

Introduction to Poetry Writing

Mission Statement:

In his lecture “In Defense of Poetry,” poet Maurice Manning relayed an anecdote detailing his mother’s distaste for poetry. “My high school English teacher told me I was stupid in front of the whole class because I didn’t know that poem about the lilacs in the barnyard was about Abraham Lincoln,” she said. “She humiliated me and left me in tears. And I decided then that I never wanted to read anything I didn’t understand. That’s why I have always hated poetry.”

Too often, the teaching of poetry focuses on symbol, at the expense of what makes poetry vibrant and important. Were we to explore our world only in symbolic terms, we would write allegories instead of poetry. Poetry is meant to be read, enjoyed, spoken aloud; our first approach to a poem should not be to figure out its socio-cultural relevance. We should look first at whether a poem affects us deeply. If so, we will want to approach the poem with the writer’s critical eye to learn what makes it powerful and effective. If not, we will want to understand where the poem came up unsuccessful.

This course will not belittle you with symbolic interpretation, but encourage you to look hard at a poem as a thing built, like an automobile, of pieces and parts, each serving some vital function, each assembled with sweat and no small effort on the part of the poet. What you write is not the most important thing about this course; what matters is how you write it, and how you approach the writing process. Daily reading and writing should become a part of your practice during this course, and my hope is that you will continue these habits for years to come.

The core assumptions of this course are as follows:

1. You cannot become an excellent writer until you become an excellent reader.
2. Every writer takes a different path to excellence. Every writer should be encouraged to take their own path, and should have freedom to change that path as his/her interests and reading tastes change.

“If you sit around thinking inspiration will come the 13th of every February or so, you’ll never get any writing done. You are a literary workman, and ought to work every day.”

–Thomas Wolfe

Office Hours and Communication:

My office hour is Tuesday, 5:00-6:00 PM in Greenlaw 517. I will make arrangements to meet with students at other times, but be aware that most student conferences will be held after 5:45 PM on M-W, as I work full-time in Durham. Please use e-mail (white@unc.edu) if you need to contact me. I will generally answer within 36 hours. In cases of emergency, and I mean REAL emergencies, leave me a voicemail at 919-883-5585.

Though I am a Facebook user, please do not use Facebook to communicate with me. My e-mail accounts are specifically created for that purpose. (When the semester is over, I’ll accept Facebook friend requests.) Likewise, my Twitter account is available for those who want to look but it is not a useful way to contact me individually.

PLEASE NOTE: You’ll need to check your e-mail account regularly, as I often write the class with specific updated assignments before we meet.

“Inspiration is writing every day.” --Baudelaire

The UNC-Chapel Hill Honor Code is in effect for all course activities, including creative work. Please familiarize yourself with the code: <http://honor.unc.edu/>

Books & Materials

The course textbook is *An Introduction to Poetry* (13th ed.), eds. Dana Gioia and X.J. Kennedy, ISBN-13: 978-0205686124, Publisher: Longman, Copyright year: 2009. You should bring your textbook to class each day.

Additionally, you will be assigned up to five other books. I will make sure all assigned books are available in the UNC library, though I reserve the right to ask you to order one book at some point during the semester, at a cost of no more than \$18.00.

Each student will be required to have a Dropbox account. A signup sheet will be provided, and you will receive an invitation from the instructor if you do not already have an account.

We will use Sakai during the semester for discussions and an assignment called “Bookshop.”

Grading Policies

Here’s one thing that bothers me about traditional assessment systems: they start with the assumption that everyone has a 100 and they lose points from there. And they tend to be pretty rigid—do what the instructor wants, when he wants it, and you’ll manage to not lose any of those points.

This course is designed to let you work your way to a goal, but gives you a variety of ways to get to that goal. You can basically write your own curriculum, using a set of achievements as a guide. The achievements reflect a variety of possible course goals for an introductory course.

It is important as you read this syllabus to realize that you will not be expected to do every item on this list. That would represent a herculean effort, well beyond that of a three-credit-hour class. So don’t get overwhelmed by the options... instead, use them to think about what you want to get out of an intro-level course in poetry writing, and plan accordingly. Student X and Student Y might both get an A in the class but might have only done one or two of the same assignments.

That said, you will see that the point values for the achievements reflect some of my beliefs. The course is structured so that you could, theoretically, get an A without ever attempting the bookshop assignment, but it’s not likely that you will.

Points

There are 98 possible achievements for a maximum score of 3,645 achievement points. The instructor reserves the right to add achievements throughout the semester. You may attempt as many or as few as you want.

2,875 or more = A	2,125 or more = C
2,750 or more = A-	2,000 or more = C-
2,625 or more = B+	1,750 or more = D+
2,500 or more = B	1,500 or more = D
2,375 or more = B-	1,250 or more = D-
2,250 or more = C+	below 1,245 = F

Discussion Leader | 10 achievement points – Served as discussion leader while a classmate’s poem was being workshopped.

Peer Award | 25 achievement points - Won a Peer Award by being voted “most helpful commenter” at the end of a class session.

Close Second | 10 achievement points – Finished second in Peer Award voting for “most helpful commenter” at the end of a class session.

Prognosticator | 5 achievement points – Voted for the winner of a Peer Award.

Prognosticator | 25 achievement points – Voted for the winner of a Peer Award five times.

Three Peer Awards | 25 achievement points – Won three Peer Awards.

Five Peer Awards | 50 achievement points – Won five Peer Awards.

Midterm | 150 achievement points – Took the midterm and scored an 85 or better.

Perfect Attendance | 100 achievement points – Attended every class, and was never late.

Showed Up | 50 achievement points – Finished the class with no more than two absences. Two late arrivals will count as one absence.

Office Hours | 10 achievement points – Visited the instructor's office hours at least once in the first four weeks of class.

Students will also have chances to earn achievements that judge the quality of their work. At several points throughout the class, I will announce opportunities to submit work to published poets and professional editors for consideration.

Five-Star Poem | 100 achievement points – An outside judge selected your poem as a five-star poem. You may submit up to two poems for consideration to each judge when judging deadlines are announced. Judges are given the following criteria: “Forget that the poems you’re about to read may have been written by beginners. Judge each of the poems you are given on a scale of one to five stars. One star should be given to poems that are *average* or below. Two stars should indicate that a poem is a bit above average. Three stars should indicate that the poem is good, a poem you’d be pleased to see in a book or literary magazine. Four stars means that you’d send the poem to a friend, and five stars means you’d write the editors and thank them for having published that poem. In any given batch of poems, you may encounter no poems that rate above two stars.” Poems submitted must be revisions of poems handed in at scheduled poem checkpoints. Judges will be publishing poets, including authors of some bookshop assignments.

Three-Star Poem | 50 achievement points – An outside judge selected your poem as a five-star poem. You may submit up to two poems for consideration to each judge when judging deadlines are announced. Judges are given the following criteria: “Forget that the poems you’re about to read may have been written by beginners. Judge each of the poems you are given on a scale of one to five stars. One star should be given to poems that are *average* or below. Two stars should indicate that a poem is a bit above average. Three stars should indicate that the poem is good, a poem you’d be pleased to see in a book or literary magazine. Four stars means that you’d send the poem to a friend, and five stars means you’d write the editors and thank them for having published that poem. In any given batch of poems, you may encounter no poems that rate above two stars.” Poems submitted must be revisions of poems handed in at scheduled poem checkpoints, including authors of some bookshop assignments.

Submit! | 5 achievement points – Bring in an acceptance letter or rejection letter from *Cellar Door* or *Should Does*.

Juried Video | 25 achievement points – Create a video version of a poem assigned by the instructor, achieving a juried score of “excellent” or

“outstanding” in every category. (Judges will be given this rubric: <http://poetryoutloud.org/uploads/fl/af34c39739/scoring%20rubric.pdf>)

The Bookshop: Reading Journals

A maturing poet can write all he or she wishes, but will never improve without a commitment to reading as much poetry as possible. We'll perform close readings of poems on a regular basis, so that we can exercise our critical faculties and explore the poems on several levels.

In addition to readings from *An Introduction to Poetry, Thirteenth Edition*, you will be assigned a book of poems every other week for the duration of this course. Because you are each individual poets with different styles, preferences, and lessons to learn, the readings will not be uniform.

Five times during the course, you will be asked to submit a bookshop proposal. Each proposal will consist of five individual volumes of poetry that you would be interested in reading. At the next class, I will assign you one of those five volumes, or perhaps another book that isn't on your list but is well-suited to the kind of work you would like to be doing. In the proposal, include some reasons for your choices.

You'll then work with that volume for the next two weeks. As you read, I expect you to write one bookshop post per week in your personal forum in our Sakai course. Each post will focus on a single poem, though students should make mention of how that poem relates to others in the volume. (Is this poem similar to most of the others? Does it make a surprising deviation from the rest? Does it signal a shift in the book's subject matter, tone, or narrative arc?)

In some instances, I may ask you to perform a close reading of a specific poem as a part of your journal. When this occurs, you will need to examine one element of craft that we have discussed in the class and how the poet uses it to achieve or reinforce the intention of the poem. Close readings will generally be equivalent to 3-4 pages, double-spaced, in a word processor.

In general, however, you'll have freedom to write about whatever you please, so long as it is related to the volume at hand. Posts must communicate that you have read and thought about the book you were assigned. Some of the best entries from previous classes covered topics such as:

- How the tone shifts as the relationship dissolves in Kara Candito's "He Was Only Half as Beautiful."
- The role of stage directions in A. Van Jordan's *M-A-C-N-O-L-I-A*.
- The effects of repeating "bye-bye" in Thomas Lux's "Baby, Still Crying, Swallowed by a Snake."
- An incomplete metaphor in Natasha Trethewey's "After Your Death."

Due dates for these posts are listed below. Bookshop posts will be approved for credit if all of the following criteria are met:

- The post focuses on a single poem in the collection, but makes mention of how that poem relates to others in the volume.
- The post demonstrates that significant attention has been paid to the whole poem, rather than a section.
- The post traces the poet's use of a single element of craft throughout the poem, citing specific lines.
- The post gives specific and detailed explanation of how the craft element is employed and what effect that has on the reader of the poem.
- The post focuses on how the poet achieves certain effects rather than explicating the meaning of the poem.
- The post is clear and well-written.
- The post is the student's original work, and does not refer to critical work about the poem being discussed. The goal of the bookshop is for you to have an individual relationship with these poems, not to build your understanding of poetry by reading other peoples' criticism or analysis. (We'll do that in other areas of the course.)
- The student shows a clear and sophisticated understanding of the craft element selected, or undertakes sufficiently ambitious analysis of a difficult topic.
- The student includes a rationale for selecting the poem and element of craft studied, preferably noting a specific way in which the post relates to his/her own creative work.
- All cited lines are included in the appropriate citation format.

You will also have the chance to read your classmates' reading journals during the week and make comment on at least two individual entries. You may find yourself commenting on similar revelations in your own readings, observations on craft elements, or your experiences with the poet or text that your classmate is discussing. You may make as many comments as you like, but a good rule of thumb is to aim to have two comments accepted for credit each week. To encourage you to read and write, you can have only one comment accepted for credit each day, so if you want to get the commenting achievements, you will need to comment at least two days each week. This encourages you to read broadly and think about poems often during the week.

Comments accepted for credit will:

- Demonstrate understanding of both the poem and the bookshop entry that analyzes it.
- Add *significant* new information to the analysis, either by highlighting points that the original post's author or other commenters did not mention, or by tracing an element of craft that the initial author did not focus on.
- Include citations in the correct format.
- Be respectful at all times of the initial post's author and of other commenters.

Starred posts or starred comments will meet each of the above criteria, but will also significantly increase your instructor's understanding of a poem or element of craft. Usually, I have my mind blown eight to ten times a semester by posts that bring me a whole new understanding. I live for those.

My hope is that as you read your classmates' journals, two things will happen:

1. You will become interested in poets and poems to which you've not yet been exposed, perhaps informing your choices on later bookshop proposals.
2. You will use your classmates' observations on form, style, and craft to identify elements in your own work that can be sharpened.

I will make comments on some bookshop posts as well, but the primary reason for doing this assignment is to learn from your classmates and the poems that struck them as important.

Bookshop Achievements

One Request | 5 achievement points – Made one request for a bookshop title before titles were assigned.

Five Requests | 10 achievement points – Made all five title requests before titles were assigned.

One Post Accepted | 75 achievement points - Had one bookshop post accepted for credit.

Five Posts Accepted | 300 achievement points - Had five bookshop posts accepted for credit.

Bi-Weekly | 100 achievement points - Had at least one bookshop post accepted for credit on each of your five assigned titles.

Seven Posts Accepted | 500 achievement points - Had seven bookshop posts accepted for credit.

Nine Posts Accepted | 750 achievement points - Had nine bookshop posts accepted for credit.

Star Post | 100 achievement points – Wrote at least one starred post.

Three Starred Posts | 200 achievement points – Wrote three starred posts.

Commenter | 25 achievement points - Had two or more comments accepted on different days in the same week.

Halfway There! | 125 achievement points - Had two or more comments accepted on different days in five of the ten weeks of the bookshop.

Consistent Commenter | 125 achievement points- Had a comment accepted in each of the ten weeks of the bookshop.

Constant Commenter | 125 achievement points - Had two or more comments accepted on different days in each of the ten weeks of the bookshop.

Star Commentary | 25 achievement points - Made a starred comment at least once.

Superstar Commentary | 75 achievement points – Made at least five starred comments.

Conceit Captain | 10 achievement points – Find an example of a published poem in a bookshop assignment that uses a central conceit. Hand in a copy of the poem (including the author's name and the source of the poem), with a three-sentence description of the conceit of the poem. If I can Google the title of the poem and the term "conceit" to find your example, you haven't earned this achievement.

Elegaic Eye | 10 achievement points – Find an example of a published poem in a bookshop assignment that serves as an elegy. Write a bookshop entry on elegy, or hand in a copy of the poem (including the author's name and the source of the poem), with a three-sentence description of how you determined this is an elegy. If I can Google the title of the poem and the term "elegy" to find your example, you haven't earned this achievement.

Personification in Action | 10 achievement points – Find an example of a published poem in a bookshop assignment where the poet uses personification. Write a bookshop entry on personification, or hand in a copy of the poem (including the author's name and the source of the poem), with a three-sentence description of how you determined this was an example of personification. If I can Google the title of the poem and the term "personification" to find your example, you haven't earned this achievement.

Refrain from Smoking | 10 achievement points - Find an example of a published poem in a bookshop assignment where the poet uses a refrain. Write a bookshop entry on refrain, or hand in a copy of the poem (including the author's name and the source of the poem), with refrain lines highlighted and a short description of the effect of the refrain. If I can Google the title of the poem and the term "refrain" to find your example, you haven't earned this achievement.

Imitation | 25 achievement points – Write an imitation of the poet assigned to you for Bookshop 5. Hand it in as your scheduled poem for April 18. Include a short paper (1-2 pages) detailing how your poem was influenced by specific choices made by the author you read for Bookshop 5.

"If you want to be a writer, then write. Write every day!" – Dr. Johnson

Bookshop Dates

All items are due by 11:59 p.m. on the day listed.

Bookshop #	Bookshop Request Due	Book Assigned	First Post Due	Two Comments on First Post Due by	Second Post Due	Next Two Comments Due by
1	January 11	January 12	January 18	January 23	January 25	January 30
2	January 25	January 26	February 1	February 6	February 8	February 13
3	February 8	February 9	February 15	February 20	February 22	February 27
4	March 1	March 2	March 22	March 27	March 29	April 3
5	March 29	March 30	April 5	April 10	April 12	April 17

Some Suggested Bookshop Titles

I recognize that you may not be coming to class with any background in poetry, so let me suggest a few titles to get you started. (If you are a reader of poetry, please suggest any volumes that you're interested in discovering. Please do not list books you have already read.) You may wish to look these over in the library before you make your first bookshop requests. I generally only assign books written after 1950.

Ahmed, Dilruba – *Dhaka Dust*
 Betts, R. Dwayne – *Shahid Reads His Own Palm*
 Bishop, Elizabeth – *Geography III*
 Boland, Eavan – *Domestic Violence*
 Collins, Billy – *Questions About Angels*
 Dennis, Carl – *Practical Gods*
 Dobyns, Stephen – *Mystery, So Long*
 Dove, Rita – *Thomas and Beulah*
 Fennelly, Beth Ann – *Tender Hooks*
 Francis, Vievee – *Blue-Tail Fly*
 Gay, Ross – *Bringing the Shovel Down*
 Grotz, Jennifer – *The Needle*
 Hoagland, Tony – *Donkey Gospel*
 Jarman, Mark – *Unholy Sonnets*

Jordan, A. Van – *M-A-C-N-O-L-I-A*
 Justice, Donald – *The Sunset Maker*
 Lux, Thomas – *The Street of Clocks*
 Matthews, William – *Flood*
 McKiernan, Ethna – *The One Who Swears You Can't Start Over*
 McLarney, Rose – *The Always Broken Plates of Mountains*
 Murillo, John – *Up Jump the Boogie*
 Phillips, Carl – *The Tether*
 Ryan, Kay – *The Niagara River*
 Trethewey, Natasha – *Native Guard*
 Wright, James – *Two Citizens*

I will ask you to purchase at least one book this semester. (It will cost no more than \$18.)

Exemplary Poem

To get to know your tastes in poems, and to expose your classmates to your favorite poems, you have the option of bringing in one poem that you think is exemplary. Pick the poem you fell in love with as a child, or the poem that made you want to take this class, or a poem that you just read recently and thought, "Hey, this is awesome."

Exemplary Poem | 10 achievement points – Submitted an exemplary poem to Dropbox no later than January 15 at 3:00 p.m.

Explained It | 15 achievement points – Attached a short paper (1-2 pages) detailing what about your exemplary poem made it stand out.

Scheduled Poem Checkpoints

The goal of a creative writing class is to get you writing. And write you shall! In fact, you should carve out some time to write each day, whether you're writing new drafts of poems, revising existing poems, writing craft papers about poems you really enjoy to better understand how they work, or journaling and taking notes which can be used in your poems later.

However, just writing a lot of poems in rapid succession does not ensure that you'll get better as a writer. Therefore, for the purposes of credit, you'll only turn in <<a set number of>> poems during the semester. To ensure that I can get you useful and timely feedback, there will be set due dates for receipt of poems, called scheduled poem checkpoints. At each checkpoint, you may hand in one (and only one) poem.

The poems you hand in at each checkpoint a) become eligible to be workshopped during in-class discussion, and b) may be annotated by the author to be considered for other achievements. For example, if your poem contains a metaphor, a heroic couplet, and a fair amount of consonance, you might ask for that poem to stand for the Metaphor Master, Heroic Couplet Hero, and Consonance Commander achievements.

You are not required to turn in poems at each scheduled poem checkpoint, but come on, you're in this class to do some creative writing, so take advantage of all of these!

Poems must be handed in to Dropbox no later than 3:00 p.m. on the days listed.

Poem	Due Date
Exemplary	January 15 (includes one-page paper on why you selected this poem)
1	January 24
2	February 7
3	February 21
4	March 7
5	March 21
6	April 4
7	April 18

Poem Achievements

New Poems! | 200 achievement points - Handed in a poem at each of the scheduled poem checkpoints.

The following set of achievements may be earned in one of two ways:

1. A separate document which includes the student's name, the achievement(s) sought, and examples. Students who seek credit for these achievements in a separate document must complete the achievement by **March 29**.
2. Integrated into one of your poems handed in during the semester. These may be handed in at any scheduled poem checkpoint. However, remember that attempting all of these in a single poem may lead to a pretty bad poem. Note which achievement(s) you seek as a footnote to the poem, including any additional notes required to earn the achievement.

If a Google search reveals that your example has been used before, you will not receive credit for the achievement.

Blank Verse Boss | 5 achievement points – Write at least three lines of blank verse. Include marks of scansion.

Concrete Image Commander | 5 achievement points – Write at least three original concrete images. Note what makes them concrete, rather than abstract.

Consonance Chief | 5 achievement points – Write five lines which use heavy consonance. Change the consonant sound being used at least three times.

Dimeter Doctor | 5 achievement points – Write at least three lines of dimeter. Include marks of scansion.

End Rhyme Recognition | 5 achievement points – Write at least five lines of that utilize end rhyme.

Enjambment Expert | 5 achievement points – Enjamb four lines. Explain why enjambing these lines is more effective than end-stopping them.

Epigraph Appropriator | 5 achievement points – Write a poem which includes an epigraph from another poem or piece of prose, or provide an example from your bookshop reading.

Heroic Couplet Hero | 5 achievement points – Write an original heroic couplet.

Hyper-Hyperbole | 5 achievement points – Write something that's extremely hyperbolic.

Mary Had a Little Iamb | 5 achievement points – Write at least ten lines of iambic verse. Include marks of scansion.

Isn't It Ironic? | 5 achievement points – Write something ironic, and then explain in a footnote how irony is being employed, including an example of how you could have pursued a non-ironic solution.

Metaphor Master | 10 achievement points – Write five original metaphors.

Metrical Maestro | 5 achievement points – Write at least three lines each of iambic, dactylic, anapestic, and trochaic verse, and three lines which include at least one spondee. Each line must contain at least three feet. Include marks of scansion.

Metonymy Maven | 5 achievement points – Write three original examples of metonymy.

Mixed Metaphor | 5 achievement points – Write a badly mixed metaphor.

Onomatopoeia | 5 achievement points – Write at least three original examples of onomatopoeia.

Parallelism Pro | 5 achievement points – Write at least three lines or sentences which include heavy parallelism.

Pentameter Prima Donna | 5 achievement points – Write at least six lines of pentameter. Include marks of scansion.

Run On! | 5 achievement points – Write a ridiculously long sentence which spans twenty or more lines of a poem.

Scan Me Up, Scotty | 5 achievement points – Scan a poem of twenty lines or more.

A-simile-ate | 10 achievement points – Write five original similes.

Synecdoche Swami | 5 achievement points – Write three original examples of synecdoche.

Tetrameter Tutor | 5 achievement points – Write at least six lines of tetrameter. Include marks of scansion.

Virtuoso of Vulgate | 5 achievement points – Write several lines that use vulgate diction. Include, below the poem, alternate versions of those lines in elevated and colloquial diction.

Formal Achievements

Abecedarian | 5 achievement points – Write an abecedarian.

Anagrammatic Anarchy | 5 achievement points – Write a poem in which each line is an anagram of the other lines. For examples, read Kevin McFadden's *Hardscrabble*.

Dirty Limerick | 5 achievement points – Write a limerick. It doesn't have to be dirty. Seriously. Not all limericks are dirty. This poem will not count toward scheduled poem checkpoints.

Epigram: Shorter is Sweeter | 10 achievement points – Find three examples of epigrams that amuse you. Then, write your own epigram. This poem will not count toward scheduled poem checkpoints.

Erasure E as e | 5 achievement points – Perform an erasure on a poem you wrote about for bookshop. This poem will not count toward scheduled poem checkpoints.

Found Without Being Lost | 5 achievement points – Write a found poem.

Four-malist | 100 achievement points – Hand in poems written in established forms at four scheduled poem checkpoints. Forms must be ten lines or longer, which excludes short forms like haiku and limerick. These may include abecedarians, villanelles, sonnets, pantoums, sestinas, rondeaus, terza rima, or ghazals.

Ghazal Guru | 25 achievement points – Write a ghazal.

Inventor | 25 achievement points – Write a poem that invents a new form. Include a description of that form which details the devices that must be used.

Influential Inventor | 5 achievement points – Have a classmate use your invented form at a scheduled poem checkpoint. The classmate will earn credit toward the Four-malist achievement.

Pantoum, Please | 5 achievement points – Write a pantoum.

Help Me, Rondeau | 5 achievement points | 5 achievement points – Write a rondeau.

Sestina Sherpa | 10 achievement points – Write a sestina.

Sonnet Surveyor | 25 achievement points – Write a sonnet. Note whether the sonnet is Shakespearean, Petrarchan, or Italian.

Terza Rima Tycoon | 5 achievement points – Write a metrical poem in terza rima.

Villanelle Viceroy | 10 achievement points – Write a villanelle.

Revising

Very few poems come out right the first time. Consistent revision is important in this class, and revising the work regularly gives you more chances for comments, either in workshop or from the instructor.

Significant Revision | 25 achievement points – Complete a revision that gives a complete overhaul to a poem, while maintaining at least three elements of its original composition.

Starred Revision | 25 achievement points – Complete a revision that dramatically improves a poem, earning a star.

Tireless Reviser | 250 achievement points – Hand in five starred revisions.

Put It Away | 5 achievement points – Let a poem sit for over a month before revising it.

Dogged Pursuit | 5 achievement points – Revise a poem within a week of getting your first comments on it.

Mind Meld | 5 achievement points – Combine elements from two unsuccessful scheduled poems into one successful revision.

Truth | 5 achievement points – Revise a poem by stating its essential truth in the first line of the second stanza.

Lie | 5 achievement points – Revise a poem by adding a lie to it.

The End is the Beginning | 5 achievement points – Revise a poem by making its original ending the first stanza.

Revise into Form | 5 achievement points – Revise by transforming a free-verse poem into form.

Kill the Abstractions | 5 achievement points – Revise by removing all the abstract language in your poem.

Eavesdropper | 5 achievement points – Revise a poem by inserting language overheard on campus or borrowed from a stranger's tweet. (Cite the tweet if you use that strategy.)

Fire and Ice | 5 achievement points – Revise a poem by making one area "hot" (highly emotionally charged) and one area "cold" (little emotional charge).

Revisions will be accepted until the final day of class but I cannot guarantee comments for any poems handed in after April 18.

Workshop Guidelines

For some, poetry workshops are a vital and welcome part of the writing process. For others, they are a necessary evil, a burdensome but indispensable task. For some, they are a frustrating experience, an exercise in misunderstanding or being understood. If this is your first poetry workshop, perhaps this experience will set the tone for all your future workshop experiences.

Workshop is an integral part of the honors experience, so we will begin early in the semester and refine as we go. However, workshop will not be successful if we do not observe the following guidelines:

- **You must read and make notes on all poems in advance of the workshop date.** Coming to a workshop unprepared is rude and will invariably lead you to say something you'll later regret. I expect to see comments, thoughts, line edits, scribbles, and other markings on your classmates' poems when you come to workshop. You'll hand back your copy of the poem after it is discussed (signed, so they can find you if they have questions).
- **The poet may not speak during workshop unless specifically addressed by the instructor.** The class must be free to speak without hearing the author. If you are tempted to clarify an issue, recognize that telling the class what you intended does not help your poem as it appears on the page. In fact, you now know how best to revise! A few minutes will be provided at the end of the session for the author to ask questions.
- **Set aside personal tastes.** The primary goal of the workshop is to discover the work's intention.
- **Try not to speak first each time or dominate the workshop.** But make sure you speak; silent people end up unhappy with their participation grades. If speaking in class makes you uncomfortable, write out your comments in advance so you can read them aloud.
- **As the workshop begins, attempt to describe the work.** Often, the greatest service we can do for a writer is to observe what is on the page—the process may illuminate areas where the poet's intention did not turn out.
- **A first reading may raise more questions than comments.** Likewise, the author's questions are often answered through the perceptions of other readers.
- **Comments should be precise and refer to evidence found in the text.**
- **Once the work has been described, the next step is to identify what works well.** Passages, devices, and choices that make evident the intention of the poem are key to the author's understanding of how the poem is actually working.
- **Workshop is a dialogue.** Feel free to respond to each other and let the conversation—and your understanding of the poem—unfurl. Just...
- **Don't be argumentative.** Everyone reads a poem differently. Sure, you may think that someone else in the class has missed the point entirely, but is the author well-served by ten minutes of bickering about whether the flower should be red or orange?
- **Comments should always be about the work on the page, never about the author.** First, consider that while we may know each other well, other potential readers may not. We must sever our knowledge of the author from the text with which we are presented. Second, remember these sage words: "Writers, above all others, should be most vigilant about the power, privileges and protection of the imagination."

Other achievements

Flawless Recitation | 25 achievement points – On a scheduled recitation day, recite a poem assigned by the instructor, achieving an instructor score of “excellent” or “outstanding” in every category. (See this rubric: <http://poetryoutloud.org/uploads/fl/af34c39739/scoring%20rubric.pdf>)

Strong Recitation | 25 achievement points – On a scheduled recitation day, recite a poem assigned by the instructor, achieving an average class score of 4 or above in every category from classmates. (See this rubric, and convert “Very Weak” to 1 and “Outstanding” to 6. <http://poetryoutloud.org/uploads/fl/af34c39739/scoring%20rubric.pdf>)

Poem into Video | 25 achievement points – Create a video version of a poem assigned by the instructor, achieving an instructor score of “excellent” or “outstanding” in every category. Debut it on a scheduled recitation day, instead of reciting. (See this rubric: <http://poetryoutloud.org/uploads/fl/af34c39739/scoring%20rubric.pdf>)

Saw a Reading | 50 achievement points - You must attend at least one public poetry reading during the semester by a publishing poet. Your report, a minimum of one double-spaced page, should note details about poems read (and any observations on craft you make), poet, audience, and setting. The more details you include the better, as the objective of this assignment is for you to *consider the elements you must pay attention to* when the time comes for you to read. Your paper should address what you think an ideal poetry reading might look like and which elements of the reading you attend meet those criteria. This can be handed in any time before April 1.

Second Reading | 25 achievement points – You must attend at least two public poetry readings by a publishing poet during the semester. After completing the *Saw a Reading* achievement, you will hand in a second short report, comparing the second reading to the first. Continue to consider the elements of an ideal poetry reading, noting similar details to those contained in your first report.

Anthology | 25 achievement points – Assemble an anthology which includes at least fifteen different poets. Write a short preface to the collection, and a short introduction to each poem. The anthology should have some governing logic, both in terms of the poems selected (a theme, a specific geography, a unique form, a specific image) and the order in which they appear.

Chapbook | 400 achievement points – Complete the final chapbook assignment. Directions for completion will be given in April; the final chapbook is due in place of our final exam.

Conference | 50 achievement points – Attend a poetry or literary conference. Submit a short summary of key points that you learned.

Interview with a Poet | 25 achievement points – Study interviews from three different literary magazines, then interview a published poet. (Poets who teach at UNC may not be interviewed for this achievement.)

Meme | 5 achievement points – Create a meme based on a poem that the whole class has read.

Profile | 5 achievement points – In the Sakai Discussion forums, click the “My Profile” link. Fill out the contact information and post a picture of yourself that will be displayed on your discussion forum posts.

Quotes | 5 achievement points – Tweet the best quotes about poetry you find or hear (or tweet a link to a Tumblr or blog where you collect these quotes).

Tweets | 10 achievement points – Tweet your thoughts on poetry (at least one tweet per week for five weeks).

Page numbers in this syllabus refer to your textbook: An Introduction to Poetry, 13th Edition, by X.J. Kennedy and Dana Gioia. Poems marked (Bb) will appear in our Blackboard course.

January

10 Introduction to the course / What is poetry?

15 How to read closely

Please have the following poems and pages read in preparation for class:

“Reading a Poem” pp. 5-18

“Saying and Suggesting” pp. 72-83

W.C. Williams, “This is Just to Say” p. 48

J. Donne, “The Flea” p. 411

Grotz, “Rescue” (Bb)

Kelly, “Song” (Bb)

Matthews, “A Poetry Reading at West Point” (Bb)

Meredith, “The Illiterate” (Bb)

17 Close reading, part 2

Please have the following poems and pages read in preparation for class:

your classmates’ exemplary poems

“Words” pp. 48-71

“Recognizing Excellence” pp.305-326

22 A guide to analysis

Please have the following poems and pages read in preparation for class:

“Recognizing Excellence” pp.305-326

24 Figurative language

Please have the following poems and pages read in preparation for class:

“Figures of Speech” pp.104-123

Collins, “Care and Feeding” p. 408

Shakespeare, “My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun” (Sonnet 130) pp. 508

cummings, “Spring is like a perhaps hand” (Bb)

Wilbur, “The Catch” (Bb)

29 Imagery

Please have the following poems and pages read in preparation for class:

“Imagery” pp. 84-103

Larkin, “Home is So Sad” p. 436

Thomas, “Fern Hill” p. 466

W.C. Williams, “To Waken an Old Lady” p. 472

31 Tone

Please have the following poems and pages read in preparation for class:

“Listening to a Voice” pp. 19-47

Wordsworth, “The World is Too Much With Us” p. 242

Komunyakaa, “Facing It” p. 270

Stevenson, “Sous-Entendu” p. 271

Plath, “Daddy” p. 448

Merwin, “Paul” (Bb)

February**5 Syntax**

Please have the following poems and pages read in preparation for class:

Frost, "Mending Wall" p. 417

Jeffers, "To the Stone-Cutters" p. 431

Walcott, "The Virgins" p. 468

7 Diction

Please have the following poems and pages read in preparation for class:

Brooks, "The Mother" p. 401

Hopkins, "The Wind-Hover" p. 429

12 Meter

Please have the following poems and pages read in preparation for class:

"Rhythm" pp. 163-181

14 Meter

Please have the following poems and pages read in preparation for class:

Blake, "The Tyger" p. 400

Larkin, "Poetry of Departures" p. 437

Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress" p. 440

19 Voice

Please have the following poems and pages read in preparation for class:

Frost, "A Servant to Servants" (Bb)

Hayes, "bowling" (Bb)

A. Jackson, "Make/n My Music" (Bb)

21 Persona

Please have the following poems and pages read in preparation for class:

Gluck, "Clear Morning" (Bb)

Gluck, "Gretel in Darkness" (Bb)

26 Saying something and meaning it.

Please have the following essay read in preparation for class:

Hoagland, "Fear of Narrative and the Skittery Poem of our Moment" (Bb)

28 Forms and formal organization

Please have the following poems and pages read in preparation for class:

Plath, "Metaphors" p.109

Dryden, "To the Memory of Mr. Oldham" p. 414

Millay, "Recuerdo" p. 442

Justice, "Mrs. Snow" (Bb)

Justice, "Villanelle at Sundown" (Bb)

Kees, "To Build a Quiet City in His Mind" (Bb)

Shelley, "Ode to the West Wind" (Bb)

Trethewey, "Miscegenation" (Bb)

Wordsworth, "Nuns Fret Not at Their Convent's Narrow Room" (Bb)

March**5** Received forms

Please have the following poems and pages read in preparation for class:

“Closed Form” pp. 183-203

Cope, “Triolet” (Bb)

MacLeish, “The Infinite Reason” (Bb)

Meinke, “Atomic Pantoum” (Bb)

Shore, “Fortune’s Pantoum” (Bb)

7 Mid-term exam**19** How to revise poems**21** Free verse

Please have the following poems and pages read in preparation for class:

“Open Form” pp. 204-225

26 Repetition

Please have the following poems read in preparation for class:

Justice, “Psalm and Lament” (Bb)

Kees, “The Beach in August” (Bb)

Kelly, “Dead Doe” (Bb)

Merwin, “Paul” (Bb)

28 Sonic devices

Please have the following poems and pages read in preparation for class:

“Sound” pp. 144-162

Brooks, “We Real Cool” p. 167

Millay, “Counting-out Rhyme” p. 175

Addonizio, “First Poem for You” p. 193

Bishop, “Filling Station” p. 399

Jarrell, “The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner” p. 431

April**2** Poetic line

Please have the following poems and pages read in preparation for class:

Hall, “Names of Horses” p. 420

Moore, “Silence” p. 50

Randall, “A Difficult Image” p. 452

4 Sentiment vs. Sentimentality

Please have the following essay read in preparation for class:

Hall, “Her Long Illness” (Bb)

Young, “Deadline” (bb)

9 Punctuation

Please have the following pages and poems read in preparation for class:

“Critical Casebook: Emily Dickinson” pp. 332-346

C. Phillips, “The Hunters” (Bb)

M. Ryan, “The Use of Poetry” (Bb)

11 workshop only

16 workshop only

18 workshop only

23 Chapbooks

Directions for the final achievement (400 achievement points) given on this day.

25 Parting words

CHAPBOOK (final achievement) DUE APRIL 30, 4:00 PM