

Cedar Crest College

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Office Hours: T and TR., 2:30-3:30 p.m.; W, 11:00 a.m.-noon; and by appointment

Advanced Creative Writing: Poetry ENG 334 (3 credits) Fall 2009

Let's go

Come on

Let's go

Opening of "Junkman's Obbligato"

Lawrence Ferlinghetti

Texts:

Strand and Boland, *The Making of a Poem: A Norton Anthology of Poetic Forms*

Your writing

A style manual: if you do not have an up-to-date one, you may purchase a copy of Hacker's *Pocket Style Manual*, 5th ed., with 2009 MLA update, at the bookstore, or you may wish to have your own copy of *The MLA Handbook*, 7th ed.

Handouts

Course Description:

An advanced workshop in the art and craft of poetry. Students will analyze the works of established authors and learn strategies for developing their own material. Emphasis is on the process of creating original works.

During class time, we will write, read our work aloud, consider what others have written, and talk about such matters as structure, language, and style. Format: This class will be a workshop: your presence and your participation will determine its success.

This course fulfills the categories of ART, Arts and Society, and Self-Design in the old curriculum and ART in the new curriculum.

Prerequisite: Successful completion of ENG 234 or HON 194, or permission of instructor.

Course Learning Objectives:

--To encourage the exercise of your creativity and your appreciation of others' creativity.

--To provide you with strategies for writing, editing, reading, and teaching poetry, approaches that you can use in this course and beyond.

Outcomes

--Students will produce original creative work that shows the mastery of various devices.

--Students will demonstrate close reading and analytical/critical thinking skills.

Course Requirements:

--**Attendance Policy:** Attendance is required. Please note: You are allowed one absence (these include medical and sports excuses, so plan your cuts carefully). There is no need to explain why you are taking the absence; simply make certain that I have any work that is due on that date. More than one absence will affect your final grade; five (5) absences will result in a grade of **F**. Excessive lateness (fifteen minutes) and early departures will count as absences.

--Readings from textbooks and assorted handouts.

--Short discovery exercises, written in class or prepared ahead of time for discussion.

--Drafts of poems for workshops. For these workshops, you will need to provide copies for the others in the class.

--**Seven "finished" poems. Note:** At least one of these poems must demonstrate proficiency in a traditional verse form (villanelle, sestina, sonnet, pantoum, blank verse, heroic couplets—the choice of the workshop at which you present this formal poem is up to you). Other than that, there will not be “set” assignments in terms of form, subject, or subgenre. My expectation is that you are already bringing to this seminar table a background in and practice in reading and writing poetry; you will also find *The Making of a Poem* to be a helpful resource.

Your work will be to produce seven original works over the course of the semester— and to present these poems in our workshops. You will be expected to follow the workshop schedule for drafts on the syllabus. The polished copy of your work will be due one week after your workshop presentation.

After I have scored your work and returned it to you, you have the option of revising and submitting your poem one more time. Again, your revision will be due at the following class meeting. You may present your work to the group or simply hand it in to me.

--A one-day diary/day-survey (You choose the day; see Caleb Crain’s “Surveillance Society,” *The New Yorker*, 11 Sept. 2006 [handout])

--Leading of a discussion: each student will lead the discussion of a section from the text.

--Presentation of outside poem: beginning on 9/2, each week one student will be responsible for presenting an outside poem--a published work from a reputable source, such as *Poetry* or *The New Yorker*

--**Active participation:** discussion of readings and other students' writing. All students must present their work to the rest of the class in the draft workshops and must take part meaningfully in peer-critiquing sessions. (On occasion, you may also present final copies and further revisions.) Failure to participate orally in commenting on others' work will result in a low class grade and the reduction of the final grade by up to a full letter grade.

Note: If you miss a class on a day when written work--draft or final copy--is due, your paper is still due on that date. The penalty for a late final copy or a missing draft will be the loss of one full numerical credit for the assignment in question.

Your Final Compilation:

At the end of the semester, you will submit the following compilation (label everything!):

--An introduction to/evaluation of your work

--Seven original poems, six of which you will have completed and submitted earlier and at least one of which must be in traditional verse form. (Some of you will have chosen to go over this number)

--A clearly labeled collection of four published poems that you have found influential

--A brief commentary explaining how these works have influenced/inspired you

Preparing Your Work:

- All work, including rough drafts for workshops, must be typed.
- You will need to provide copies of your work for the rest of the class.
- All work should be double-spaced. Use one-inch margins and a font size of 12 (This is a sample of size 12 font).
- Proofread. And then proofread again. Using the spell checker is only the start. Read your work aloud to double-check for errors.
- Submit all work on time; late papers will affect the workshop and your final grade.
- Do not wait to print your paper until just before it is due (Something will inevitably go wrong).
- Keep a copy of everything that you write.

Conferences:

I will be happy to meet with you to discuss your work. See me after class or e-mail me to schedule an appointment.

Grading:

Grading for Creative Writing assignments is generally holistic and uses a scale of 1-4, 4 being the highest score (and the equivalent of an A).

Because of the emphasis on the process of writing, I will not assign letter grades to individual papers. I will, however, make copious comments and use a system of numbers: **4** indicates excellent/outstanding work, **3** indicates satisfactory progress/good work, **2** indicates fair work, and **1** will serve as a warning about unsatisfactory work. I will give you a warning at the midpoint of the semester if it seems as though your work merits a grade below B-. The rubric for grading is included on the last page of this handout.

Your **final grade** will depend on the quality of your written work, your progress, your attendance, and your participation in literary discussions and peer-critiquing sessions.

Additional Student Responsibilities:

- Attendance Policy:** Attendance is required; see under "Course Requirements."
- Make-Up Policies:** Because the course is conducted as a workshop, all assignments should be completed and presented on time. If you miss a class meeting on a day when work is due, you must still provide me with the work on that day and present the work in class on the first day that you return.
- The Cedar Crest **Honor Code** and the **Classroom Protocol Code**, as stated in the Customs Book, will be in effect at all times.
- Plagiarism**, which is the appropriation of and uncredited use of another's work, is a serious offense. It does not matter if the work is by an established author, your best friend, or a blogger whose writing you find appealing. Plagiarism is theft; it is unethical. It is a waste of your time, integrity, and money and a waste of your classmates' and my time and energy. Plagiarism will result in a grade of **F** for the course.
- College Policy Regarding Learning Disabilities:** Students with documented disabilities who may need academic accommodations should discuss these needs with their professors during the first week of class. Students with disabilities who wish to request accommodations should contact the Learning Center.
- Cell Phone Etiquette:** Because of the emergency notification system, phones should be put on vibrate. They should also be put out of sight. If a cell phone rings during class,

please hand it to me to answer. I will explain that you are in class and unavailable. Please refrain from checking your phone/texting during class.

--Before you leave class tonight, make sure that you have the phone numbers/
e-mail addresses of two of your classmates; these will be your contacts for notes.

Syllabus

Some caveats: All assignments must be completed by the dates specified. Everyone should read every section--do not leave the discussion leader stranded! For the poems in each section, research and record the date. Bring your textbook to every class meeting. Please note that workshops need to be flexible; if changes seem to be appropriate, we'll revise the syllabus accordingly. Also **note** that workshops—our most important classroom activity—may require more time than the syllabus anticipates.

August 26 Introduction to the course: What we talk about when we talk about poetry

September 2

Workshop: Poem #1

Read: Introductory Statement, "On Becoming a Poet," and "Poetic Form: A Personal Encounter," xiii-xxv, and "Open Forms," 257-88

Presenter of outside poem: _____

September 9

Final copy of Poem #1 due

Workshop: Poem #2

Presenter of outside poem: _____

Read: "Verse forms: Overview" and "The Villanelle," 1-20

Discussion leader: _____

September 16

Final copy of Poem #2 due

Workshop for Poem #3

Presenter of outside poem: _____

Read: "The Sestina," 21-42 Discussion leader: _____

September 23

Final copy of #3 due

Workshop for #4 begins

Presenter of outside poem: _____

Read "Shaping Forms: Overview and "The Elegy," 165-296

Discussion leaders (2): _____

September 30

Workshop for #4 continued. Final copies by those who presented on 2/14 are due.

Presenter of outside poem: _____

Read: "Meter," 157-60

Read: "The Sonnet," 55-71 Discussion leader: _____

October 7

Final copy of #4 due

Workshop for Poem #5

Presenter of outside poem: _____

Read: "The Pastoral," 207-38

Discussion leaders: _____

October 14 No class meeting on this date—use the extra time to read, write, dream

October 21

Final copy of #5 due

Presenter of outside poem: _____

Read: "The Pantoum," 42-53 Discussion leader: _____

October 28

Presentations of one-day diary. (Submit your diary on the night of your presentation.)

Presenter of outside poem: _____

Read: "The Stanza," 136-55 Discussion leader: _____

Read: "The Heroic Couplet," 120-135 Discussion leader: _____

November 4

Continue, if necessary, presentations of one-day diary

Workshop for Poem #6

Presenter of outside poem: _____

Read: "The Ode," 239-55 Discussion leader: _____

November 11

Final copy of #6 due

Workshop for Poem #7

Presenter of outside poem: _____

"Blank Verse," 100-120 Discussion leader: _____

November 18

Workshop for Poem #7 continued

Presenter of outside poem: _____

Read: "The Ballad," 73-100 Discussion leader: _____

November 25 No class meeting on this date—Thanksgiving Break

December 4

Last Words: Compilation due—presentations

Rubric for Writing:

4 Superior/Outstanding

Work that uses an assignment as the occasion for a piece of writing imaginative and compelling enough to engage readers on its own terms. It presents an insight or viewpoint with enough fullness and support to command readers' respect, if not their assent. The treatment of content is fresh, not hackneyed, and the language is clear and vivid, not cliched. Superior work demonstrates a mastery of form and an understanding of sophisticated sentence structure, and needs little or no additional editing in terms of basic details of grammar, punctuation, and format. Superior work demonstrates creativity, along with an understanding of --and a sophisticated use of--poetic devices and forms.

3 Good

Work that meets all of an assignment's expectations with competence. The work may lack the fresh thought or compelling development of 4-work*, but it demonstrates, nevertheless, its author's ability to respond intelligently to an assignment's demands, to structure and focus writing clearly, and to choose words accurately and effectively.

*In contrast to 4-work, 3-work may--despite its original thought--require a final editing that takes care of weaknesses in basics that detract from the content.

2 Fair

2-work shows evidence of attempting to meet the assignment's bare specifications, but lacks sharp focus, the full and purposeful development, or the stylistic awareness necessary for a higher grade. 2-work is clearly inadequate in at least one way. Although 2-work may demonstrate competence in one or more facets, one or two pervasive weaknesses will outweigh its strengths. Weaknesses may include failure to engage meaningfully an important aspect of the writing task or to maintain a focus, skimpy or illogical development, and/or repeated significant errors in grammar or idiom.

1 Poor

Work that does not respond acceptably to an assignment, 1-work may misunderstand or disregard the assignment's intent, lack any pattern or organization, or make enough errors in Standard English to make it difficult for a reader to follow the author's thought.

F Failure

The following will merit a grade of F: Failure to submit an assignment, incomplete work, work that disregards the assignment's intent, and, of course, plagiarism.

