murders; we name them among the tyrannies of the caging of our own from across the Americas who seek and have sought refuge here; of the disproportional deaths, for lack of healthcare or economic access, of communities of color across the Americas from COVID-19; of the documented femicides of hundreds of our daughters; of the ICE raids across our streets, our high schools, and our university campus; and of the theft of the unceded territory of our Indigenous Tigua and Mescalero peoples; among other acts, visible and hidden, wrought from the racism of our countries, rended and founded in genocide, slavery and imperialism.

We stand in solidarity with the African American Studies Program and our Black own in this profound Black Lives Matter movement, who dignify those who have fought and died, who are still fighting; and with the Chicano Studies Program and the Institute of Oral History, who surface the lived experiences of, and in so doing, call dignity to, our Indigenous and Latinx own. We are aware of the very many for whom the cause of equality has already been their lives' work, and we pledge to see it, attend to it, and to continue the cause ourselves in our own teaching, community service, and in the poems, stories, essays, memoirs and novels we will write.

We will scrutinize the ways that racial, ethnic and LGBTQIA+ discrimination persists in our department, from our students and our faculty to our programmatic goals, and each of our projects, and we commit and recommit to dismantling the inequities of Black, AfroLatinx, Indigenous and LGBTQIA+ representation in our department.

We will continue to teach our students a writing that is informed by a rich multitude of literatures driven by, and not just tokenly inclusive of, the stories and verses of traditionally underrepresented communities. We will examine where we lack that, and we will correct it. We refuse to perpetuate a white, heteronormative, monolingual or patriarchal literary canon. We are a bilingual department and a multilingual community; our students and faculty are from Juárez-El Paso and from across the globe. So we acknowledge the veracity of each of our students' cultural knowledge, and that ours is a collectively-constructed and living literature: one which knows and speaks of rivers, can reimagine dreams from what dreams have been deferred.

We renew our perspective that the term "America" is the *Americas* for our students, staff and faculty, that our identities and our missions cross borders and oceans. We commit to cry out, again and again in language, the power of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's words, 57 years ago, when he beckons us to be "cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states." We still grasp for, through our communal sorrow, his wisdom that "[i]njustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny."

We stand in solidarity for true civil rights, and we ask you too, to name now through the power of language our terrors and our loves swirling around us, what is our history flooding our present. We ask you to help us to uncover, with clarity: a promise—on newspapers, paper towels, all your scraps of paper—of our collective ache for a social change that can succor and sustain.

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En abril de 1963, durante los once días de confinamiento por protestar por los derechos civiles en Alabama, el reverendo Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, entonces de 34 años, comenzó a escribir al margen de un periódico lo que luego se conocería como su "Carta de la cárcel de Birmingham ". Continuó escribiendo en toallas de papel, hojas amarillas y, finalmente, en el bloc de notas que sus abogados pudieron dejarle.

"Tal vez sea fácil para aquellos que nunca han sentido los punzantes dardos de la segregación decir: "Esperen ". El Dr. King Jr. escribió:" [b] pero cuando has visto a turbas salvajes linchar a tus madres y padres por voluntad propia y ahogar a tus hermanas y hermanos a su antojo; cuando has visto a policías llenos de odio maldecir, patear e incluso matar a tus hermanos y hermanas negros; cuando ves a la gran mayoría de tus veinte millones de hermanos negros asfixiados en la hermética jaula de la pobreza en medio de una sociedad acomodada; cuando de repente tu lengua titubea y tartamudea al intentar explicarle a tu hija de seis años por qué no puede ir al parque de diversiones público que acaba de anunciarse en la televisión. . . y observas las ominosas nubes de inferioridad que comienzan a formarse en su pequeño cielo mental, y observas que comienza a distorsionarse su personalidad y a desarrollar una amargura inconsciente hacia los blancos; cuando tienes que inventar una respuesta para tu hijo de cinco años que pregunta: "Papi, ¿por qué las personas blancas tratan a las personas de color tan mal?"; . . .cuando te acosan de día y te atormentan de noche por el hecho de ser negro, cuando vives constantemente de puntillas, sin saber exactamente qué esperar a continuación, y

plagado de miedos internos y resentimientos externos; cuando siempre luchas contra una sensación de degeneración de 'no-cuerpo', entonces entenderás por qué nos resulta difícil esperar ".

Compartido hace poco, vemos a través del lente de la inestable cámara que llevaba en su cuerpo el oficial de policía que lo persigue, cómo en Oklahoma el 20 de mayo de 2019, el Sr. Derrick Scott, de 42 años, implora a las piernas que lo ahogan, "No puedo respirar, no puedo respirar, por favor!" *Dame tu mano*, dice una voz, mientras varias rodillas lo sujetan al pasto, *no te resistas, estás bien*, le dicen antes de que muera bajo su custodia.

El 25 de mayo de 2020 en Minnesota, George Floyd, de 46 años, está pidiendo su propio aliento en la calle 38th y la avenida Chicago. "Por favor, por favor, por favor, no puedo respirar. Por favor, hombre", ruega. Está siendo asesinado por un oficial de policía cuya rodilla se mantiene en el cuello de Floyd durante cinco minutos, mientras que un espectador le ruega a él y a los otros tres oficiales allí: "No, mano, míralo, ya no responde ". La palabra mano, hermano, es una invocación de parentesco, una palabra que nos dice que cualquier hombre puede estar ligado a otro hombre en esa calle, pero el asesino sigue presionando su rodilla contra el Sr. Floyd, quien está inmóvil, desarmado e inconsciente, por otros tres minutos y 46 segundos.

En Kentucky, el 13 de marzo de 2020, la Sra. Breonna Taylor, de 26 años, está durmiendo en su propio apartamento entre sus turnos de EMT cuando la policía golpea su puerta con una orden de no tocar después de la medianoche, en busca de dos personas que ya estaban en su custodia. La Sra. Taylor, en su cama, desarmada, recibe ocho disparos. Nunca encuentran las drogas por las cuales se firmó su orden judicial, aunque acusan al novio de la Sra. Taylor, el Sr. Kenneth Walker, quien, arrancado de su sueño, pensó que los oficiales vestidos de civiles eran criminales, trató de defenderse de su cama con su arma de fuego autorizada. Los oficiales lo acusan por asalto en primer grado y por el intento de asesinato a un oficial de policía. Disparan más de 20 veces. La Sra. Taylor estaba estudiando para ser enfermera mientras una pandemia se extendía por todo el mundo, mientras los pulmones de las personas se llenaban de líquido y se hinchaban por aire, ella anhelaba poderlos ayudar a respirar.

El 23 de febrero de 2020, el Sr. Ahmaud Arbery, de 25 años, corre vestido con una camiseta y pantalones cortos, desarmado. Está haciendo ejercicio en su propio vecindario cuando el ángulo de la cámara se acerca a la curva larga y gris de la carretera, luego se ve otro camión y al Sr. Arbery. La cámara zumba y tiembla, pero podemos ver a un padre y a su hijo levantar escopeta, pistola y sus voces mientras que el Sr. Arbery lucha contra sus asesinos, luchando por no ser derribado.

En nuestra propia frontera Juárez-El Paso, el 4 de agosto de 2019, hace apenas un verano, un hombre maneja por todo Texas con un rifle semiautomático. Él comparte un manifiesto en el que plantea que nos dispara por la retórica y el comando del estado-nación de EE. UU. Mueren así: Leonardo Campos Jr, de 41 años. Maribel Campos, de 56; David Alvah Johnson, de 63; Ivan Filiberto Manzano, quien recién cumplía 41; Jordan Anchondo, de 25 años; Andre Pablo Anchondo, de 23; Arturo Benavidez, de 59; Javier Amir Rodríguez, de 15 años; Sara Esther Regalado Moriel, de 66; Adolfo Cerros Hernández, de 68; Gloria Irma Márquez, de 61; María Eugenia Legarreta Rothe, de 60; dElsa Mendoza de la Mora Márquez, de 57; Juan de Dios Velázquez Chairez, de 77; María Flores, de 77; Raúl Flores, de 83; Margie Reckard, de 63; Alexander Gerhard Hoffman, de 66; Teresa Sánchez, de 82; Angelina Silva Englisbee, de 86; Jorge Calvillo García, de 61; y Luis Alfonso Juárez, de 90. Todos ellos murieron comprando una silla de ruedas, cuadernos, papel de hojas sueltas, marcadores, pan, frijoles, jabón. El 25 de abril de 2020, Guillermo García, de 36 años, quien había

estado en Walmart recaudando dinero para el equipo de fútbol de su hija, muere en el hospital después de pasar nueve meses tratando de volver a respirar. El 25 de mayo de 2020, Paul Gilbert Anchondo, cuyos padres Jordan y Andre murieron protegiéndolo, cumple un año.

El Departamento de Escritura Creativa de la Universidad de Texas en El Paso reconoce estas vidas como nuestras, como parte de esos reconocidos—dentro de los cuales hay quienes han muerto y aún lo ignoramos—asesinatos y asaltos extrajudiciales de violencia racial sistémica. Estas son muertes ejercidas por fronteras, armas, rodillas, hisopos, políticas, idiomas, por funcionarios, oficiales o ciudadanos. Nosotros condenamos estos asesinatos; los nombramos entre las tiranías de enjaular a los nuestros que vienen de todo el continente americano y que buscan y han buscado refugio aquí; condenamos el número desproporcionado de muertes que por falta de atención médica o de recursos económicos han enfrentado las comunidades de color en todo el continente americano por COVID-19; condenamos los feminicidios documentados de cientos de nuestras hijas; de las redadas de ICE en nuestras calles, en nuestras escuelas secundarias y en nuestro campus universitario; y condenamos el robo de Tigua y Mescalero territorio de nuestros pueblos Indígenas; entre otros actos que, visibles y ocultos, son el resultado del racismo de países concebidos y fundados desde el genocidio, la esclavitud y el imperialismo.

Nos solidarizamos con el Programa de Estudios Afroamericanos y con la profundidad del movimiento Black Lives Matter, que dignifica a quienes han luchado y muerto, y que todavía están luchando; también con el Programa de Estudios Chicanos y el Instituto de Historia Oral, que muestran las experiencias vividas y, al hacerlo, dignifican a nuestros Indígenas y latinos. Somos conscientes de todos aquellos que han hecho de la igualdad su causa y el trabajo de sus vidas, y nos comprometemos a verla, atenderla y alimentar esta causa nosotros mismos en nuestra práctica docente, servicio comunitario y en los poemas, cuentos, ensayos, memorias y novelas que escribiremos.

Examinaremos las formas en que la discriminación racial, étnica y LGBTQIA + persiste en nuestro departamento, desde nuestros estudiantes y nuestra facultad hasta nuestros objetivos programáticos y cada uno de nuestros proyectos, y nos comprometemos y volveremos a comprometer en desmantelar las desigualdades de representación de negros, Afrolatinos, Indígenas y de la comunidad LGBTQIA + en nuestro departamento.

Continuaremos enseñando a nuestros estudiantes a construir una escritura informada desde la rica diversidad de literatura impulsada por, y no solo simbólicamente inclusiva, las historias y versos de comunidades tradicionalmente subrepresentadas. Examinaremos qué es lo que nos ha faltado y lo corregiremos. Nos negamos a perpetuar un canon literario blanco, heteronormativo, monolingüe o patriarcal. Somos un departamento bilingüe y una comunidad multilingüe; Nuestros estudiantes y profesores son de Juárez-El Paso y de todo el mundo. Por lo tanto, reconocemos la veracidad del conocimiento cultural de cada uno de nuestros estudiantes y que la nuestra es una literatura viva y construida colectivamente: una literatura que sabe y habla de ríos, que puede reimaginar esos sueños desde los sueños que se han aplazado.

Renovamos nuestra perspectiva de que el término "América" es Las Américas en honor a nuestros estudiantes, personal y facultad, porque nuestras identidades y nuestras misiones cruzan fronteras y océanos. Nos comprometemos a gritar y a demandar, a través del lenguaje, el poder de las palabras del reverendo Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, hace 57 años, cuando nos llamaba a ser "conscientes de la interrelación de todas las comunidades y estados". Aún entendemos, a través de nuestra tristeza

colectiva, su sabiduría de que "[la] injusticia en cualquier lugar es una amenaza para la justicia en todas partes. Estamos atrapados en una inevitable red de mutualidad, atados en una sola prenda de destino".

Nos solidarizamos con los verdaderos derechos civiles y te pedimos también que señales a través del poder del lenguaje esos terrores y pasiones que nos rodean, lo que llamamos nuestra historia y que inunda nuestro presente. Te pedimos que nos ayudes a descubrir, con claridad: una promesa, en periódicos, toallas de papel, en todo trozo de papel, nuestro llamado colectivo por un cambio social que nos socorra y sostenga.

**I will distribute the course schedule in-class, and through Blackboard,  
by Monday, August 30, 2021.**