Course Description: This course is designed to provide students with opportunity to advance their understanding of contemporary poetic forms and to develop their own strategies and procedures as makers of poetry. We will focus particularly on poetries that exist “off the page” as combinations of text, sound, image, and objects (or all-of-the-above). Students will present their own poetry productions for critical analysis and will in turn be called upon to critically engage their classmates’ efforts with an eye for providing constructive criticism for revision. Students will also be called upon to critically engage mixed-media works by contemporary poets and to become participants themselves in the greater literary community.

Required Texts and Materials

Because our focus is on mixed-media poetries, our objects of study will be delivered primarily vis-à-vis the internet or video/sound recordings.

A computer with high-speed internet connection, a microphone and printer (hopefully color). Access to some kind of digital camera (ideally with video capability). Mp3 player and headphones. Lots of paper and printer ink/toner. Time to read, think, and write. Willingness to muddle around with computer programs and other unfamiliar technologies.

Course Policies
Disability Services: Support services, including registration assistance and equipment, are available to students with documented disabilities through the Office of Disabled Student Services (DSS), MS 2.03.19. Students are encouraged to contact that office at 458-4157 prior to starting classes to make arrangements, though they can contact the office at any time. If you need accommodation related to a disability, please make an appointment with me to discuss your needs as soon as possible.

Scholastic Honesty: The University of Texas at San Antonio defines “scholastic dishonesty” as including but not limited to “cheating on a test or other class work, plagiarism (the appropriation of another's work in one’s own written work offered for credit), and collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing course work offered for credit).” University policy further dictates that “Should a student be accused of scholastic dishonesty, the faculty member may initiate disciplinary proceedings.” If at any time you are uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism, please make an appointment to meet with me. Should any student intentionally plagiarize or otherwise cheat in my class, I will lobby for their expulsion from the graduate program and from the university.

Classroom Conduct: Many of us will undoubtedly have divergent interests, approaches, ideologies, politics, academic experience, personal backgrounds, and more. The success of this class requires we engage these differences from intellectually open and informed perspectives. Your first responsibility as a participant in this class to show your classmates due respect and consideration. As explained in the Provost's statement on “Civility in the Classroom”: “Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. To assure all students have the opportunity to gain from time spent in class, students are prohibited from engaging in any form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result, minimally, in a request to leave class.” This policy is equally applicable in the virtual classroom—i.e., any on-line class discussions that may take place vis-à-vis WebCT.
Department Policy Regarding Student Writing And Behavior In Creative Writing Courses: Writing instructors may, at their sole discretion, refuse to workshop or comment upon any student work they deem patently offensive or outside their professional purview. Instructors should make every effort to communicate their standards so students know what is likely to be considered unacceptable. * If the instructor determines that a student's submission is unacceptable, they should inform the student and give him or her opportunity to submit an alternative work. If an instructor believes a student's writing or personal manner suggest they are emotionally unstable and may pose a risk to themselves or others, the instructor may insist the student see a professional counselor (through the university counseling center) as a condition for continued participation in the workshop. If the student's behavior violates the Student Code of Conduct, the instructor may file a referral with Student Judicial Affairs. Faculty may also, at their discretion, report concerns about student behavior to the UTSA police. In all cases, instructors should register their concerns with the Department Chair.

Relevant Web Contacts/Resources:
Counseling Services <http://www.utsa.edu/counsel/index.htm>
Student Judicial Affairs <http://www.utsa.edu/OSJA/index.cfm>
Student Code of Conduct <http://www.utsa.edu/infoguide/appendices/b.cfm>
UTSA Police Department <http://www.utsa.edu/utsapd/>

*Please be aware that I will not accept any work that is graphically depicts sexual or violent acts (no blood, no nudity), nor will I accept work that overtly endorses sexism or racism. If you have any doubt about whether I may consider a piece unacceptable, please check with me before presenting the work to the class.

Attendance: Students are expected to attend every class. Assignments will often be made in class, and it is your responsibility to find out what is expected of you. Moreover, much of our discussion will center on texts, movies, and sound-pieces that will be presented during class time. I will not necessarily be able to provide copies of these works or otherwise recreate the viewing experience. Since in-class writing assignments can not be "made up," and as being absent in no way excuses being unprepared for the following class or for failing to complete assignments, this means attending class is imperative. [See “Late Paper” policy.] Missing two classes excludes the possibility of earning an "A" in the course. Missing three classes will result in a failing grade. Only absences documented with a physician's note or from some other worthy source will be "excused." The professor will have the final say as to whether an absence will be excused regardless the reason. Religious Holidays: Students unable to attend classes on particular days because of sincerely held religious beliefs shall, without penalty, be excused from such classes and be given meaningful opportunity to make up examinations, graded activities or assignments provided the instructor is notified of their needs within the first two weeks of the term.

Late Assignements: Late assignments will be marked down one letter grade. If a student is absent the class period an assignment is due, his/her work will be marked down two letter grades.. (In other words, DO NOT SKIP CLASS TO FINISH AN ASSIGNMENT.)

Technology: Although this course requires that you develop your own mixed-media poetic productions, this is not finally a course about the technologies one might use to make such artwork. It is the student’s responsibility to work out whatever technological challenges their projects pose and/or to conceptualize projects that they’re technologically capable of producing. At the very least you’re going to need to be able to use MSPowerpoint and to be willing/able to learn basic image, sound and video manipulation using software of your choice. If you’re not at all technologically savvy, or if you haven’t the patience to train yourself to work with the technologies involved, this is not the right class for you.
Grade Distribution:

Semester Grades will be based on performance in the following areas and with the following approximate percentage breakdowns:

20% Participation. This class is student-centered and student-driven. In other words, you as students are responsible for determining much of its form and content. Your input, your intellectual curiosity, your imagination and enthusiasm shall determine just how “interesting,” “meaningful,” and “useful” it will be for you and your peers. Hence, your participation in class is mandatory. Students are expected to come to class prepared, to turn in assigned drafts and critiques on time, and to contribute positively to discussions. Participation grades will be based upon students’ attentiveness in class, ability to answer questions well, ability to ask intelligent questions, and willingness to interact productively in class discussions.

20% Process Assignments/In-Class Writing. Process Assignments are designed to help students fully engage in specific phases of the writing process and include: Idea Generation Exercises, Self-Assessment Exercises, Response Papers, and a Critical Journal.

10% Project Rationales (1-2pp each). For every major project a student presents to class for workshop (approximately 5 over the course of the semester) she will be asked to provide a rationale that explains her goals and explains why she undertook the particular approach or process.

10% Literary Event Responses (2-3pp each). Students are required to attend two approved literary events and to write a 2pp response for each describing the event and offering a critical analysis of the works/ideas presented.

10% Peer-Critiques and Discussion Leader Assignments (1p each). Students will be asked to lead discussions on peer’s poems and also to lead discussion on assigned texts. For these assignments, students should come to class prepared with points they want to make and questions they’d like to pose. For purposes of grading, students should turn into the instructor a 1-2pp outline of their points and questions.

20% Analytical Essay (5-8 pp). This paper should provide critical analysis of either a single poetic work or some general poetic concern/idea relevant to the topic of the course. Students will be required to submit an abstract of their argument for approval. They will also be asked to present a draft of their paper for peer critiques.

10% Final Project: This will be the culminating project of the course. Students are required to present a proposal and to get instructor approval before undertaking this project. These projects will be graded on complexity and quality of finished product (including attention to detail) as well as the quality of the writer’s presentation of the work and her rationale.

Grading Criteria: Your grade will be determined by both the timely completion of course requirements and the quality of your responses. Because an “A” requires work above and beyond basic course requirements, additional readings/response papers, poems, or critical work may be turned in at any time. Be aware that your class grade is heavily dependent on class discussion, your contribution to workshops, and other activities which cannot be made up.

“A” -- Regular attendance; no more than one absence; student is prepared for every class, shows that he/she has read the assignments, participates in every class in a positive and constructive way; student’s writing is virtually free of grammatical and spelling errors, is thoughtful, creative, interesting; student has turned in all required in-class writing and homework on time and student’s revisions are substantial and polished; student demonstrates enthusiasm in class and concern and dedication to the course itself; student is adult and responsive to others’ work and is encouraging and supportive to all other writers; student’s comments show both sensitivity and honesty; student has turned in pieces of creative writing or critical work beyond what has been assigned.
Grading Criteria

“B” -- Regular attendance; no more than two absences; student is prepared for every class, shows that he/she has read the assignments, participates in every class in a positive and constructive way; student’s writing has few grammatical and spelling errors, is thoughtful, creative; student has turned in all required in-class writing and homework and student’s revisions are substantial and polished; student demonstrates enthusiasm in class and concern and dedication to the course itself; student is adult and responsive to others’ work and is encouraging and supportive to all other writers.

“C” -- Regular attendance; no more than two absences; student is prepared for every class, shows that he/she has read the assignments, participates in every class in a constructive way; student’s writing, has some grammatical errors and/or lacks originality; student has turned in all required in-class writing and homework and student’s revisions are adequate; student often demonstrates enthusiasm in class; student is adult and responsive to others’ work and is encouraging and supportive to all other writers, and has attended one literary event and one response paper.

“D” -- Regular attendance; no more two absences; student is usually prepared for class, participation is lacking in quality; student’s writing has frequent grammatical errors, lacks originality; and/or is regularly not turned in on time; student may not have turned in all required in-class writing and homework; student’s revisions are adequate; however, student fails to show interest in other’s writing or in the class materials.

“F” -- Any performance less than that of a “D”

Disclaimer:

As professor, I reserve the right to alter this syllabus at any time and in any way I determine will serve the course goals. If you have concerns about the course, the professor, or other students, you are invited to express them proactively to me. I am always open to suggestions as to how participants’ needs and interests might best be served.