ENGL 3382: INTRO TO CREATIVE WRITING: POETRY

ONLINE, 3 CREDIT HOURS, SPRING 2018

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Name: Dr. Ching-In Chen; Savanah Burns (TA)
Office Location: Evans Complex 116
Office Hours: M, W 12-2p CST on campus and via Skype or Google Hangout; also by appointment
> *(Please send me an e-mail if you want to schedule a virtual office hour with me.)*

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> *(Please type ENGL3382 as the subject line of your e-mail and address your communications to Dr. Chen. Allow 24 hours for a response, M-F.)*

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Create dangerously, for people who read dangerously …. Writing, knowing in part that no matter how trivial your words may seem, someday, somewhere, someone may risk his or her life to read them.

> \- Edwidge Danticat, from "Create Dangerously"

Whose turn is it to open-throated sing? / And what world's turn is it / to be sung of, a thing made noticed / that isn't, its beauty insisted.

> \- Ari Banias, from "No More Birds"

Welcome to Introduction to Creative Writing: Poetry! In this introductory course, we will explore the skills and tools needed to "create dangerously" and "to open-throated sing." We will read and write poems with an eye towards learning how these creative texts are built. This class is a process and community-centered workshop. There will be much experimental work in and out of class, with assignments that will get you to try new things in your writing. In addition, we will engage the larger world through an Academic Community Engagement (ACE) project which aims to apply the skills and techniques we learn in this class in a real world context. This semester, you will design and implement a lesson based on a poem from *WHEREAS* or *Surveillance* for a specific community of your choice (except English majors or Creative Writing minors!), which helps non-poetry readers make sense of the poem and guides them in writing their own poems based on historical documents or media coverage, making use of other kinds of everyday material.

LEARNING GOALS

In our class, I invite you to build a community where we:

1) <u>learn key terminology, craft elements and creative strategies from reading contemporary poetry</u>. We will read and analyze a variety of published writings in contemporary poetry with an eye to how these creative texts were built, using craft elements such as concrete detail, image, voice, setting and the poetic . We will learn the *craft* of writing through studying various strategies and approaches other writers have chosen, and consider how to apply these strategies to our own creative work.

2) <u>learn and implement basic craft elements and techniques for writing poetry and prose.</u> Through a series of in-class and take-home writing exercises, we will experiment with various strategies and approaches. You will choose a subset of these writing experiments to revise into more polished pieces and submit them for workshop feedback. Over the course of the quarter, you will create a final chapbook portfolio. In addition, we will apply the skills and techniques we have learned this quarter by designing and implementing a lesson for a community-based workshop.

TEXTBOOKS AND MATERIALS

Required:

1) Addonizio, Kim and Dorianne Laux. *The Poet's Companion: A Guide to the Pleasures of Writing Poetry.* W. W. Norton & Company, 1997. (ISBN 0-393-31654-8)

2) Layli Long Soldier, *WHEREAS,* Graywolf Press, 2017. ISBN: 978-1555977672

3) Jackson, Ashaki. *Surveillance.* Writ Large Press, 2016*

(* *Because Jackson's chapbook has limited distribution, you must purchase this text directly from the author by using this link:* https://squareup.com/store/writ-large-press/item/surveillance *Please place your order early in the semester so that you can receive the chapbook in time.)*

4) Additional assigned readings available via Blackboard.

Optional:

5) Smith, Danez. *Don't Call Us Dead.* Graywolf *Press, 2017.* ISBN: 9781555977856

COURSE EVALUATION

1) Discussion Board Posts: 10%

2) Creative Experiments: 10%

3) Revised Poem Drafts for Workshop: 15%

4) Post-Workshop Revisions: 15%

5) Peer Workshop Feedback: 15%

6) Academic Community Engagement project + reflection: 15%

7) Attending a Literary Reading + Reading Response: 5%

8) Final Portfolio (Chapbook - five revised poems + process letter) + Reading: 15%

Total: 100%

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE TURNED IN ON TIME BY THE DEADLINE. THIS IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT IN A CREATIVE WRITING CLASS BECAUSE THE INITIAL WRITING (THE WRITING EXPERIMENTS) GENERATE MATERIAL FOR YOU TO REVISE AND BUILD POEM DRAFTS. Because of this, I will not accept late work for assignments, unless you have a documented emergency, which you should explain to me **and** submit documentation to the Dean of Students office: http://www.shsu.edu/dept/dean-of-students/documents/AbsenceRequest.pdf

1)DISCUSSION BOARD POSTS: 10%
We will use the Blackboard discussion board to facilitate the conversation which would typically occur during class time in face-to-face courses. You will be responsible for three discussion posts for each discussion board unit.

- one Lead Post which formulates an original analysis about the poems assigned for that week, using vocabulary and terms from the *Poet's Companion* textbook and/or our class lecture notes. In addition, I may pose specific questions to consider based on that week's topic. This lead post must be a **minimum** of 150 words in length and should include at least **one** direct citation (or specific example) from the poem you are discussing. Include word count at the end of your post.

- two Response Posts which respond to two different Lead Posts from classmates. This response must be a **minimum** 75 words in length and include a substantive contribution of your own. Substantive contributions should either ask a fresh question related to your classmate's observations, further develop your own view on a relevant subject matter and/or class readings, or introduce new resources from your own research into the discussion. Include word count at the end of each post.

Note: When creating a post in Blackboard, your word count can be found in the bottom right corner of the text box.

2) Creative Experiments (10%):

a) I believe that the best way to learn how to write well is to write and read often. I have designed this class to encourage you to develop an ongoing writing practice where you try various strategies and techniques. There is not a right or wrong answer in terms of how to complete the experiments, other than following the instructions which can be downloaded from Blackboard. Most experiments can be completed in less than one hour, but the more time and energy you invest, the more you will learn.

b) Experiments are graded upon completion. Missing one individual experiment is allowed (though not preferable).

d) I do not usually provide feedback on experiments because I view them as early drafts and notes towards possible pieces. If you'd like to get more in-depth feedback, I encourage you to visit me in office hours or make an appointment for virtual office hours.

3) Revised Poem Drafts For Workshop (15%):

a) During each unit, we will workshop a subset of the class, using the revised poem draft for workshop that you will submit on Discussion Board. To help you practice the elements of craft you are reading about in *Poet's Companion,* you will follow the instructions by using the specified *Poet's Companion* exercise and submit the draft for peer and instructor feedback (what is typically referred to as "workshop" in creative writing).

b) Workshop drafts should be uploaded in one Word document on Blackboard. If your creative piece depends upon experimental visual arrangement or formatting, please also submit a PDF so that we can be sure of your creative intention when responding. Drafts should be typed in 12-point Times, Garamond or Palatino Linotype unless an alternate format is necessary for the reading of your piece. Please make sure you add your full name, page number and title in the top right-hand header of your draft so that it shows up on each page. If you choose consciously not to title your poems, please refer to the first line in parentheses as your placeholder title for the sake of workshop discussion. *Please note:* learning the ropes of the writing profession means learning how to professionally submit our work to journals, contests and

other opportunities. Because of this, **workshop drafts which do not follow the guidelines provided will receive a grade penalty for lack of professionalism.**

c) *Late Workshop Drafts:* It is considered professionally rude to upload your drafts for workshop late. Because of this, **late submissions will lose one letter grade for each day they are late. I reserve the right to cancel a workshop if it is deemed that the writer has not given his/her/their peers reasonable time to provide good feedback.**

e) *Grading:* Your work will be evaluated based on how thoughtfully you have engaged elements of craft discussed in class as well as timeliness of submission.

4) POST-WORKSHOP REVISIONS: 15%

a) Inexperienced writers often gloss over the practice of revision, but learning how to revise our own work is a crucial skill for writers. You will revise the pieces you have submitted for workshop, using the feedback you have received in workshop and additional revision exercises provided in class.

b) For each revision, you must complete a revision plan for each piece, choosing and naming at least three strategies (from workshop or revision exercises). **When revising, please mark changes you make so that it's clear where you have revised** (i.e. italicize, highlight or bold your revisions in your revised draft).

c) *Grading:* Your work will be evaluated based on how thoughtfully you have engaged peer and instructor feedback, elements of craft discussed in class and timeliness of submission. *Note:* I do not expect you to make every change suggested in workshop. Part of the workshop experience is sifting through often conflicting feedback and making intentional choices about how to re-vision the creative piece on its own terms. I do expect to see substantial consideration of how to approach re-visioning your creative pieces, which include major structural considerations and alterations (for instance, taking the spine of the house and deciding to put in a new roof versus simply moving the chairs around in the room). For this reason, **please discuss your revision strategies in your process letter.** If you have questions about revision and feedback, I encourage you to discuss this with me during office hours.

5) PEER WORKSHOP FEEDBACK (15%):

a) Similar to your investment in your own reading and writing practices, investing in giving excellent feedback to your peers pays off in learning about the craft of writing. Because of this, your workshop feedback will be evaluated based upon the effort you have made in providing helpful feedback and upon whether or not you followed the parameters of the assignment. An excellent critique is a thorough, constructive critique that follows the format I provide. A poorly written response does not follow that format or is cursory or vague or disrespectful to the writer. Late responses will not be accepted for credit.

b) For each workshop draft, you will give feedback by downloading and following the guidelines provided for each cycle of workshop on Blackboard. **You will begin by writing a neutral description of the structure and content of the creative piece with a more bird's eye approach (endnote) before providing annotations (providing responses to specific word choices, lines and line breaks, etc). Please provide a**

minimum of three specific annotations of what works well and three specific annotations for revision suggestions.

c) There may be a rare occasion in which you think the creative piece is "perfect as is" and needs no revision. I will give one pass per quarter in which you can offer no suggestions for revision. Instead, you should use all six of your annotations to explain what's working well in the piece. However, if you often come to the conclusion that the draft is "perfect as is," I encourage you to look closer at the draft to consider other possibilities for the draft (versus what is wrong with the draft). This work is challenging and gets easier with practice.

6) ACADEMIC COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT + REFLECTION: 15%

You will design a lesson for a one-time creative writing workshop based on a poem from *WHEREAS* or *Surveillance*, which helps non-poetry readers make sense of the poem and guides them in writing their own poems based on historical documents or media coverage, making use of other kinds of everyday material. You will have the option to choose a specific community (except English majors or Creative Writing minors) to implement the lesson in person or to produce an audio (podcast) or video of the lesson for dissemination on the web. If needed, there is a lab with recording equipment in the Evans which we could access. In addition, students will write a short written reflection as part of their process letter.

7) ATTENDING A POETRY READING + READING RESPONSE:

a) **During the course of the quarter, you will attend at least one public poetry reading either organized by the creative writing department and write a reflective response, following the guidelines on Blackboard.** I will accept up to two additional reading responses for extra credit (to the tune of a missed experiment per additional reading response).

b) In the spring, SHSU partners with the National Book Foundation to bring National Book Award finalists to the Huntsville campus for a series of readings and events. Poet Danez Smith is one of the authors coming to campus. I expect you to attend this event unless your schedule conflicts. If so, you can propose an alternate poetry reading to attend, but you must send your proposal to me before approval. Local libraries, other universities and academic institutions, bookstores, coffee shops, and other art organizations often host readings. If you're unsure whether or not an event counts as a public poetry reading, please check in with me.

c) If I participate in a reading, my part of the reading should not be included in your response. Also, please do not use any event that you help organize for this assignment.

d) If you anticipate that attending public literary readings may be a challenge for you, I will accept as a substitute a reading response of our National Book Award visitor Danez Smith's book, *Don't Call Us Dead.*

8) FINAL CHAPBOOK PORTFOLIO + READING (15%):

a) At the end of the quarter, you will compile a revised sample of your writing from this quarter into a final portfolio chapbook. **Please include at least five substantially revised creative poems and a two-page process letter on your writing process. The final chapbook will count for 75% of your final portfolio grade.**

b) Our class will host a virtual open mic on the last day of class. You will record an audio or video reading of an excerpt from your chapbook which is less than three minutes to share. T**his reading will count as 25% of your final portfolio grade.**

COURSE PRACTICES

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

At the beginning of each unit, I will send out an announcement that details the work due for that unit as well as any relevant assignment instructions, due dates, and any special considerations to keep in mind. Check your university e-mail daily M-F. You are responsible for information and updates sent out about class via e-mail and to ensure that we are in e-mail contact.

ACCESSIBILITY + ACCOMMODATIONS

a) It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination.

b) If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical) that might affect your academic performance, please let me know as soon as possible. I am dedicated to cultivating a classroom environment that is as accessible as possible to all students. The Office of Services for Students with Disabilities will work with you to make arrangements for accommodations. It is located in the Counseling Center, Lee Drain Annex (tel. 936.294.1720).

ALTERNATE NAMES + GENDER PRONOUNS

I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun than what is listed on the class roster if you let me know.

NETIQUETTE + CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

a) In order to maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning, I expect everyone in the classroom to treat each other with respect and practice common courtesy. Discriminatory conduct will not be tolerated in the class or by the University. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect

to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, ability, and nationality.

b) In an online course, nonverbal cues taken for granted in face-to-face communication are largely absent. This means that it is often difficult to measure things like tone and intent. Because of this, I ask that you take extra caution when formulating your discussion posts and communicating electronically with your instructor and your classmates. Please use language that is professional, measured, and kind at all times. As with face-to-face classes, differences in perspective and disagreement on discussion topics will arise—these are healthy aspects of any intellectual exchange. In our online course, I ask that you take every precaution to ensure that your classmates know that any disagreements are with ideas only, not with individuals *as* individuals.

c) Also, keep in mind that each time you communicate—with your instructor, your peers, the class, or anyone else—whether it is in writing, conversationally, email, or online chatting, you are making a distinct impression on those with whom you communicate. Any email correspondence for the class should be as well written and thoughtfully considered as anything else you submit for the class.

d) Writing is an emotional process that can provoke intense feelings in anyone who takes it seriously. If you are having difficulty during the class, I encourage you to check in with me.

COMPUTER PROBLEMS

Please direct your questions about technology-related issues to SHSU Online. We all have problems with computers and saving work at some point. These problems do not excuse late work. There are multiple solutions to this: a flash drive, using your iPod, saving your work to your personal account on the server. If you have an assignment due on Blackboard and are having problems submitting your work, please contact Blackboard support at (936) 294-2780 or blackboard@shsu.edu. If all else fails, please e-mail me with your completed work **before** the deadline to avoid being marked late.

VIRTUAL OFFICE

a) In order to centralize class communication on syllabus- and course-related topics, please post questions concerning course logistics to the Virtual Office on Blackboard rather than sending e-mails to the instructors. If you have a question about logistics, chances are that someone else has the same or a similar question. We will field and respond to such queries in the Virtual Office space so that everyone who might have a similar question to yours can find the answer in one easy location. You may also post responses to fellow students' questions if you have answers for them. We will respond to Virtual Office questions within 24-48 hours, M-F.

b) Please don't post any questions or comments which don't pertain to all the students in the class, as this is a class discussion board viewable by all students. For questions concerning a more personal issue, please e-mail with the subject title, "ENGL 3382," and sign your name.

c) I will respond to direct emails, should an emergency arise or a question arise that cannot be answered through the Virtual Office, within 24 hours, M-F, 9a-5p CDT, unless otherwise specified. Please wait a full 24 hours before re-sending a duplicate message or making further inquiries once you have sent us an e-mail.

LEARNING PARTNERSHIP/OFFICE HOUR POLICY

It is important to me that you have a positive learning experience in my class. I view learning as a partnership between professor and students that requires mutual respect, regular preparation, and attentive communication. My office is open, and I welcome student visits. While I can't customize the course to meet each student's individual desires, if there's something I can do to improve your experience in my class, please let me know. Please feel free to discuss any class-related matter with me and especially to address significant issues when they occur. I encourage you to make an appointment ahead of time to ensure that I'm not meeting with another student during the time you want to talk to me. If my office hours don't work for your schedule, please e-mail me or talk to me after class.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

ACADEMIC HONESTY

a) All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

b) English Department policy states that a paper or assignment, which evidence can support as plagiarized or in any manner not the result of a student's own intellectual endeavors, will receive zero points. The second offense will result in failure of the course and possible university disciplinary action. Submitting your own previously written work for a current assignment or submitting an assignment in more than one class without the prior permission of the instructors is also considered academically dishonest.

c) A definition of academic dishonesty can be found at the following link: http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/728eec25-f780-4dcf-932c-03d68cade002.pdf. Students are expected to review this information and will be held accountable for it on all formal assignments.

d) Throughout the quarter, you will be asked to draw on and respond to the thoughts and ideas of published authors and other students. Many writers borrow from and are influenced by other writers, and use found text from the world in their work. In this class, I encourage you to do all of the above, but

to cite and recognize what you use. You should be using sources to do something fresh and original in your work, not merely copying (which would be plagiarism). If you are borrowing an idea, either express it in your own words, thus thinking it through and making it your own, and acknowledge the borrowing in a note, or use the exact words of the source in quotation marks and acknowledge with a note. To this end, the work you turn in must be your own, and all your sources cited properly, and it should be written during this quarter only. Please talk to me about this in office hours if you are confused or unsure about this.

RELIGIOUS *HOLY* DAYS

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. "Religious holy *day*" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT

The Code of Student Conduct and Discipline can be found at the following link: https://netreg.shsu.edu/mirror/codeofconduct.html. Students are expected to comply with the Code at all times.

INSTRUCTOR EVALUATIONS

Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

ENGL 3382 SPRING 18 INTRO TO POETRY COURSE SCHEDULE

Unless otherwise specified, all assignments are due by 11:59p on the due date. See Modules in Blackboard for specific instructions for each assignment.

~ like life, this syllabus is a roadmap, but the journey may change ~

Abbreviations:

PC = The Poet's Companion: A Guide to the Pleasures of Writing Poetry

W = Whereas

S = Surveillance

Date	Reading(s)	Assignments & Due Dates (Module Activities)
Week 1 Jan 18-19	Start Here Module	*By Fri:* 1) Add profile image 2) Introduction Post 3) Syllabus Quiz
Week 2 Jan 22-26	1) Module 1 Content 2) *PC:* "Writing and Knowing" (19-29); "Images" (85-91)	*By Tues:* 1) Experiment 1 2) Respond to 2 Peers' Intro Posts *By Fri:* 3) Lead Post

Week 3 Jan 29-Feb 2 *Feb 1: 12th class day. Last day to drop without a "Q" and receive 100% refund and to submit degree applications*	1) Module 2 Content 2) *PC:* "Poetry of Place" (74-79); "Simile and Metaphor" (94-101)	*By Tues:* 1) Experiment 2 2) Respond to 2 Peers' Lead Post 1 *By Fri:* 3) Lead Post 2
Week 4 Feb 5-9	1) Module 3 Content 2) *PC:* "Music of the Line" (104-111); "The Energy of Revision" (186-192)	*By Tues:* 1) Experiment 3 2) Respond to 2 Peers' Lead Post 2 *By Fri:* 3) Lead Post 3 (Practice Annotation & End Note)
Week 5 Feb 12-16	1) Module 4 Content 2) *W:* Part I (1-53)	*By Tues:* 1) Experiment 4 2) Post Revised Poem Draft for Workshop 1 *By Fri:* 3) Lead Post 4
Week 6 Feb 19-23	1) Module 5 Content 2) *PC:* "Voice and Style" (115-127) 3) *W:* "Introduction" + "(1) Whereas Statements" (54-85)	*By Tues:* 1) Respond to 2 Peers' Lead Post 4 2) Annotations & End Notes for Workshop 1A *By Fri:* 3) Lead Post 5

Week 7 Feb 26-Mar 2	1) Module 6 Content 2) *PC:* "Stop Making Sense: Dreams and Experiments" (129-134) 3) *W:* "(2) Resolutions" + "(3) Disclaimer" (86-101)	*By Tues:* 1) Respond to 2 Peers' Lead Post 5 2) Annotations & End Notes for Workshop 1B *By Fri:* 3) Annotations & End Notes for Workshop 1C
Week 8 Mar 5-9	1) Module 7 Content 2) *S:* All	*By Tues:* 1) Annotations & End Notes for Workshop 1D 2) Experiment 5 *By Fri:* 3) Annotations & End Notes for Workshop 1E
SPRING BREAK Mar 12-16		
Week 9 Mar 19-23	Module 8 Content	*By Tues:* 1) ACE Project Proposal for Lesson Plan 2) Experiment 6: Process Note *By Fri:* 3) Post-Workshop Revision
Week 10	Module 9 content	*By Tues:*

Mar 26-29 *SHSU closed Mar 30 for Good Friday*		1) Post 2 Revised Poem Sequence for Workshop 2 2) ACE Lesson Plan Draft *By Thurs:* 3) Annotations & End Notes for Workshop 2A
Week 11 Apr 2-6 *April 6: Last day to "Q" drop.* *Students cannot drop after this date; they will receive grade earned.*	Module 10 Content	*By Tues:* 1) Annotations & End Notes for Workshop 2B 2) ACE Project Small Group: Feedback on Lesson Plan *By Fri:* 3) Annotations & End Notes for Workshop 2C
Week 12 Apr 9-13	Module 11 Content	*By Tues:* 1) Annotations & End Notes for Workshop 2D 2) Experiment 7 *By Fri:* 3) Annotations & End Notes for Workshop 2E
Week 13	Module 12 Content	*By Tues:*

Apr 16-20 *Apr 16: National Book Awards Reading*		1) ACE Lesson Plan Revisions 2) Post-Workshop 2 Revision Plan + Revisions <u>By Fri:</u> 3) Upload Attending a Reading Response
Week 14 Apr 23-27	Module 13 Content	<u>By Tues:</u> 1) Post Portfolio Draft <u>By Fri:</u> 2) ACE Lesson Plan Implementation & Report-back
Week 15 Apr 30-May 4 *May 4: Last class day. Last day to resign by 5:00 p.m. in Registrar's Office.*	Module 14 Content	<u>By Tues:</u> 1) Annotations & End Notes for Small Group Portfolio Workshop <u>By Fri:</u> 2) Upload audio or video recording to virtual open mic space
FINALS WEEK May 7-10		<u>By Wed:</u> Upload Final Chapbook

Grades will be posted by Monday, May 14, 12:00 p.m.