English 2333
Thursdays, 5:30-8:15 pm

Creative Writing-Poetry

Instructor: Jack Buentello
Room: MB 1.126

Content and Goals:
This course is an opportunity for students to study the art of writing poetry. It is an introductory course which assumes no previous experience in this genre. We will analyze poetry to understand how it is constructed. We will do in-class writing exercises to help students develop ideas, practice techniques, and understand the importance of inspiration and revision.

We will workshop student writing, and students will discuss and write comments which will be given to the writer as well as to the professor. Students will be required to turn in revisions of their work in a final portfolio. Students will be graded on the quality of their preparation and participation, their critical analysis of texts, oral and written critiques of student writing, and the quality and completion of writing assignments.

Requirements:
Class participation, in-class writing assignments; works of poetry and substantial revisions of each, typed critique leader papers; clearly written or typed notes on all your classmates’ workshopped pieces as well as assigned critiques, attendance & critique of one poetry event. All homework assignments must be typewritten/word processed.

Texts:
Drury, John, Creating Poetry (Writer’s Digest Books)

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/>
Grade Distribution

Class Participation 25%
(Includes: Discussion, Attendance, Verbal Workshop Critiques)

In-Class Writing Exercises 15%

Written critiques on class short works 25%

Writing (Final Portfolio) 35%
Includes: Critique of Poetry Event (5%),
2 Poems (10%), Revision of that work, (10%),
2 page Critique Leader notes (5%)
and all in-class writing exercises (5%)

Total 100%

Your Final Portfolio Should Include:

Poetry work shopped in class (copy with my comments on it)
Revision of that work
All in-class writing exercises
Your written critique as critique leader
Any responses to poetry events

Poetry Events
Attend any type of poetry event and turn in a response paper responding to the event. A response paper should be a typed, informal paper (1-2 pages) where the writer discusses his/her opinions of the event and/or writes a creative piece in response to the event. When attending these events, please remember to be a polite and mature audience member. If you strongly dislike an event, you should never leave in the middle or interrupt the performers. Take notes quietly for your response paper.

Literary Readings of Poetry in San Antonio
(Please run the event by the Professor for approval.)
Some readings will be announced in class.
Readings by writers at Gemini Ink, Twig Bookstore, Barnes & Noble

UTSA Creative Writing Reading Series
(Posted online under the UTSA English Dept. Creative Writing Program)
UTSA 1604 Campus
Assembly Room, John Peace Library (4.03.08)

Sagebrush Literary Journal Readings
(Posted online under the UTSA English Dept. Creative Writing Program)

Gemini Ink First Friday Readings
“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, student’s writing is free of grammatical and spelling errors, is thoughtful, creative, interesting, and original; 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 responsive to others’ work and is encouraging and supportive to all other writers; student has participated in at least one outside “literary” event.

“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, and above all, original; student has turned in all required in-class writing and homework on time and student’s revisions are substantial and polished; student is responsive to others’ work and is encouraging and supportive to all other writers.

“C”
Regular attendance; no more than three 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 lacks originality; student has turned in all required in-class writing and homework on time and student’s revisions are adequate; student often demonstrates enthusiasm in class; student is responsive to others’ work and is encouraging and supportive to all other writers.

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

“F” is any performance less than that of a “D”

Workshop Critique Directions

Critique Leader: (5%)
You will each be a critique leader for poetry written by another writer in class. The “Critique Leader” will open and lead the discussion on that work. He/she should plan to spend about 5-10 minutes talking and lead a class discussion on the work. The critique leader is required to turn in a 2 Page (typed, double-spaced) critique that is worth 5% of the total course grade. Your in-class critique and your written critique count toward your grade.

Poem Critiques: (15%)
For each work you read, you are asked to type 1-2 pages of critique notes. You will also write critiques on the works themselves. Quote from the works as necessary. You should use correct terms as appropriate (subject, meter, consonance, etc.) and should pay attention to language and how it is used to convey emotion, describe an object, paint a picture, etc. It is not enough to say something is “good” or that you liked it, you need to say why. You should come to class prepared to speak about the works as part of your participation grade.
Creative Writing: Fiction 2333
Syllabus Spring 2010

Week One:  August 30
Syllabus, discussion of texts & course & guidelines.
In-class exercise: Introduction

Week Two   September 6
Discuss Assigned Reading
In-class exercise: Preparing to be a Poet
Drury: Introduction, p. 9-24

Week Three  September 13
Discuss Assigned Reading
In-class exercise: The Language of Poetry
Drury: p.25-41

Week Four   September 20
Discuss Assigned Reading
In-class exercise: Sight in Poetry
Drury: 42-51

Week Five   September 27
Discuss Assigned Reading
In-class exercise: Movement
Drury: p. 62-84

Week Six    October 4
Discuss Assigned Reading
In-class exercise: Shaping a Poem
Drury: p. 85-100
(Poetry copies due October 11 for class workshop)

Week Seven  October 11
Discuss Assigned Reading
In-class exercise: Patterns & Tradition
Drury: p. 101-136
Poems Due: Sign Up for Workshop, Discuss Critiques, Leaders

Week Eight  October 18
Discuss Assigned Reading
Drury: Voice: p.137-146
Workshop poems
Week Nine  
**October 25**
Discuss Assigned Reading  
Drury: Sources of Inspiration p 147-166  
Workshop poems

Week Ten  
**November 1**
Discuss Assigned Reading  
Drury: Things to Write About p. 167-179  
Workshop poems

Week Eleven  
**November 8**
Discuss Assigned Reading  
Drury: Other Arts, Other Influences p. 180-190  
Workshop poems

Week Twelve  
**November 15**
Discuss Assigned Reading  
Drury: Finishing p. 191-199  
Workshop poems  

**November 22  Thanksgiving**  
Thanksgiving Holiday  
No Class

Week Thirteen  
**November 29**
Publishing Your Poetry  
Workshop poems

Week Fourteen  
**December 6**
Discuss Portfolio  
Workshop poems (Retakes)

Week Fifteen  
**December 13**
Final Questions/Revisions

Week Sixteen  
**December 15 (Saturday) Spring Finals 5:00-7:30**  
All Portfolios Dues-No Exception
### English 2333: Sign-up for Critiques

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Critique Guidelines

1. On the first read, jot down your immediate reactions to the work: how it made you feel, what parts were compelling, if the poem worked or not, etc. Set these aside for later.

2. Then, re-read the poem. This time, try to understand it from a writer’s point of view. What is the author trying to achieve? What style & voice is the author writing in, and how does that inform the rest of the poem. It may help you to relate the piece to a “great” poet’s work. What does this tell us about what the author might be trying to achieve?

3. Does the diction suit the style, the characters, and the ideas? How is language, sound, etc. used?

4. Point of View: What is the point of view? Who is telling their story if anyone? Is this the best point of view for this particular work?

5. If there’s dialogue: is it believable? Does it suit the characters in the poem? Do you know who is speaking at all times? How does this dialogue help or hinder the poem? What is its purpose?

6. How is description used in the poem & why? Does it affect all your senses?

7. Are there clichés? Can these be replaced with original phrases/metaphors/similes?

8. Are the characters realistic human beings? Are they cardboard characters?

9. Does the voice suit the poem? What is the best voice for this poem?

10. Does the poem linger in your mind? Do you want to read more of the same?

11. Does the beginning work? Does it draw you in? Is there a better place to begin?

12. Is this poem original? Told in an original way? What is unique about it?

13. Overall, what are the weaknesses of this work? Why? What does the author need to do?

15. Overall, what are the strengths of this work? Why? What does the author do the best?

As critique leader, you may want to begin with a few of these questions, then open up a discussion, returning to some of your other ideas later. There are many other questions that we will ask as the course progresses; these are a few to get you started. It is most important that you are honest in your critiques, but that doesn’t necessitate abuse. If you’re criticizing the work, try to make a suggestion for how to improve it, or ask the class to help you to do this. Always remember, this is not YOUR work. Try to put yourself in the author’s shoes, and figure out how the author would best achieve his/her goals. At the same time, you should think about what it is like to receive the critique you’re getting ready to give; find strengths as well as weaknesses.
Write responses to the following questions on this sheet or on a separate sheet of paper:

1. Why kind of poetry do you want to learn to write?

2. What do you hope to learn in this class?

3. Who are your favorite poets/poems and why?