

ENGLISH 409
ALISON DEMING
Tuesday 3:30 – 6:00 p.m.

ADVANCED POETRY WORKSHOP
Spring 2009
EDU 240

Welcome to the poetry workshop. In this course we will read and discuss a range of poems and poetic forms while also giving close attention to the poems you are writing. Each participant in the workshop is expected to help shape the content and direction of our explorations this semester. I will ask you to read widely and to try your hand at a variety of poetic strategies. Generally speaking, the content of the course will consist of in-class discussion of work-in-progress, occasional writing exercises, craft lectures, and presentations on contemporary poetry/poetics. Each week I will ask you to write at least one poem employing a particular aspect of craft. Each poem should be taken through several drafts, making it as developed as possible in a few day's time, then turned in to me and photocopied for your classmates. Later in the semester, the assignments will be less specific, and you will be free to explore whatever formal directions are most interesting to you.

REQUIREMENTS

Two portfolios, written and oral critiques of manuscripts of your classmates, active classroom participation, two short craft analysis papers (3 pages), in-class presentation of one craft analysis, and attendance at two poetry readings.

Reading:

I will give weekly reading assignments from the text:

The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry, eds., Jahan Ramazani, Richard Ellman, and Robert O'Clair, 3rd edition, NY: Norton, 2003. Available at UA Bookstore.

Some of the readings will be discussed in detail. Others may come up during workshop discussion. Reading poems will feed your process as a writer: words beget words, poems beget poems. I will ask you to read as a writer, looking for devices that you can cull for your own poems. You will write two short craft analysis papers based on a particular poet or poem in our anthology. You will present one of these papers as an in-class talk and discussion (5 – 10 minutes).

Workshop:

Each week please make 15 copies of your poem to distribute to the class. **PLEASE BE SURE YOUR POEMS ARE TYPED WITH YOUR NAME ON EACH PAGE.** I will select four or five poems for our weekly workshop discussion and email you on **WEDNESDAY** afternoon to let you know which poems I've chosen. You can each expect to have poems on the worksheets three times during the semester. You will be responsible for reading the workshop poems and coming to class prepared to offer constructive criticism that will help the writer in the process of revision. Write a one-page response to each poem, which you will give to the writer addressing: 1) what the poet (or poem) is trying to do; 2) what strategies the poet has used; 3) the strengths and

weaknesses of those strategies; 4) constructive suggestions for revision and poems or poets that would be relevant to read.

PLEASE COME TO CLASS PREPARED TO DISCUSS THE ASSIGNED READING AND THE WORKSHOP POEMS EACH WEEK.

Conferences

Please come by my office for a conference as often as you need to. I can help you generate ideas, narrow or broaden your focus, locate research materials, or experiment with new forms.

GRADING:

Two portfolios	25 % each	=50%
Two craft analysis papers plus presentation	10% each	=30%
Class participation	10%	=10%
Attendance at poetry readings	5% each	=10%

PORTFOLIO

Each of your two portfolios must contain:

- 1) At least five revised poems
- 2) One craft analysis paper
- 3) One written response to a Poetry Reading you have attended giving date, time, place, name of poet. This will not be graded but must be handed in with the portfolio. Please describe and comment upon the reading, giving some biographical and publication information about the poet.

ABSENCES:

Attendance is mandatory.

Required. If you have more than two unexcused absences, I will drop you from the course, unless you have discussed exceptional circumstances with me.

Because this is a workshop, each participant is responsible for becoming a reader, an audience, and an editor for each other participant in the class. I expect you to take this responsibility seriously and to treat your colleagues in the class with respect, offering detailed suggestions for revision on works put forward for discussion, and listening to the views of others in class. If your attendance and participation fall, so will your grade. Violations of the Student Code of Conduct and Code of Academic Integrity will not be tolerated. Arriving late, leaving early, sleeping, reading non-course materials in class, taking or making cell-phone calls, carrying on conversations that disrupt class discussion are unacceptable. I will consider rude, ridiculing, insulting, or abusive comments on student work to be disruptive classroom behavior, and such behavior will be addressed according to university policy. You are expected to behave in a professional and respectful manner, especially towards people with whom you disagree. I will hold myself to these same standards. Plagiarism is a serious offence and will result in your failing the course. Plagiarism means “intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own work.” I will award an Incomplete only under very

exceptional circumstances and then only when all but a minor portion of the course work has been completed.

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COURSE SCHEDULE, ENGLISH 409, Spring 2009

January 20

Introductions. Review course requirements.

Class discussion of the “public” poem.

Walt Whitman, “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed”

Robert Frost, “The Gift Outright”

Langston Hughes, “The Bitter River”

W. H. Auden, “September 1, 1939”

Elizabeth Alexander, Inauguration poem (hand-out)

Assignment for next week:

Read in anthology

Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Gerard Manley Hopkins

January 27

Discussion of readings. In-class writing assignment.

Students: hand-out Poem #1.

Assignment for next week:

Read in anthology

W. B. Yeats, Gertrude Stein

February 3

Workshop

Readings: TBA

February 10

Workshop

Readings: TBA

February 17

Workshop

Readings: TBA

February 24

Workshop

Readings: TBA

March 3

Workshop

Readings TBA

March 10

CRAFT TALKS (first half of class)

PORTFOLIO #1 DUE

March 17 SPRING BREAK

March 24

Workshop

Readings: TBA

March 31

Workshop

Readings TBA

April 7

Workshop

Readings: TBA

April 14

Workshop

Readings: TBA

April 21

Workshop

Readings: TBA

April 28

CRAFT TALKS (second half of class)

PORTFOLIO #2 DUE

May 5

Last Day of Class

Evaluations and student readings.

ALISON DEMING ML 438

Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. and Thursday 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Or by appointment

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