Professor: David Ray Vance  Telephone: 458-5359
Office: MB 2.450  E-mail: david.vance@utsa.edu
Office Hours: MW 2-3:30pm (and by appointment)

Course Description: This course provides students with an opportunity to advance their understanding of contemporary poetics and to develop their own strategies and procedures as writers of poetry. As this is a graduate-level course, students are expected to have previous workshop experience and to have a serious commitment to writing poetry. Students will submit their own poetry to the workshop process and will in turn be called upon to critically engage their classmates’ poems. Students will also be expected to critically engage the works of several contemporary poets and to become participants themselves in the greater literary community by producing a publishable book review on a volume of poetry published in the last 18 months. Students will submit a final portfolio of revised poems that takes into account the suggestions they received by way of the workshop. Attendance is mandatory.

NOTE: This course satisfies requirements for three of twelve semester credit hours of electives for an M.A. degree in English. It also satisfies requirements for three of the twelve semester credit hours required for the graduate certificate in creative writing.


Course Policies: Policy Regarding Student Writing And Behavior In Creative Writing Workshops: Creative Writing workshops are highly interactive courses in which students submit their own creative writing for review and, in turn, discuss and comment upon their peers’ submissions. This means that workshop participants determine much of the course content as they decide which of their works to submit for discussion and review. It also means that a single individual’s participation in the course has the potential to significantly impact the workshop experience for the rest of the students in the class. All students have a right to a safe and nurturing workshop environment and all workshop participants owe a duty of care to their classmates to be respectful to others and to see that their participation doesn’t compromise other students’ ability to partake in the class. That said, not all work is appropriate or acceptable for submission to the workshop, and work which denigrates people based on race, gender, sexual orientation, or ethnicity is expressly prohibited. Because students’ comments and behavior in class necessarily impact their classmates, it is
imperative that they maintain a professional attitude and assure their written and verbal comments are never dismissive, threatening or intimidating. Should the instructor determine that a student’s participation undermines the workshop’s effectiveness or creates an environment which is detrimental to or interferes with the learning and development of other students, he may bar the student from attending or otherwise participating in the class. This decision is entirely within the instructor’s discretion and the instructor’s decision is final. This policy is equally applicable in the virtual classroom—i.e., any on-line class discussions that may take place vis-à-vis Blackboard.

Attendance & Late Assignments: Graduate students are expected to attend each and every class, to come to class prepared, and to turn in assignments on time. Students who miss more than one class or turn in assignments late without providing a valid reason should expect their final grade to be docked one full letter. The professor shall be the final arbiter of what constitutes a valid reason, but documented medical issues, authorized university activities, and days of special concern (religious holidays, established days of cultural importance, etc.) will certainly be excused if properly documented. Students should inform the professor before missing a class or as soon thereafter as possible. You are responsible for making up any work missed and must make up assignments within a reasonable time after your absence. Habitual tardiness and/or coming to class unprepared will be treated in the same manner as unexcused absences.

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.

Contagion: Please do not come to class if you are sick and likely to infect others. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), most people recover from the flu (including H1N1) in about a week. That means if you get the flu, you’ll most likely not miss more than one class. And if you do need to miss more than one, remember that a doctor’s note can function to excuse absences. To prevent spreading the flu, the CDC recommends staying home “at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius) or signs of a fever (have chills, feel very warm, have a flushed appearance, or are sweating).” For further info, see: http://www.flu.gov/plan/school/studentfactsheet.html

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. For further information about Disability Services, visit their website at http://www.utsa.edu/disability/students.htm.

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. Please familiarized yourself with UTSA’s Student Conduct Code:

Grade Distribution:

25% Class Participation: Includes in-class writing assignments, the student’s overall contribution to class discussions (including assigned Blackboard discussions), and also her/his contributions as “discussion-leader” and “workshop leader” as assigned.

25% Weekly Writing Assignments: These will consist primarily of two page responses to assigned readings and/or literary events, but they may also include responses to writing prompts and/or reflective essays about the student’s writing process. Students will also be called upon to share favorite poems and writing exercises with the class.

25% Book Review Assignment: This review (4-5 pp = min. 1,400 words) will be of the sort one expects to find in a contemporary journal.

25% Final Portfolio: To include substantial revisions of poems submitted for workshop, 2 poetry event responses (2-3pp each), and a statement of poetics (2-3pp) discussing which poets’ works and which workshop experiences most influenced your poems and helped you develop during the semester. This essay is a chance for you to evaluate how your poetry changed over the semester.

For the purposes of determining grades on individual assignments and for overall course grades, the following scale applies: 90-100 A; 80-89 B; 70-79 C; 60-69 D; ≤59 F.

Disclaimer: As professor, I reserve the right to alter this syllabus at any time and in 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.
# 6043 (S11) Tentative Schedule

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>January</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Introductions – The syllabus, the course, grading, workshop contract, method and goals. Homework: 1) Sources/Samplings (1p front and back) – bring copies for all 2) Post to Blackboard a poem published after 1950 that you admire/aspire. 3) Print the posted poems (#2 above) and write comments/suggestions as for workshop.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>MLK Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Present Sources/Samplings  Workshop Dry Run  Discuss Readings  Homework: 1) Submit Poem 1 Draft (P1) to Blackboard dropbox by Wednesday, January 26th at 5pm – do not include your name anywhere in the document. I'll distribute compiled document via Blackboard. 2) Prepare P1s for Workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Start Workshop P1 (9)  Discuss Nowak (R1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Finish Workshop P1 (5) / Start P2 (5)  Discuss Strickland (R2)</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Finish Workshop P2 (9)  Discuss Cha (R3)</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Start Workshop P3 (9)  Discuss Rabinowitz (R4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Finish P3 (5) Workshop; Group Workshop of P4  Discuss Clark (R5)</td>
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<td>March</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Individual Conferences  Book Review Proposal Due</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Begin Workshop P5 (9)  Discuss Hayes (R6)</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Finish Workshop P5 (5) / Start P6 (5)  Discuss Naca (R7)</td>
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<td>April</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Finish Workshop P6 (9)  Discuss Rogaczewski (R8)</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Start Workshop P7 (9)  Discuss Torres. (R9)</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Finish Workshop P7 (5) / Complete any unfinished workshop business  Discuss Osman (R10)</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Final Discussions  Book Review Due</td>
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<td>May</td>
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<td>3 5-07:30 pm</td>
<td>Class Reading  Final Portfolio DUE  Presentation Copies</td>
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Workshop drafts (P#) are due on Blackboard on the Thursday (5pm) before we're scheduled to begin the relevant workshop. These due dates will be spelled out on Blackboard.

Reading Responses (R#) are due on Blackboard by noon the day the text is scheduled for discussion.
Book Discussion Leader Assignments:

Discussion leaders will not post a response to the blackboard discussion thread designated for their author. Instead, please post your response to the Discussion Leader Drop Box (by 5pm the day of the scheduled discussion). This response should be 3-5pp and should include a list of questions you plan to use to spark class discussion. To be clear, Discussion Leaders are not supposed to lecture or simply to use the opportunity to tell the class what they think. Rather, your goal should be to get the conversation moving in productive directions and to help keep it moving.

In most cases, two students will be assigned to serve as discussion leader for each poet. Please do coordinate with the person assigned to lead discussion with you so you each have adequate opportunity to drive the discussion. You'll also want to be sure that you don’t both have precisely the same questions or approaches.

Nowak (R1)

Strickland (R2)
1. 
2. 

Cha (R3)
1. 
2. 

Rabinowitz (R4)
1. 
2. 

Clark (R5)
1. 
2. 

Hayes (R6)
1. 
2. 

Naca (R7)
1. 
2. 

Rogaczewski (R8)

Torres (R9)
1. 
2. 

Osman (R10)