

**ENGLISH 3304: Creative Writing: Poetry Workshop**  
**“Form and Theme in Lyric Poetry”**  
**TR 9:30-10:45**  
**Carroll Science 204**

**Instructor:** Dr. Tim DeJong

**Office:** Carroll Science Building 412

**Office Hours:** MW 12:30-2:30, T 11:00-1:00, and by appointment (Zoom or in-person)

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**Course Description**

This course focuses on the practice of writing poetry. Students will write and workshop their own poems, forming a supportive community of writers. We will also read and discuss a wide range of published poetry, leading to new understandings of the techniques, traditions, and possibilities of form and language. Each student will produce a number of poems throughout the semester, as well as a final portfolio of revised work. Our particular focus will be on learning some of the forms and themes common to lyric poems, with an emphasis on considering how these aspects of poetry interconnect. No previous experience with writing poetry is required.

**Course Objectives**

By the end of this course, you will have developed the skills to:

1. read poetry closely, carefully attending to techniques such as imagery, simile, metaphor, tone, form, and style, and considering the cultural, societal, and spiritual contexts of the work.
2. discuss poetry in a workshop format, providing thoughtful, supportive, and generative feedback on your classmates' work.
3. demonstrate an awareness of contemporary poetry, developed through considering a wide range of published poets' techniques and styles.
4. explore and develop your own voice and style on the page.
5. revise your poems, incorporating suggestions or ideas gathered through the workshop process.

**Course Texts**

**\*\*\*Please note that hard copies of the course texts in the same edition as listed here are required for this course. See me if this poses a challenge for you.**

Sylvia Plath, *The Collected Poems* (HarperCollins, 2008)

Brigit Pegeen Kelley, *Song* (BOA Editions, 1995)

Terrance Hayes, *American Sonnets for My Past and Future Assassin* (Penguin, 2018)

Solmaz Sharif, *Customs* (Graywolf, 2022)

Notebook or journal for in-class writing exercises

Additional poems, available on Canvas, may be required as printouts

**Grade Breakdown**

Attendance and Participation	20%
Workshop Poems (9x3%)	27%
Reading Responses (3x6%)	18%
Oral Presentation	10%
Final Poetry Portfolio	25%

**Classroom Expectations / Attendance and Participation**

You are expected to show up to class having read the required material and prepared to contribute to the discussion. Broadly speaking, your attendance and participation grade derives from three factors: (1) regular attendance in class; (2) active, regular, and respectful verbal participation in class discussion; and (3) intentional, thorough completion of in-class writing assignments.

Attendance at all class sessions is required. Please notify me in advance of any absence explaining the reason for the absence. Any missed class work can only be made up at a later date only for valid reasons, such as a documented illness or a university sponsored-trip. If you are required to miss class for any such reason, just let me know; excused absences will not count against your grade and I will help you get caught up on anything you’ve missed.

While attendance is required, note that attendance alone is insufficient for a high attendance and participation grade. Active participation in class discussions and workshops is also expected.

Much of the class material will be poems (and perhaps the occasional essay or prose piece) posted on Canvas. You are encouraged, though not required, to bring printed copies of these poems—as well as the poems written by your peers, during workshops—and other materials to class. I will tentatively and somewhat reluctantly allow the use of laptops to read and use course materials posted online. However, laptops may only be used for that purpose or for other purposes directly related to the class. I reserve the right to withdraw the laptop use policy if I observe repeated use of social media or any other websites unrelated to the course and class session.

Smartphone use of any kind is not permitted during class time. Please put your phones away at the beginning of class and leave them stowed away until we complete the class session. In an emergency situation in which you are contacted by or need to contact someone during class time, please step outside of the classroom to use your phone. Otherwise, phone use will be noted by me, either publicly or in my class records, and will result in an automatic penalty to your attendance and participation grade.

### **Workshop Poems**

Over the course of the semester, you will produce nine poems which you will workshop in class together with your peers. Different formal and/or thematic guidelines may be imposed for each poem in order to encourage you to practice different forms of poetry and creative thinking and writing. For each class workshop session, I’ll set up a discussion board where you can upload your poems in .docx format.

***Poems must be submitted to the relevant discussion board on Canvas by the end of the workday on the day before class, that is, by 5:00 p.m. on the Monday or Wednesday before class.***

For each workshop poem that you submit, you will be expected to write a brief 50–100-word introduction to the poem that offers a quick summary of the poem’s origin, context, and/or aims. You will include this introduction in your discussion post on Canvas when you upload your poem. Basically, you’ll want to summarize for us what the poem is about and how or why you came up with it. We will use these brief introductions in the workshop setting to situate and facilitate our discussions of the poems.

Since submitting work on time is crucial to the success of any workshop, there will be a one-point deduction per day for poems submitted late, i.e. you will only receive two-thirds of the possible points for that poem once it is a day late, one-third if it is two days late, and so on. Otherwise, completed workshop poems will receive a “completion grade,” that is, you will receive full points for submitting the poem on time. However, you *cannot* bring a revised version of the poem to the workshop after submitting it online. The poem that appears on Canvas will be the poem we discuss. So, make sure that it reflects your genuine, considered effort to complete the assignment.

### **Reading Responses**

During the term, you will be required to write three reading responses on any three of the poems assigned to the class. Reading responses will be submitted online via on Canvas. Once the class session in which we discuss a given poem has been completed, you have up until the end of the week to submit a reading response on that poem. Once we have moved on to other poems, reading responses may no longer be

submitted for previous poems we have discussed. You may not write a reading response on the same poem you choose for your oral presentation.

To encourage you to submit your responses in a timely fashion rather than leaving them all until the end of term, one fixed due date is in place: you must have submitted *two of your three* reading responses by **March 28**. A second reading response that is handed in after this date will be considered late and will be penalized at a rate of 2% per day. Your third reading response must be turned in by **April 23**.

Each reading response should list your name, the course name, the instructor’s name, and the date, in the left-hand margin. They should begin with an interesting, provocative title. They must be typed in 12-point Times New Roman, and be **400-600** words in length. They will be graded for both style and content, out of a maximum of twenty points. More information about the reading responses will be distributed early in the semester.

### **Oral Presentation**

On one of the last class sessions of the semester, you will lead your classmates in a discussion of a poem of your choosing. It can be a poem from any of the course texts that we have not discussed in class, or a poem from the list of poems I will compile on Canvas under the heading “Poems for Further Reading.” You can also choose a different poem to present on, but you must confirm with me beforehand that the poem is a suitable one to present on.

The goal will be to guide the class through your reading of the poem, using whatever techniques you feel will be useful, including a writing exercise, a discussion, the use of technologies such as PowerPoint, and/or your own questions and thoughts about the poem. Generally, the point of your presentation should be to explain why the poem succeeds, i.e. how it works to generate meaning. More information on the oral presentation, including a rubric, will be given in class.

### **Final Poetry Portfolio**

Your final poetry portfolio will be due at the end of the semester and will comprise a total of ten poems. At least six, and as many as nine, of the poems in your portfolio should be revised versions of the poems you produced for the class workshops. This means that at least one, and up to four, of the poems in your portfolio will be poems you produce independently of the workshop, ideally over the course of the semester as we engage in reading and writing poems together. Poems produced for workshops are required to follow the formal or thematic guidelines imposed for that workshop. Poems produced independently of the workshops can take any form you wish.

You will be required to preface the ten poems in your portfolio with an artist’s statement of 800-1000 words explaining how you arrived at these particular poems. You can discuss the thematic connections between the poems, explain which poems you chose to include and why, explain the ordering of the poems, discuss the revision process for the poems, and/or discuss how your understanding of poetry and its composition has evolved over the course of the semester.

In grading your final poetry portfolio, the two main criteria I will consider are (1) the quality of the poems and (2) evidence of effort and care in their writing. For this second criterion, I will have access to the original poems you wrote for workshop, and so part of your grade will emerge through my comparison between the original poems and the revised ones. Your artist’s statement will also be an important document comprising evidence of the attention and effort you have invested into your poetry.

## Baylor Writing Center

Studying and writing poetry also involves and requires being able to write good prose. The mission of the Baylor Writing Center is “to assist all members of the Baylor University community—undergraduate and graduate students (both in-person and online), faculty, and staff from all disciplines—by working with them to improve their writing projects, to develop skills and abilities that will help them become more effective, more confident writers, and to make writing a more meaningful, productive, and enjoyable process.” The Writing Center is a valuable university resource that you are highly encouraged to make use of during the semester. The Baylor Writing Center is located in Moody Memorial Library, 2nd West. They can be reached at 254-710-4849 or via email at [uwc@baylor.edu](mailto:uwc@baylor.edu). More information: see [baylor.edu/english/index.php?id=948048](http://baylor.edu/english/index.php?id=948048).

## Important Dates

**January 31** is the last day to drop and add classes without receiving a W (Withdrawal) on one’s transcript. **April 3** is the last day of the semester on which a class can be dropped.

## Grading Policy

Grades will be distributed according to the following scale established by the College of Arts and Sciences at Baylor University:

93-100%	A	77-79%	C+
90-92%	A-	73-76%	C
87-89%	B+	70-72%	C-
83-86%	B	60-69%	D
80-82%	B-	0-59%	F

## Note on Plagiarism

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. One form of plagiarism is presenting someone else’s work as one’s own, whether in part or in full. A second form of plagiarism is using sources without including the proper citation. This includes copying words from a source, but also includes borrowing ideas, *even if paraphrased*, without giving credit. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence which will result in, at minimum, a grade of 0 on the paper in question and, at maximum, automatic failure of the course.

The use of AI chat bots such as ChatGPT also counts as plagiarism and will be treated as such. Turnitin has added an extension that checks not only for plagiarism in its traditional forms but for AI use. This extension will also be in effect for all submitted work in the course. *Any suspected* instance of plagiarism in *any of its forms*—whether traditional methods or the use of AI— will be reported to the Honor Council and/or the Office of Academic Integrity at Baylor. This will apply for *all submitted written work*. You are expected to be familiar with Baylor’s Honor Code and policies, available to read online at [www.baylor.edu/honorcode](http://www.baylor.edu/honorcode), or see <https://www.baylor.edu/risk/doc.php/343035.pdf>. As instructor, I reserve the right to penalize plagiarism to the fullest extent possible, including expulsion from the course and a permanent record on the offending student’s transcript.

## Turnitin Policy

Baylor University subscribes to the Turnitin.com Anti-Plagiarism service, a site that monitors student papers and detects plagiarism. This site is intended to help both students and professors conduct themselves ethically throughout the course. I will be requiring you to submit all your essays through Turnitin.com, so I am providing you with the following disclaimer: *Students agree that by taking this course, all required papers, exams, class projects or other assignments submitted for credit may be submitted to Turnitin.com or similar third parties to review and evaluate for originality and intellectual*

*integrity. A description of the services, terms and conditions of use, and privacy policy of Turnitin.com is available on its web site. Students understand all work submitted to turnitin.com will be added to its database of papers. Students further understand that if the results of such a review support an allegation of academic dishonesty, the course work in question as well as any supporting materials may be submitted to the Honor Council for investigation and further action.*

### **Title IX**

Baylor University does not discriminate on the basis of sex or gender in any of its education or employment programs and activities, and it does not tolerate discrimination or harassment on the basis of sex or gender. This policy prohibits sexual and gender-based harassment, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, stalking, intimate partner violence, and retaliation (collectively referred to as prohibited conduct). For more information on how to report, or to learn more about our policy and process, please visit [www.baylor.edu/titleix](http://www.baylor.edu/titleix). You may also contact the Title IX office directly by phone, 254-710-8454, or email, [TitleIX\\_Coordinator@baylor.edu](mailto:TitleIX_Coordinator@baylor.edu).

### **Academic Accommodations**

Any student requiring academic accommodation owing to a mental or physical disability should inform me immediately at the beginning of the semester. As student, you are responsible for obtaining appropriate documentation and information regarding needed accommodations from the Baylor University Office of Access and Learning Accommodation (OALA) and providing it to me early in the semester. Contact the OALA at 254-710-3605. More information is available online at <http://www.baylor.edu/oala>.

### **Crises and Emergencies**

BUCC Crisis Line: (254) 710-2467 (Business Hours/Non-Business Hours/Weekends)

Baylor Police Department: (254)710-222

MHMR Crisis Center: (254)867-6550

MHMR 24-Hour Emergency/Crisis Number: (254)752-3451

When home during academic breaks, when the counseling center is closed, please call your local resources. Some national numbers for support during a crisis:

National Hope Network Hotline: 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>READINGS (all on Canvas except for books listed in syllabus as Course Texts)</b>	<b>DUE</b>
Jan 16	Course Introduction / What is Lyric?	Sappho, “Fragment 31”	
Jan 18	<b>UNIT ONE: LYRIC FORMS</b> What is Lyric? (cont’d) Lyric Forms: Blank Verse	William Wordsworth, “Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey” W.B. Yeats, “The Second Coming”	
Jan 23	Lyric Forms: Sonnet	John Donne, “Batter my heart, three-person’d God” William Shakespeare, “Sonnet 73” Gerard Manley Hopkins, [“As Kingfishers Catch Fire”] Robert Hayden, “Those Winter Sundays” Joe Bolton, “The Name of Desire” Dianne Seuss, [“There’s something to be said for having one plate, one spoon”]	
Jan 25	Workshop #1		Poem for Workshop #1 (Jan 24 5:00 p.m.)
Jan 30	Lyric Forms: Ode and Villanelle	John Keats, “Ode to a Nightingale” Ross Gay, “Ode to Buttoning and Unbuttoning my Shirt” Ashanti Anderson, “Ode to Black Skin” Dylan Thomas, “Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night” Elizabeth Bishop, “One Art” Tracy K. Smith, “Solstice”	
Feb 1	Workshop #2		Poem for Workshop #2 (Jan 31 5:00 p.m.)
Feb 6	Lyric Forms: Pantoum, Ghazal, and Golden Shovel	Randall Mann, “September Elegies” Oli Hazzard, “Pantoum in Which Wallace Stevens Gives Me Vertigo” Agha Shahid Ali, “Even the Rain” Marilyn Hacker, “Ghazal: The Dark Times” Terrance Hayes, “The Golden Shovel”	
Feb 8	Workshop #3		Poem for Workshop #3 (Feb 7 5:00 p.m.)
Feb 13	<b>UNIT TWO: LYRIC THEMES</b> Self and Identity	Frank O’Hara, “Adieu to Norman, Bonjour to Joan and Jean-Paul” Sharon Olds, “I Go Back to May 1937” Jaime Zuckerman, “Poem for the Nestling that Died in a Blue Soup Bowl” Thomas Lux, “Render, Render” Jennifer Chang, “Again a Solstice” James Davis May, “Depression in Saint-Méloir-des-Ondes”	
Feb 15	Love and Relationships	Marie Howe, “What the Living Do” Donald Justice, “Men at Forty” C.K. Williams, “Exhaust” Leah Naomi Green, “The More Extravagant Feast”	

		Christian Wiman, “All You Shining Stars”	
Feb 20	Faith and Mortality	Christian Wiman, “All My Friends Are Finding New Beliefs” Jean Valentine, “I came to you” Ellen Bass, “What Did I Love” Carrie Fountain, “First” Mark Strand, “Black Maps” Jay Hopler, “love & the memory of it” Jay Hopler, “The Vacation Over”	
Feb 22	Workshop #4		Poem for Workshop #4 (Feb 21 5:00 p.m.)
Feb 27	Place	John Ashbery, “The One Thing That Can Save America” Mark Strand, “Our Masterpiece is the Private Life” Ernest Hilbert, “For Lynn, At Lake Nockamixon” Kim Addonizio, “Kansas, 4 A.M.” Bob Hicok, “A Primer” Rick Barot, “A Poem as Long as California”	
Feb 29	Narrative	Sharon Olds, “The Clasp” John Murillo, “Dolores, Maybe” Kevin Prufer, “Into the Weeds” Philip Levine, “You Can Have It”	
Mar 4-8	<b>Spring Break (no class)</b>		
Mar 12	Workshop #5		Poem for Workshop #5 (Mar 11 5:00 p.m.)
Mar 14	Attention	Rainer Maria Rilke, “Archaic Torso of Apollo” Elizabeth Bishop, “The Fish” Lisa Russ Spaar, “Whole Foods” Robert Hass, “The Woods in New Jersey” Charles Wright, “American Twilight”	
Mar 19	Attention	Jeffrey Harrison, “Entry in a Baby Book: Two Weeks” Craig Arnold, “Meditation on a Grapefruit” Rick Barot, “Tarp” Lisa Muradyan, “I Just Need You to Know that Chickens are Basically Dinosaurs” V. Penelope Pelizzon, “Cliché”	
Mar 21	Workshop #6		Poem for Workshop #6 (Mar 20 5:00 p.m.)
Mar 26	<b>UNIT THREE: LYRIC SELVES</b> Sylvia Plath, <i>The Complete Poems</i>	Sylvia Plath, <i>The Complete Poems</i> [selected poems]	
Mar 28	Sylvia Plath, <i>The Complete Poems</i>	Sylvia Plath, <i>The Complete Poems</i> [selected poems]	Two Reading Responses
Apr 2	Brigit Pegeen Kelly, <i>Song</i>	Brigit Pegeen Kelly, <i>Song</i> [selected poems]	
Apr 4	Workshop # 7		Poem for Workshop #7 (Apr 3 5:00 p.m.)

Apr 8	<b>Diadeloso (no class)</b>		
Apr 11	Terrance Hayes, <i>American Sonnets for My Past and Future Assassin</i>	Terrance Hayes, <i>American Sonnets for My Past and Future Assassin</i> [selected poems]	
Apr 16	Workshop #8		Poem for Workshop #8 (Apr 15 5:00 p.m.)
Apr 18	Solmaz Sharif, <i>Customs</i>	Solmaz Sharif, <i>Customs</i> [selected poems]	
Apr 23	Workshop #9		Poem for Workshop #9 (Apr 22 5:00 p.m.); Final Reading Response
Apr 25	Oral Presentations		Oral Presentation
Apr 30	Oral Presentations		Oral Presentation
May 2	Oral Presentations (if necessary), Course Wrap-Up		Final Poetry Portfolio