English 459.090
ADVANCED POETRY WORKSHOP
TR 9:30-10:45/Spring 2019
Dr. Christine Butterworth-McDermott
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Official Course Description:
Classroom analysis and discussion of student writing. Prerequisites: 12 hours of English including ENG 261 and ENG 359 or graduate standing or consent of instructor. May be repeated once for up to 6 hours.

Details:
This course is a continuation of the skills we've learned in 359. Obviously, this course requires a lot of writing. You will complete a collection of 8-10 linked poems (how they are linked is up to you). There will also be plenty of workshopping of your own and others’ poetry. We will also be talking about published work; why it is successful, what the author intended to do with the work and how he/she achieved that effect. You'll be mimicking the work of famous poets in order to learn things about craft and polish your own work.

Required Materials:
- Jamaal May, *Hum*
- Aimee Nezhukumatathil, *At the Drive-in Volcano*
- Catherine Pierce, *The Tornado is the World*
- You’ll need plenty of money for copies.
- You need dedication to your own work & making others’ work the best it can be.

459 helps to meet these Program Learning Outcomes:
- The student will demonstrate close reading skills and recognize strategies used by professional creative writers.
- The student will employ these techniques and strategies, crafting carefully composed, competent creative work in poetry.
- The student will articulate useful, critical editorial advice for peer writers.
- The student will demonstrate strategic revision on completed creative work.
- The student will compose a complete, polished manuscript of substance.
**Grade Breakdown**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<td>5%</td>
<td>Attendance</td>
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<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Professionalism</td>
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<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Class Discussion (on professional poetry)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Question/Observation assignments (4)</td>
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<td>20%</td>
<td>Poems inspired by poets (4)</td>
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<td>Poems for workshop (2)</td>
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<td>20%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Written comments (10%)</td>
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<td>Oral comments (10%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Final Project (8-10 linked poems)</td>
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******PLEASE NOTE: All assignments must be turned in hard copy and emailed.******

**NOTE:** You may not turn in work for another class into this class. If a poem has been graded/edited by another professor, I reserve the right to not accept and/or grade it as it has already been looked at by a professional.

**Attendance (5%)**

If you want to do well in this course, I would strongly suggest you attend every class period. There will be numerous discussions, group interactions, and several assignments. Your eventual grade will benefit from high attendance and active participation. If you aren’t here, I count you as absent. If you are asleep in my class, you are absent. Please plan your absences wisely and please inform me if there are extenuating circumstances to you not attending class.

- 0-1 absences = A  
- 2 absences = B  
- 3 absences = C  
- 4 absences = D  
- 5 absences = F  
- 6 absences = **fail the course**  
- sleeping in class = 1 absence  
- coming in late/leaving early = 1/2 absence*

Being absent is **not an excuse for missed information or assignments**. You should either e-mail a classmate (or me) to find out what went on in class if you are not able to attend. You should pick up any missed packets or material. You must be responsible for all the material discussed in class on the days you were absent.

**Discussion (10%)**

We will be reading several collections of poetry. You’ll be expected to comment on them in class, having a conversation about the poet’s craft (their techniques in terms of image, placement, lineation, & sound). It should be evident that you’ve read the entire collection and understand its arc.

We will also be having two professional poets as our guests on 2/7. You will need to talk to them. ☺ Here’s your opportunity to ask them questions about their work and the writing life.
**Professionalism (5%)**
A portion of your grade is devoted to your ability to be professional and turn in all materials neatly and on time. This includes Assignments, Poems, Workshop comments. This also includes interactions and email correspondence. I will grade you on whether:

a) you bring your hard copy.

b) you email your material to mcdermotc@sfasu.edu in a doc or docx file. This email must have a subject & a short note: “Hi, Dr. C., here’s my Rasmussen mimic poem.” Emails must come before class time.

c) you turned things in on time (at the beginning of class, I don’t accept late work).

d) everything is included and all requirements are met

e) everything is in the correct format (heading, correct genre format, correct font).

f) you have taken your assignment seriously (rather than phoning it in).

**Extra Information**

- Work will not be accepted late.
- If you do not show up to turn in your assignments, you will not be allowed to turn them in late or via email. Please email your assignment prior to class if you cannot attend.
- If you do not show up to your workshop day, you may not include those poems in your final project.
- Your poems & all assignments should be meticulously proofread and presented in the most professional manner. If they have errors in grammar, spelling, etc., you will receive one grade lower than the poems warrant.
- Two missed assignments (papers, poems, etc) will constitute failure of the class.

**4 Poems Inspired by Poets (20%)**
We will read four collections by professional poets, ½ the collection for each class period. Choosing one poem from the section you read, you will then create your own poem written in the style of the author we are reading. For example, if we were to study Mark Doty, who is highly imagistic and likes to write in tercets, you would have a poem that has both those qualities. You will include a one paragraph explanation (on a separate page) of what aspects of the craft of a particular poem you chose inspired you and how you used it in your work. The poems you create for these assignments must also fit your final project. DUE DATE: Rotates.

**4 Questions/Observation Assignments (10%)**
On the days when you don’t have a poem due, you will be asked to write 2-3 sentences about the craft of the poet in general, or a question you might have about the poet’s technique in a series of poems. This question/observation must specifically cover the assigned reading material. You will turn this in (typed) at the beginning of the class. DUE DATE: Rotates.
2 Poems for Workshop (10%)

This assignment will consist of 2 poems that fit your theme that will be workshopped by the class. Poems shouldn’t be longer than a page unless the lines are short. This assignment will also include a brief introduction explaining your project and how these poems fit it and/or what you were trying to achieve as a craftsperson.

We will workshop 4 poems in one day. Your two will be ½ a workshop. You will need to make enough copies for the class and me and them turn in the day before your workshop.

DUE DATE: Rotates

Do not double side your work. I may do this for example work, but when you turn in your poems they should be single-sided. Remember, too, all formatting affects the overall feeling/reading of the poem, so don’t put something into columns or double-space unless you intend to.

Grading for Poems:

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• All work MUST be turned in on the due date (at the beginning of class) or it will not be counted. Please also email your poems to me.

• If you do not turn in your work on time in class, I will not accept it, you cannot workshop it, and it cannot be revised. You will receive a 0/F for that assignment.

• All poems will be graded on professional format, spelling, etc.

• I will include comments about how you can improve the poems. All comments will focus on how well you employ the elements of poetry.

• I will see how well you take my suggestions in your final draft (how thoughtful, extensive, etc. your revisions are)

What Grades Mean in terms of poetry:

A      exceptional use of imagery, language, placement, line length, and sound to highlight a specific message/idea. If rhyme is used it does not lean toward verse. Presented professionally. Poem is original in imagery & idea as well as sophisticated in use of craft

B      well-defined use of imagery, language, placement, line length, and sound to highlight a specific message/idea. If rhyme is used it does not lean toward verse. Poem is original in imagery & idea as well as sophisticated in use of craft, professionally presented in correct format. Not as original/sophisticated as an A but could get there with revision

C      simplistic or derivative use of imagery, language, placement, line length, and sound to highlight a specific message/idea, but presented in correct format. Rhyme leans toward verse. Revision would improve poem.
poorly developed use of imagery, language, placement, line length, and sound to highlight a specific message/idea OR incorrect format, simplistic rhyme, errors in terms of grammar or presentation.

plagiarized, grammatically unreadable, incomplete, does not fulfill assignment, not handed in.

Except for poems not turned in (and thus not accepted), all creative work can be improved in the revision process.

**Group Workshop (20%)**

Each student will have a group workshop on his/her poem packets. Your job as peers is to:

A) **Write** significant, astute notes on each and every poem: both line edits and end comments (10%). You must be a careful reader. Remember make the poem the best it can be, not what you want it to be.

B) **Speak** about those poems in class in an intelligent and respectful fashion (10%).

I will grade you on your in-class comments and also collect written peer responses after each workshop, evaluate them, then return them to the poet. If you have poor handwriting or very small handwriting, please type up your end comments. If I can’t read your writing, I may request this of you. Comments should be balanced between positive comments and constructive comments. If you do not make quality comments on the poet’s work, you will be graded accordingly.

You will turn in your comments to me at the end of workshop. I will read them and grade the commentary then turn the comments back to the poet within a week’s time.

If you do not write quality comments on the poet’s work, you will be graded accordingly.

**Grading on Workshop:**
- In-depth written comments on peers’ work in large group workshop are expected.
- Thoughtful/constructive oral comments in large group workshop are expected
- Promptness, neatness of getting work to me, peers will be graded.
- Attendance and oral/written activity is expected.
Final Project (20%)  
At the end of the semester, you will hand in a collection of 8-10 linked poems. The collection will have a brief introduction about your intent and your execution. The poems should be arranged as they would appear in a chapbook.

The project should be bound together in some manner. The order of the project should be:
- Title page
- Contents page
- Introduction
- Final poems
- Rough drafts I have marked (i.e. graded copies).

Revisions may include:
- Verb changes
- Images developed, extended, changed
- Eliminations, block-outs
- Sound/rhythm development or changes
- Structural changes (i.e. line breaks, spacing)

I will FAIL the following
- Late work.
- Work with insufficient number of copies; this will count as late work. Make sure you get your copies done well in advance of class. Remember if your printer breaks down the library has printers & copy machines.
- Incomplete work—all creative work must be presented in its entirety.
- Assignments/creative work not typed in standard format
- Work with an abundance of spelling/grammatical errors
- Plagiarized papers will result in failure of the course (see university policy below)

My Pet Peeves:
Here are the things that drive me crazy. Most of you know this.

- Talking when others are talking. If someone “has the floor,” he/she is usually trying to make a worthwhile point. It will be in your interest to listen to them because it is polite.

- Students who don’t show up or participate in workshop. Remember we’re a team here and your input is important. If your classmates work their butts off to critique your work, you should do the same.
I try to be upfront about expectations and due dates. I write them down on the board, tell you in class and usually on the assignment sheet/syllabus. You shouldn’t have to ask me when the due date for something is. If you choose not to do something, you will be graded accordingly.

Okay, here’s the weird one—a lot of you already know it—I can’t stand it when people pack up early. I will try to never hold class over the allotted time, but if I am talking or someone else is, don’t move. Sit and listen—when I say “that’s it for today” you can start closing your book, putting stuff away, or zipping/unzipping your backpacks.

Never ever ever say that a poem “has no point” or is “not good.” It may not have a noticeable point to you as the reader at that particular moment, but I will say that to the writer it definitely has a point. Try to come from that place of understanding. You can say, “I’m not sure I’m getting this, but I think the poem is about...” is acceptable. “This has no point” is not. There’s a difference between “This poem is repetitive, and I found it boring,” and “I’m not sure the repetition is working to help the message of the poem.” Try not to speak to anyone in a way you wouldn’t want to be spoken to.

Meanness, prejudicial comments, etc. Don’t treat anyone in a way you wouldn’t like to be treated yourself. Arrogance, rudeness, general nastiness doesn’t fly here.

On a personal level, teacher to student, I do prefer the hard-working student. You may be a brilliant poet, but it’s also important to be a team player. It’s just common sense: don’t treat anyone in a way you wouldn’t like to be treated yourself. Not everyone is on the same level as you. Someone may be ahead or behind. Your job as a CW student at SFA, as I see it, is to help everybody in your workshop as best you can, building them up and trying to help them move forward.
UNIVERSITY POLICIES YOU NEED TO KNOW:

Academic Integrity (A-9.1)
Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54)
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

Students with Disabilities
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/

Acceptable Student Behavior
Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.
LAST WORDS

Be constructive in your criticism—which means offer helpful advice (not just *this is great!* but don’t crush someone either. There’s a fine line between being constructive and being destructive. Harsh criticism can hurt. Be honest, but fair.

Point out the strengths of a work, not just its negatives. At the same time, don’t just say “it’s good”—come up with concrete ways to discuss how the poem can be improved, or why it should remain as is.

As artists, none of us are exactly the same. We each are trying to achieve different things for different reasons. Never try to make someone else’s work into your own; let it exist by its own rules.

Don’t give up. There will be times when communication will fail, but keep trying, eventually there will be a breakthrough.

There will be times you will disagree with me and my assessment of your work. *Try out* what I’m asking—you may get some interesting results. You can always change it back after the class is over. 😊

Remember to enjoy yourself, experiment, get enthused. Find a consuming passion. Be an artist. That’s what it’s all about.

AND

College can be very demanding. So, while keeping your goals in mind, also take the time to take care of yourself. You won’t succeed if you spread yourself too thin. So be good to you, eat some ice cream, and when things get bleak remember to relax and have fun!

*Enjoy the semester.*

*Writing has laws of perspective, of light and shade, just as painting does or music. If you are born knowing them, fine. If not, learn them. Then rearrange the rules to suit yourself.*

—*Truman Capote*
Calendar for 459
Subject to Revision as Necessary

WEEK ONE
1/22 T Introduction to course.
1/24 R “Refresh” lecture on elements of poetry/craft/technique.
FOR NEXT TIME: Read Student Examples.

WEEK TWO
1/29 T Discuss assignment/publications & chapbooks. FOR NEXT TIME:
Read connected poems by Claudia Emerson (handout)
1/31 R Discuss Emerson.
FOR NEXT TIME: Read poetry by Christian Anton Gerard and Heather Dobbins, visiting poets (handout). Come up with two questions you’d like to ask each of them.

WEEK THREE
2/5 T Discuss poetry of Gerard & Dobbins.
2/7 R In-class visit for Gerard & Dobbins.
FOR NEXT TIME: Read work by Matthea Harvey (handout).
Gerard & Dobbins will give a public reading this night.

WEEK FOUR
2/12 T Discuss Harvey & mimic assignment. FOR NEXT TIME: Read Aimee Nezhukumatathil’s At the Drive-In Volcano (to page 46, parts 1 & 2 & 3)
2/14 R Discuss Nezhukumatathil. Group 1 & 2 turn in poems. Groups 3 & 4 turn in Observations/Questions. FOR NEXT TIME: Read Nezhukumatathil’s At the Drive-In Volcano (to end, parts 4 & 5).

WEEK FIVE
2/19 T Discuss Nezhukumatathil. Groups 3 & 4 turn in poems. Groups 1 & 2 turn in Observations/Questions.
FOR NEXT TIME: Read Jamaal May’s Hum through page 36
FOR NEXT TIME: Finish Jamaal May’s Hum

WEEK SIX
FOR NEXT TIME: Read Matthew Rasmussen’s Black Aperture, part 1 to page 22.

**FOR NEXT TIME:** Read Matthew Rasmussen's *Black Aperture*, parts 2 & 3. Note part 2 relates to parts 1 & 3, but is a long piece, broken into sections.

**WEEK SEVEN**

3/7 R Catch-up Day

**FOR NEXT TIME:** Read Catherine Pierce's *The Tornado is the World* parts 1 & 2 to page 49.

**WEEK EIGHT**
3/12 T Discuss Pierce. Groups 3 & 4 turn in poems. Groups 1 & 2 turn in Observations/Questions.

**FOR NEXT TIME:** Finish Pierce, part 3.


!!!**WEEK NINE—SPRING BREAK!!!!**

**WEEK TEN**
3/26 T Discuss Workshop/Second portion of class

**FOR NEXT TIME:** Students 1 & 2 prepare poems.


**FOR NEXT TIME:** Edit Students 1 & 2.

Students 3 & 4 prepare Poem Packet.

**WEEK ELEVEN**
4/2 T Students 1 & 2’s workshop. Students 3 & 4 handout Poem Packet.

**FOR NEXT TIME:** Edit Students 3 & 4’s poems. Students 5 & 6 prepare Poem Packet.

4/4 R Students 3 & 4’s workshop. Students 5 & 6 handout Poem Packet.

**FOR NEXT TIME:** Edit Students 5 & 6’s poems. Students 7 & 8 prepare Poem Packet.

**WEEK TWELVE**
4/9 T Students 5 & 6’s workshop. Students 7 & 8 handout Poem Packet.

**FOR NEXT TIME:** Edit Students 7 & 8’s poems. Students 9 & 10 prepare Poem Packet.

4/11 R Students 7 & 8’s workshop. Students 9 & 10 handout Poem Packet.

**FOR NEXT TIME:** Edit Students 9 & 10’s poems. Students 11 & 12 prepare Poem Packet.
WEEK THIRTEEN
4/16 T Students 9 & 10’s workshop. Students 11 & 12 handout Poem Packet.
4/18 R EASTER

WEEK FOURTEEN

WEEK FIFTEEN
5/1 R Students 17 & 18’s workshop. Students 19 & 20 handout Poem Packet.
FOR NEXT TIME: Edit Students 19 & 20’s poems.

WEEK FIFTEEN
5/7 T Students 19 & 20’s workshop.

5/9 R Explanation of final project. Editing/project tips.

FINAL PROJECT DUE DURING FINALS WEEK