COURSE SYLLABUS FOR ENGLISH 221.01: THE WRITING OF POETRY, AN INTRODUCTION

Instructor: Shawn Delgado  
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Office: CURRY 335 F  
Office Hours: 10AM–Noon W or by Appt.  
Class Time: 2:00-3:15 MW  
Classroom: MHRA 1209

Overview
Course Description:
Welcome to the introductory poetry workshop. Over the course of the semester, we will study a broad range of (mostly contemporary) poems, write many of our own, and share our thoughts about poetry in an open, diverse forum. While readings and discussions of published poetry will hopefully give us a broader sense of the possibilities within the genre of poetry—at the highest level, there are no rules but those you make and break—the focus is on your work. Beginning with the third week, we will spend more than half of any given class meeting reading and discussing the poems which you and your peers will compose this semester. Many of these poems will come from prompts, while some (especially later on) will be entirely to your own invention. This course requires a patient, careful eye and a willingness to speak in public. If you are not comfortable with providing constructive feedback for your peers’ poetry or are uncomfortable speaking in front of your peers, this class will not be a good fit. This is also a course that requires you to have some previous familiarity with the genre of poetry. If you haven’t taken an introductory literature course here (ideally ENG 106: Introduction to Poetry), this course might be somewhat bewildering. This is also a course which will encounter potentially unsettling (certainly strange and occasionally off-putting) subject matter. If you are not comfortable with approaching sensitive, often personal, and sometimes controversial topics with the open mind of a generous reader, this is not the class for you. Ideally, this class is for people who are curious about the genre of poetry, but especially for those who are interested in honing their own craft. If you’re just here to show us all how talented you are, don’t bother. This is not the place for egos, but rather a place to fall in love with some poems and grow as a writer.

Student Learning Goals

Throughout this course, you should expect to:
1. develop artistic abilities & a refined body of work by focusing intensively, under faculty guidance, on the reading and writing of poetry;
2. learn sophisticated models for revision, & sharpen reading, editorial, & analytical skills, as well as the ability to articulate matters of craft;
3. be familiar with formal possibilities for writing, including the historical development of prosody through a close study of the structure of poetry;
4. develop a broader knowledge base of contemporary works & of the literary canon; and
5. enhance your professional development with the support of a community of faculty, fellow students, & distinguished visiting writers.

Required Texts:
There is no way to complete the course or be present and participating without these materials, and we will be using them immediately and throughout the entire semester. You are expected to bring the appropriate texts to class in some physical print form. This rule will not only apply to textbooks, but also the poems of your peers who are up for workshop.

Lenses: Perspectives on Literature is available for purchase at the University Bookstore. Please acquire this book in advance of class.

Other documents—such as assignment sheets and the course anthology of poems—will be posted on Blackboard. Print them at a reasonable size and bring them to class. This is particularly important for
poems, so that you are able to have your notes from reading as well as make new ones alongside any line. If you rent your textbooks, something as simple as sticky notes will allow you to interact with these texts, highlighting and commenting on important or complicated material. Alternate editions of these texts will not be appropriate or acceptable. While Lenses is technically a second edition, it is a complete re-write of the original without recycled content, so the older edition will be acceptable.


UNCG Grading System
A: Excellent—Achievement of distinction & excellent; B: Good—General achievement superior to the acceptable standard; C: Average—Acceptable standard for graduation; D: Lowest Passing Grade—Work which falls below the acceptable standard; F: Failure—Failure that may not be made up except by repeating the course.

Course Grade Breakdown:
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>In-Class Participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annotations</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poem Recitation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>8-Poem Dash</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case Studies in the Performance of Poetry</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poetry Portfolio</td>
<td>25%</td>
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I employ a grading scale that ranges from A—F including plus and minus grades. I will not discuss grades until at least 24 hours after the grade has been announced, either through handing back the assignment or posting the grade to blackboard. If you receive a failing grade for 30% or more of your assignments, you will not be able to pass this course.

Participation:
I cannot stress enough the importance of your participation in class. Your questions, comments, and active listening are what make a workshop, because one of the most important benefits of a workshop is that you get honest feedback from many independent readers. While I will expect you to have written notes to hand back to the author whose work is being discussed, much more can be accomplished if we also have a diverse forum with many viewpoints. Will some of us contradict each other or disagree? Absolutely. There is no single answer to the questions we will be asking, and as long as comments are made in a respectful and open-minded fashion, you can expect to leave with a multitude of revision opportunities for your work. As an author, be aware that the final product is yours, and anything we say should simply serve as a suggestion or possibility, rather than a mandate or judgment.

While we will not have enough time to discuss every poem on the syllabus, we will spend portion of most classes to discuss how these poems can serve as examples we may follow. While I may frame a discussion or lead us into it, I do not intend these discussions to be 1-sided lectures. If you feel you’re not willing or able to speak regularly in front of others, this class is not for you. It should be noted, as well, that I may ask a random student so summarize one of the poems to start a discussion, so please come well-prepared to discuss all work.

Annotations:
These assignments will require you to take detailed notes directly alongside one of the poems listed for that class’s reading. Not only will this prepare you for discussions, but this will help you to analyze the many ways in which a poem can make meaning. It can be rather remarkable what you will find when you slow down and spend more than twenty minutes looking closely at a poem, and you can do the same with
your own work when you revise. You will turn these in with handwritten notes alongside the poems themselves unless otherwise requested and discussed.

**Poem Recitation** (Minimum 14 Lines):
As poetry originally emerged from an oral tradition of literature, I’m requiring everyone (including myself) to memorize a poem to recite that poem in class. In the first few weeks I’ll bring in a sign-up sheet to determine which week you’ll recite your poem at the beginning of class. If you’d like to recite a poem not in our anthology, please ask me in advance, so that I can approve the poem (mainly for length). When you recite your poem, you must bring a hard copy so that I may follow along and make notes.

**8-Poem Dash:**
While I will only have collected 5 poems from you for critical feedback by the middle of the semester, I would like you to have attempted 8 different prompts (the second half of the semester will be less prompt-driven). I will be collecting these to make sure that you’re prepared for the second half of the semester which will have fewer poems due, so that you have time to revise for the final portfolio. I realize that this is asking you to write a lot of work in a relatively short time period. Hopefully, this will get you to leave your comfort zone and just write. Later on, you can decide which drafts have the most potential and are the most worth pursuing.

**Case Studies in the Performance of Poetry:**
Over the course of the semester, I’d like you to find five poets whose reading styles you find engaging. They do not have to be from our anthology. For each of these poets, I’d like you to write a brief analysis (1-2 pages) of their reading style that also relates back to your own work. These pieces should be somewhat self-reflective, as you are essentially explaining to me how you would like to revise your own reading style. Ideally, you are also learning different things from different readers, as these studies should avoid feeling redundant. All studies should also provide a link to the reading, so that I may follow along with any reference you are making. More details will be included on the assignment sheet in the upcoming weeks.

**Poetry Portfolio:**
Your final portfolio will include all original drafts of poems (the version you first turned in), draft comments from all class members, and a revision of a to-be-set number of poems (probably 4; TBA on the official assignment sheet) accompanied by revision letters.

**Basic Workshop Practices (How to Turn in Common Assignments)**
**Individual Poems Due:**
All poems submitted should be emailed to me as either .doc or .docx files before the due date so that I may have time to review them all and return them with feedback. They should also follow these guidelines:

— the poem should be written with a standard 12 point Times or Times New Roman font
— the poem should be left-justified (not centered)
— the poem should be single-spaced, unless each line is its own stanza
— the poem should be free from spelling & grammatical errors
— the poem should have your name clearly legible in the top right-hand corner

**Submitting for Workshop:**
Twice a semester (once at the beginning of the semester and again after the drop date) we will randomly select the order of the workshop. Once this is determined, you must provide me a poem (through email) by midnight on the Thursday the week BEFORE you will be reviewed. This gives both myself and your peers the long weekend to carefully read your work and provide comments and suggestions. I will post the upcoming week’s workshop packet onto Blackboard at noon each Friday. These poems should follow
the guidelines previously outlined or they will not be included in the workshop packet.

**Being Prepared for Workshop:**
To be properly prepared for workshop, you should have printed copies of all your peers’ poems for that day, and they should already have your notes and suggestions written on the poems. This is similar to the annotations assignment. At the end of class, you will be turning these into the poets, so that they might use them for revision. It’s crucially important that these notes are made before class, since none of us will get a chance to say everything we want, and you might not get to speak on every poem.

**Policies**

**Late Work:**
I do accept late work, however, I will assess a penalty of a letter grade for each calendar day the work is late, not for each day of class it is late. All assignments are due at the beginning of class (unless otherwise stated), so tardiness on these days will result in the work being marked as late. Incomplete work or work not directly addressing the assignment in question will not be accepted. If you have any questions about the guidelines for how to turn an assignment in to me, it is your responsibility to ask me in advance of the due date.

**Attendance Policy:**
You are allowed a maximum of 2 absences without a grade penalty. The third and fourth absences will each result in a half-grade deduction to your final grade (maxing out at a full letter grade). On the fifth absence, you will fail the course. If you do not bring the proper readings to class it will result in an absence, and I may ask you to leave. In the case of behavior I consider disruptive to the class, I reserve the right to ask you to leave. If, under any circumstances, you are asked to leave the classroom, you will be marked as absent for that day.

For every two times you arrive late to class or leave early, you will receive an absence. It is your responsibility to see me at the end of class to make sure I update the roll to reflect your attendance. I consider a student tardy as soon as I begin my lecture or any classroom activity. I will not recap any information to cater to a late student, though you’re certainly welcome to meet with me during my office hours. In this course there is no such thing as an “excused” absence, except under extreme circumstances or for religious reasons (state policy detailed in the following paragraph.

You are, by state law, allowed two excused absences due to religious holidays, which do not count toward your total allowed two absences. If you plan to miss class because of your faith, you must notify me in advance of your absence.

If you encounter any serious personal issues (health, family, or financial) that interfere with your attendance or completion of work in this course, I suggest that you contact the Dean of Students Office in the Elliott Student Center to help serve as an advocate and adviser. They are also available by phone at 334-5514 or through email at deanofstudents@uncg.edu. Among the many services they provide, the Dean of Students Office can help represent you in the case of emergencies. As a general rule, though, the terms “excused absences” and “unexcused absences” aren’t applicable in this course.
**Academic Integrity Policy:**
As stated in the student handbook: “Academic integrity is founded upon and encompasses the following five values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Violations include, for example, cheating, plagiarism, misuse of academic resources, falsification, and facilitating academic dishonesty. If knowledge is to be gained and properly evaluated, it must be pursued under conditions free from dishonesty. Deceit and misrepresentations are incompatible with the fundamental activity of this academic institution and shall not be tolerated” (from UNCG’s Academic Integrity Policy). To ensure that you understand the university’s policy on academic integrity, review the guidelines and list of violations at <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu>. I expect you to abide by the Academic Integrity Policy.

Any violations of this policy will result in an automatic failing grade for the assignment and based on the severity of the violation you may fail the course as well. If I encounter multiple infractions of this code, you will fail the course and your infractions will be reviewed at a university level.

**Electronic Device Policy:**
There is a zero tolerance policy for cellular phones in this class. If you use a cell phone in class, you may be asked to leave. If you are asked to leave, you will be marked as absent for that day. The same policy applies to headphones. Laptops and tablet devices may be used in class only to take notes pertaining to our class, and since this is a lecture-light course, a pen and paper should be sufficient. There is no internet usage allowed. Any class readings should be printed out and brought to class, so there should be no need to access Blackboard, check email, etc. If you use a laptop for other purposes, you will not be allowed to use a laptop in class again. To be perfectly clear: one violation means no laptop use.

**E-mail Response Policy:**
I will respond to all emails within a 48-hour period. If I have not responded past that time, please resend the message. Also, I ask that you contact me as soon as possible to address any questions or problems. As I will say often, procrastination is one of your greatest hazards in this course.

**The Office of Accessibility Resources and Services:**
Students with documentation of special needs should arrange to see me about accommodations as soon as possible. If you believe you could benefit from such accommodations, you must first register with the Office of Accessibility Services on campus before such accommodations can be made. The office is located on the second floor of the Elliott University Center (EUC) in Suite 215, and the office is open 8am to 5pm, Monday - Friday. Telephone: 334-5440; e-mail: oars@uncg.edu.

**The Writing Center:**
The purpose of the Writing Center is to enhance the confidence and competence of student writers by providing free, individual assistance at any stage of any writing project. Staff consultants are experienced writers and alert readers, prepared to offer feedback and suggestions on drafts of papers, help students find answers to their questions about writing, and provide one-on-one instruction as needed. Located in the Moore Humanities and Research Building, room 3211. I would, though, try my best to work with someone who has a strong background in poetry, ideally a poet in the MFA program (one of the oldest and strongest in the country). They should be extremely familiar with the workshop environment and contemporary program.
The Learning Assistance Center:
The Learning Assistance Center offers free services to the entire UNCG undergraduate community and is located in McIver Hall, rooms 101-104, and 150. For help with study skills, contact Erin Farrior, Academic Skills specialist. Telephone: 334-3878; email: lac@uncg.edu

Course Schedule
All listed readings should be completed before that day’s class and are listed in italics like this. Major assignments will be capitalized, italicized, and bolded LIKE THIS. Any non-typical class dates (school holidays, conferences, meetings outside the typical classroom, etc.) will be listed in bold and capitalized LIKE THIS. I reserve the right to make minor changes to the class schedule throughout the semester. You will be notified of these changes through Blackboard.

Week 1  Welcome and Introduction to our Poetry Workshop
Monday, August 18th—Read over and discuss course syllabus
Wednesday, August 20th—Discuss and practice annotations, cold read poems,
   Lenses: “To Read is to Write...” p 1-9

Week 2  Masterful Metaphor: Like Flying a Kite
Monday, August 25th—Hand out prompts for the first half of the semester (8 poem dash due 10/9)
   Lenses: “Poetry” p.11-30; “My Last Duchess” by Robert Browning p. 243-244; “We Wear the Mask” by Paul Lawrence Dunbar p. 247
   Blackboard: “The Pier Aspiring” by Thomas Lux
Wednesday, August 25th—Lenses: “Metaphor, Simile, and Imagery” p.129-137
   Blackboard: “Wound” by Larry Levis; “Morning Song” by Sylvia Plath; “The Universe Is a House Party” by Tracy K. Smith; “Negative” by Kevin Young
Thursday, August 26th at Midnight—Poem #1 Due

Week 3  Litany and Association
Monday, September 1st—NO CLASS: LABOR DAY HOLIDAY
Wednesday, September 3rd—Workshop #1
   Blackboard: “Forms of Love” by Kim Addonizio; “Where I’m From” by Georgia Ella Lyon; “Origins” by Jeffrey McDaniel; “Resumé” by Dorothy Parker; “True/False” by Dean Young
   Annotation 1 Due
Thursday, September 4th at Midnight—Poem #2 Due

Week 4  Ulteriority: Why Are We in the Poem?
Monday, September 8th—Workshop #2
   Lenses: “Theme” p.101-107
   Blackboard: “What Do Women Want?” by Kim Addonizio; “One Art” by Elizabeth Bishop; “Killing” by Bob Hicok; “Praying Drunk” by Andrew Hudgins; “Lighter” by Dorianne Laux
   Annotation 2 Due
Wednesday, September 10th—Workshop #3
Thursday, September 11th at Midnight—Poem #3 Due
Week 5  Character and Memory: Finding the Portrait
Monday, September 15th—Workshop #4
  **Lenses:** “Character” p. 93-98
  **Blackboard:** “Fifth Grade Autobiography” by Rita Dove; “Old Men Playing Basketball” by B.H. Fairchild; “My Father’s Love Letters” by Yusef Komunyakaa; “The Portrait” by Stanley Kunitz
  **Annotation 3 Due**
Wednesday, September 17th—Workshop #5
**Thursday, September 18th at Midnight—Poem #4 Due**

Week 6  Perspective
Monday, September 22nd—Workshop #6
  **Lenses:** “Point of View” p. 109-115
  **Blackboard:** “Those Winter Sundays” by Robert Hayden; “Lawrence” by Tony Hoagland; “The Lost Children” by Randall Jarrell; “What He Thought” by Heather McHugh
  **Annotation 4 Due**
Wednesday, September 24th—Workshop #7
**Thursday, September 25th at Midnight—Poem #5 Due**

Week 7  Setting and Pastorals
Monday, September 29th—Workshop #8
  **Blackboard:** “Ode to Barbecue” by Barbara Hamby; “Root Cellar” by Theodore Roethke; “Himalaya” by Ellen Bryant Voigt
  **Annotation 5 Due**
Wednesday, October 1st—Workshop #9

Week 8  Narrative Poetry
Monday, October 6th—Workshop #10
  **Lenses:** “Plot” p. 89-92
  **Blackboard:** “To Sleep” by Ellen C. Bush; “Because I could not stop for Death” by Emily Dickinson; “Talk” by Terrance Hayes; “The Boy” by Marie Howe; “Diving into the Wreck” by Adrienne Rich
  **Annotation 6 Due**
Wednesday, October 8th—Workshop #11
**Thursday, October 9th at Midnight—8 POEM DASH DUE (Select 1 poem for next week’s small group workshop)**
**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10th—LAST DAY TO DROP WITHOUT GRADE PENALTY**

Week 9  Short Week: Small Group Workshop (Everyone gets workshoped)
Monday, October 13th—NO CLASS: FALL BREAK
Wednesday, October 15th—Workshop #12
**Week 10**  
**Persona and the Challenge of Voice**  
Monday, October 20th—Workshop #13  
  - *Lenses*: “Style, Voice, and Tone” p. 117-121  
  - *Blackboard*: “We Real Cool” by Gwendolyn Brooks; “the yetí poet returns to his village to tell his story” by Lucille Clifton; “Maybe Dats Your Pwoblem Too” by James Hall; “Tone of Voice” by Charles Harper Webb  
  - **Annotation 7 Due**  
Wednesday, October 22nd—Workshop #14  
**Thursday, October 23rd—Poem #7 Due**

**Week 11**  
**The Larger Image**  
Monday, October 27th—Workshop #15  
  - *Lenses*: “Symbolism” p. 139-151  
  - *Blackboard*: “Currency” by Victoria Chang; “The Dickens” by Travis Denton; “Hawk’s Shadow” by Louise Glück; “Captive Flower” by Denise Levertov; “Broken Toe” by Charles Harper Webb  
  - **Annotation 8 Due**  
Wednesday, October 29th—Workshop #16  
  - **Case Studies in the Performance of Poetry Due**

**Week 12**  
**Myth Building**  
Monday, November 3rd—Workshop #17  
  - **Annotation 9 Due**  
Wednesday, November 5th—Workshop #18  
**Thursday, November 6th—8th Poem Due**

**Week 13**  
**Humor and Surprise**  
Monday, November 10th—Workshop #19  
  - **Annotation 10 Due**  
    - *Lenses*: “On Irony” p. 159-166  
    - *Blackboard*: “Yes” by Denise Duhamel; “America” by Tony Hoagland; “How You See Depends on Where You Go” by Jynne Dilling Martin; “Teaching the Ape to Write Poems” by James Tate; “Café Loop” by Jillian Weise  
  Wednesday, November 12th—Workshop #20

**Week 14**  
**The Lyrical Fringe**  
Monday, November 17th—Workshop #21  
  - **Annotation 11 Due**  
by Steve Scafidi

Wednesday, November 19th—Workshop #22
Thursday, November 20th—9th Poem Due

Week 15     Finishing Up
Monday, November 24th—Workshop #23
Wednesday, November 26th—NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 16
Monday, December 1st—Workshop #24

FINAL PORTFOLIO DUE AT FINAL EXAM TIME: Monday, December 8th at 3:30PM.