

## Cedar Crest College

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Office Hours: Tues., 11:00-noon; Thurs., 2:30-3:30 p.m.; and by appointment

### **Creative Writing: Poetry ENG 234 (3 credits) Spring 2009**

*Though rain curses the window  
Let the poem be made.*

Anne Sexton

*Our real poems are already in us  
and all we can do is dig.*

Jonathan Galassi

#### **Texts:**

Barbara Drake, *Writing Poetry*, 2nd ed.

Natalie Goldberg, *Writing Down the Bones*, expanded edition

Diana Hacker, *A Pocket Style Manual*, 5th ed.

Your writing

**and**

#### **On Reserve:**

ENG 234 Poetry Folder, with additional poems that we will study

#### **Course Description:**

A basic workshop in the 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.

English 234 is for students who are interested in writing for an audience. Private journal-keeping is an honored and honorable form of writing, but it is not the concern or work of this course. 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 100, with a grade of "C" or higher.

#### **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 reading and analytical/critical thinking skills.

## **Course Requirements:**

--**Attendance Policy:** Attendance is required. Please note: You are allowed two absences (this includes medical and sports absences, so plan your cuts carefully). There is no need to explain why you are taking the two absences; simply make certain that I have any work that is due on those days. Note that more than two absences will affect your final grade and that seven (7) absences will result in a grade of **F**. Excessive lateness (twenty 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 class discussion.

--Drafts of poems for workshops.

--**A minimum of eight "finished" poems:** 6 structured assignments and a final "free" project of 2-3 poems demonstrating your mastery of strategies covered in the course. See syllabus for dates.

--A self-evaluative paragraph, to accompany the final project.

--An oral report on a poet and his/her work. A sign-up sheet will be available.

--An individual conference/tutorial to review your work.

--**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.

**Extra-credit option:** response paper (1-2 pages) on a reading by a guest author (TBA).

**Note:** If you miss a class on a day when written work--rough 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.

## **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). Obviously, there is one exception to the rules for format: the experimental poem.

--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.

--You should begin planning your final project in mid-March.

--Keep a copy of everything that you write.

### **Revising Your Work:**

You have the option of revising and resubmitting your work (and I strongly encourage this), but please do so promptly. Do not wait until the final days (or even weeks) of the semester to produce multiple drafts. Again, plan and pace your work. Submit revisions within 1-2 weeks, if you wish me to consider them. You should be writing and revising throughout the semester. You may workshop a revision, with copies for your classmates, or you may simply submit the revision to me.

### **Conferences:**

At least once this semester, I will meet with you individually to review your work. This conference is a course requirement. A sign-up sheet will be available.

### **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.

### **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 in whole or part, 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 two weeks of class. Students with disabilities who wish to request accommodations should contact the Learning Center.

**Before** you leave class on the first day, make sure that you have the phone numbers/e-mail addresses of two of your classmates.

**Remember** to put your cell phone on vibrate before the start of class.

## Syllabus

Reading and writing assignments must be completed by the dates specified. 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. The conference is required and counts as a class.

*Ink runs from the corners of my mouth  
There is no happiness like mine  
I have been eating poetry.*

Mark Strand

Tuesday, Jan. 20  
Introduction to the course  
Why poetry (why not?)

Thursday, Jan. 22  
List Poems  
WP, Chaps. 1 and 3  
WDtB, xi-xiv  
Bring from the Poetry Folder: “What Not to Do” (“Magic of Love”) and Snyder  
Be prepared to discuss your answers to the poetry quiz, WP, 9-11  
\* Workshop begins: If ready, bring draft of list poem (with copies for class)

Tuesday, January 27  
\* Open-book quiz on general information section of syllabus (pp.1-3)  
Writing is Revising  
WP, Chap. 7, 141-53  
WDtB, 1-17  
\* Workshop of list poem continues

Thursday, January 29  
Autobiographical Poems  
WP, Chap. 2  
WDtB, 18-38, 45-52, 89  
From Poetry Folder: Hayden and Roethke  
\* Assignment #1--List Poem--due. Submit final copy and rough drafts with comments from workshop. (If poem is substantially changed, provide copies for class.)

Tuesday, February 3  
\* Workshop: Draft of autobiographical poem due

Thursday, February 5

Voice

WP, Chap. 10, 201-5 [to end of third para.]

\* Workshop: Continue bringing in drafts of autobiographical poems

Tuesday, February 10

Background

WP, Chap. 14

\* Assignment #2--Autobiographical Poem--due

Thursday, February 12

Observational Poems

WP, Chap. 4

WDtB, 53-61, 75-78, 81-88

From Poetry folder: Kinnell, Quinn, and Oliver

\* Begin workshop: Draft of observational poem due

Tuesday, February 17

Research (in a poetry class??)

\* Workshop: Continue bringing in drafts of observational poems

Thursday, February 19

Poetic Forms

WP, Chap. 6

WDtB, 93-102, 133-35

From Poetry Folder: Frost, Shakespeare, Patchen, Hollander, Bishop, and sheet on the tanka and cinquain

\* Assignment #3--Observational Poem--due

Tuesday, February 24

Games and Experiments

WP, Chap. 13

WDtB, 112-113, 122-25

\* Workshop: Begin bringing in drafts of experimental (formal or game) poems

Thursday, February 26

\* Workshop

Tuesday, March 3

WDtB, 152-55

\* Assignment #4--Experimental Poem (formal or game)--due

Thursday, March 5

Allusion (or *finding* your voice with the help of others)

WP, Chap. 8

From Poetry folder; Williams and Koch \*\* Last date for revisions of Assignments 1-3.

March 10 and March 12 Spring Break

Tuesday, March 17

Persona Poems

WP, Chap. 10, 205-13

From Poetry Folder: Atwood and Gluck

\* Draft workshop begins: Persona poem or poem using allusion

Thursday, March 19

\* Workshop continues

Tuesday, March 24

Dreams (Surrealism)

WP, Chap. 9

WDtB, 67-74

\* Assignment #5 due (persona/allusion)

Thursday, March 26 No Class Meeting Today

Tuesday, March 31

Myth Making

WP, Chap. 12

\* Workshop: If ready, bring draft of surrealistic/archetypal poem

Thursday, April 2

Oral Reports

1. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

\* Workshop continues

Tuesday, April 7

Oral Reports:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

\* Workshop continues

Thursday, April 9 No Class Meeting

Tuesday, April 14

Oral Reports:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

\* Workshop continues

Thursday, April 16

Oral Reports:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

\* Assignment #6--Surrealistic or Archetypal Poem--due

\*\* Workshop: From this point on, you may bring in drafts of your last (free) project (2-3 poems). The final project is a final demonstration of your mastery of strategies covered in this course.

During the week of April 19, we will have individual conferences. A sign-up sheet will be available.

Tuesday, April 21

Poems of Address: Addressing real and imaginary readers

WP, Chap. 5, 77-92

WDtB, 117-21, 147-50

\* Workshop

Thursday, April 23

WDtB, 167-78

\* Workshop

\*\* Last day to hand in revisions

Tuesday, April 28

WDtB, 179-95

\* Workshop

Thursday, April 30

Last Words

\* Final Project, including self-evaluative paragraph, due at beginning of class

Presentations of projects

Bring a favorite selection (poetry or prose by a published author) to read

## Writing Rubric:

### 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 mastery of form, uses 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 areas, 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; 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.**