Stephen F. Austin State University
ENGLISH 4365: Topics in Creative Writing
Girls on Fire: 20th and 21st Century Women Poets
(Fall 2021)

Course number/section: ENGL 4365-001
Meeting place: Ferguson 177
Meeting time: 2-3:15 p.m. TR

Professor: Dr. Sara Henning
Office: LAN 263
Office hours: TR 1:00-2:00 pm; W 1:00-4:00 pm
(Zoom available)
Email: henningsdi@sfasu.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this part-workshop, part-seminar, we will study collections of poems by women poets, published between 1961 and 2020. The texts, inclusive of LGBTQIA, BIPOC, and neurodiverse perspectives, offer a rich range of voices, approaches, and experiences. In this course, students will synthesize readings via analytic methods, propose and complete their own chapbook-length creative projects, and engage attentively in class discussions. Together, we will consider how, over time, female-identifying writers shattered barriers and fought their way to the top of the literary world, many establishing themselves as the voices of our time.

Credit Hour Justification
ENGL 4365 “Special Topics in Creative Writing” (3 credits) typically meets twice each week in 75-minute segments, three times a week in 50-minute segments, or one night a week in 150-minute segments, for 15-weeks, and includes a 2-hour final examination or Final Portfolio of revised original fiction. The topic varies by genre and style; it may focus on prose or poetry. It may be limited to form (for example, flash fiction) or by tone and tradition (for instance, ghost stories). Students are assigned readings, both critical and creative. They are required to complete three original stories (two must be 2000-4000 words long, one must be under 1000 words) or a selection of poems with justification, for workshop review, one short craft analysis essay (roughly 5 pages) or analysis assignments (totally 5 pages); participate in workshop by having read and responded to others’ work and submitted editorial comments to their peers (roughly 30 pages of editorial suggestions); to create a self-reflective final portfolio that includes at least two drafts (original and revised) of their creative work. These activities average at a minimum 6 hours of work each week to prepare outside of classroom hours.

REQUIRED TEXTS/SUGGESTED PRACTICES

Sylvia Plath. Ariel.
Carolyn Forché. The Country Between Us.
Kimiko Hahn. The Narrow Road to the Interior.
Patricia Smith. Blood Dazzler.
Lee Ann Roripaugh. Tsunami vs. the Fukushima 50.
Natalie Diaz. Postcolonial Love Poem.
Diane Seuss. frank : sonnets.
Christine Stewart-Nuñez. The Poet & the Architect.
Professionalism

Regular access to a laptop or tablet for in-class work

Printing capabilities

Familiarity with Brightspace/D2L

SFASU values students’ mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. SFA provides a variety of resources to support students’ mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

On-campus Resources:
SFASU Counseling Services
www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices
3rd Floor Rusk Building
936-468-2401

SFASU Human Services Counseling Clinic
www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp
Human Services Room 202
936-468-1041

Crisis Resources:
Burke 24-hour crisis line 1(800) 392-8343
Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1(800) 273-TALK (8255)
Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Question/Observation Craft Analyses (8)

Our study of contemporary women poets will hinge on analysis and synthesis: which strategic choices does each writer employ to thematically, narratively, and/or architecturally address her poetic goals? In these short assignments (1 typed page), you will pose a question, and then answer it, citing a collection’s craft-level strategies. Due Date: TBA.

Modeling Poems (8)

We will read eight collections of poems by women poets, one collection per week. For each book, you are asked to write one poem which uses a thematic, narrative, or architectural technique used by the poet we are reading. You will turn in these poems both hard copy to me (& on D2L) in the specified Dropbox.

Poems for Workshop (2)

This assignment will consist of two poems of your choice which relate in some way to our critical or creative readings this semester. With your poems, you should include an author’s note describing your poem’s rhetorical and aesthetic goals, as well as any questions you have for your peers and instructor. You will distribute your poems to instructor and workshop members prior to workshop, as well as turn them in on D2L.
Metacognitive Self-Evaluation Statements

With each of your modeling poems, and after your large-group workshop, you will turn in a short, metacognitive self-evaluation (1-2 type-written pages, double-spaced, though I trust you to use your judgment here) describing your intentions toward your workshop poems, as well as consider where your poems stand in relationship to the grading criteria provided below. You will end your metacognitive self-evaluation by providing yourself a letter grade for each poem (letter grade with numerical equivalent offered), which should be both justified and rhetorically positioned within the text of your metacognitive self-evaluation. As I grade your poems, I will provide holistic feedback using our course grading rubric via marginal comments and a reflective end statement. Such feedback is meant to help guide your progress as a writer and should be used for the purposes of preparing a final draft for your portfolio. I reserve the right to raise or lower your grades, based on how you rhetorically position your grade justification in relationship to the quality of your poem.

Grading Rubric

A=accomplished use of imagery, figurative language, voice, lineation strategy, and music (consonance, assonance, internal rhyme, and/or elements of prosody, when appropriate) to construct a moving aesthetic experience. Poems written in form (sonnet, villanelle, etc.) make intentional use of formal conventions, moving beyond demonstration of competency to achieve artful purpose. The poem abides by standard conventions (MLA). The poem demonstrates artistic mastery.

B=effective use of imagery, figurative language, voice, lineation strategy, and music (consonance, assonance, internal rhyme, and/or elements of prosody, when appropriate) to construct a very good aesthetic experience. Poems written in form (sonnet, villanelle, etc.) make intentional use of formal conventions, moving beyond demonstration of competency to achieve artful purpose. The poem abides by standard conventions (MLA). With revision, the poem has the potential to achieve artistic mastery.

C=competent use of imagery, figurative language, voice, lineation strategy, and music (consonance, assonance, internal rhyme, and/or elements of prosody, when appropriate) to construct an aesthetic experience. However, the poem may sometimes lean on cliché, other derivative language, or affect an archaic tone without rhetorical justification. Poems written in form (sonnet, villanelle, etc.) either skew occasionally from formal conventions or never quite moves beyond demonstrated competency. The poem abides by standard conventions (MLA). With substantial revision, the poem has the potential to achieve artistic effectiveness.

D=undeveloped use of imagery, figurative language, voice, lineation strategy, and music (consonance, assonance, internal rhyme, and/or elements of prosody, when appropriate) to construct an unsatisfying experience. The poem often relies on cliché, other derivative language, and may appear rhetorically incomplete or incoherent. Poems written in form (sonnet, villanelle, etc.) may fail to achieve formal conventions, leaning toward verse. The poem does not abide by standard conventions (MLA) and demonstrates errors in grammar, syntax, and other formatting concerns. Large-scale revision of poetic strategy is recommended.

F=The poem presents significant issues related to at least one of the following outcomes: academic integrity (poem is plagiarized), severe grammatical/syntactical infractions, failed rhetorical strategies, a failure to attend to goals of the assigned task, or failure related to submission by appropriate due date.
Workshops

Each student will have a large-group workshop over their poems. During these workshops, students will read each other’s work, giving instructive, holistic feedback, which could include reactions, broad-stroke comments, and noting places that are particularly strong/require additional development.

As a peer, prior to Workshop, you will provide constructive feedback for each workshop member’s work. As you provide constructive feedback, you should use the following strategies: (a) line-by-line marginalia/edits and (b) a short, summative assessment (one paragraph), close-reading the draft for its stylistic choices. On each day of Workshop, you will submit your critiques in the appropriately labelled Dropbox.

NOTE: A detailed model with instructions, etiquette, and expectations for workshop will be provided prior to the first workshop. Due dates for submitting drafts and submitting feedback will also be provided.

Final Portfolio

At the end of the semester, you will submit a collection composed of revised, final versions of your modeling poems, workshop poems, and any additional poems you choose to include. The collection will have a brief introduction summarizing, synthesizing, and reflecting on your intent and execution of poems. The portfolio must include the following:

1) ‘Table of Contents’ page listing all pieces in portfolio, including page numbers

2) Short Introductory Statement

3) Final drafts & Rough Drafts, organized in a way that makes sense to you

Your work must be compiled in an electronic document, formatted using MLA standards, and submitted via D2L prior to your final exam period.

Notes on Grading Criteria:

This Portfolio assignment is worth a total of 200 points (roughly 30% of final grade). The portfolio will be scored by completeness of assembled work, attention to detail and description in analyses for each piece submitted, obvious attempts at development and revision in creative work, and obvious ability to utilize subject specific terms discussed in class throughout the semester.

Grading

Question/Observation Craft Analyses (8): 200 points (20%)
Modeling Poems (including short metacognitive self-evaluation): 200 points (20%)
Poems for Workshop (2) (with short, post-workshop metacognitive self-evaluation): 100 points (10%)
Workshop Critiques: 100 points (10%)
Final Portfolio: 300 points (30%)
Attendance/Professionalism: 100 points (10%)

Total: 1000 points
Note: Because this is a studio workshop, I expect each student to participate fully in class discussion and attend class. Lack of attendance and participation will negatively impact your grade.

Grading Standard:

A (excellent performance): 90-100.
B (above average performance): 80-89.
C (average performance): 70-79.
F (failure): 0-59.

COURSE POLICIES

Technology Requirements

Desire2Learn (D2L)

D2L will be used to facilitate some aspects of the course. In D2L, you will be able to:

- Access additional required materials not found in your textbook (additional assigned readings on elements of craft and additional poems or stories which illustrate those elements).
- Access your course grades.
- Access supplemental resources/activities which are not required but may be useful.

Email

Course news and updates will be sent to you via email, so you will be responsible for checking your SFA email account regularly. Emails sent to the instructor on weekdays (Monday-Friday) will receive a response within 24-48 hours.

Absences

Because this is a hands-on, activity-oriented studio class, attendance is a significant factor for success in this course. Missing class means missing in-class activities, which are meant to support artistic development. Missing more than two regularly-scheduled class periods (1 week) without justifiable cause demonstrates a lack of commitment on your end. If an extraordinary circumstance develops which negatively impacts your ability to perform or attend class, please reach out to your instructor at your earliest convenience to discuss your progress and your options.

Valid excuses are limited to health, religious observation, family emergencies, and participation in certain SFASU-sponsored events. Students must provide written documentation from which a decision will be made regarding the absence’s excusability. Without written documentation, the absence will automatically be considered unexcused. Students with acceptable excuses may be permitted to make up work when the nature of the work missed permits. However, no absences beyond the allotted number will be permitted, whether unexcused or excused. Whether an absence is excused or unexcused, students are still responsible for all course content and assignments. Note also that you must turn in all major assignments to pass the course.
I take attendance at the beginning of class; arriving more than **five** minutes after class begins will result in your being marked absent.

**COVID-19 update:** if you have been exposed to COVID-19 or have tested positive for the virus (and you are symptomatic or asymptomatic), refrain from attending class for the appropriate quarantine period until you are well. Please reach out to let me know that you are ill, and we can make other arrangements. **You will not be penalized for missing class due to COVID-19.**

**Late Work**

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the assigned due date. If a circumstance arises in which you need to discuss your progress with me, please see me during office hours or email me to check in. You should save your work in multiple places; I highly recommend using online storage options such as OneDrive, which is included as a free service in the university’s downloadable subscription of Microsoft Office 365, to prevent lost work.

**Course Citizenship**

Although students with disciplinary problems tend to be few and far between at the college level, if behavioral disruptions persist within a single class meeting (or, for that matter, across multiple meetings), the student in question will be asked to leave the class with a lowered participation grade and an absence recorded for the day.

Please make safe choices during the global pandemic. Wearing masks are encouraged, but optional.

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 available to help SFA students succeed.

**Assignment Submission**

You must submit all written work to the assigned D2L/Brightspace Dropbox, in addition to submitting hard copies of workshop drafts to me. All work submitted for Group Workshops must be submitted on the appropriate course Discussion Board. Assignments are due by class time on their due date.

**Academic Integrity**

Adhering to academic integrity standards at all times by producing your own work and successfully attributing others’ ideas to them is a necessary aspect of university communication. 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) falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assignment; 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 include, but are not limited to: (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 the Internet or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper or presentation without giving the author due credit.
Any appeals on academic integrity cases must be made within thirty days after the first class day of the next long semester. Students should appeal to the instructor first then to the chair if the situation is not resolved. Further appeals can be made to the dean and provost if necessary.

Please read the complete policies at: https://www.sfasu.edu/policies/student-academic-dishonesty-4.1.pdf

Course Evaluations

Course evaluations will be available online near the end of the semester. I request that you take advantage of the opportunity to give feedback about how effective this class and my teaching was, particularly because I read evaluations to help make decisions about future classes. In other words, your feedback can help my future students have a good class experience.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

1. The student will demonstrate close reading skills and recognize strategies used by professional creative writers.
2. The student will employ techniques and strategies for crafting carefully composed competent creative work in a variety of genres (fiction, poetry, literary non-fiction).
3. The student will articulate useful, critical editorial advice for peer writers.
4. The student will demonstrate strategic revision on completed creative work.
5. The student will compose and sustain a complete, polished manuscript of substance in the focus-genre.

Title IX Statement

Stephen F. Austin State University strives to provide an educational and work environment that affirms the rights and dignity of each individual. It is the policy of the university, in accordance with federal and state law, to prohibit unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, genetic information, citizenship and veteran status. Additionally, Stephen F. Austin State University prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Unlawful discrimination based on sex includes discrimination defined as sexual harassment.

The Discrimination Complaints policy (2.11) and the Sex and Gender-Based Discrimination, Violence, Harassment, and Misconduct policy (2.13) outline the university's commitment and detail the procedures used to prevent, respond, and investigate complaints. It is the responsibility of the university president to ensure that SFA and all its constituencies comply with the provisions of this policy and with all federal and state laws, executive orders and regulations regarding non-discrimination.

The university prohibits and will not tolerate sexual misconduct because such behavior violates the university's institutional values, adversely impacts the university's community interest, and interferes with the university's mission. The university also prohibits retaliation against any person who, in good faith, reports or discloses a violation of this policy, files a complaint, and/or otherwise participates in an investigation, proceeding, complaint or remediation under this policy. Once the university becomes aware of an incident of sexual misconduct, the university will promptly and effectively respond in a manner designed to eliminate the misconduct, prevent its recurrence and address its effects.

Stephen F. Austin State University is dedicated to providing an environment of non-discrimination and equal opportunity in its programs and employment opportunities. The Title IX office supports the University's commitment by offering training, programs and processes that promote an inclusive, diverse and supportive environment consistent with the SFA Way.

To fulfill its mission, the Title IX office:
• Coordinates the delivery of detailed educational programs and training concerning discrimination, harassment, sexual violence, interpersonal violence, and stalking;
• Recommends, develops, interprets and implements policies and procedures in support of non-discrimination;
• Oversees investigations into complaints of discrimination, harassment and sexual violence by promptly organizing an impartial administrative review and addressing any patterns or systemic problems that might be identified during the review of such complaints;
• Serves as the university's designated office responsible for coordinating the University's compliance with state and federal law, including, but not limited to:
  ▪ Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972,
  ▪ Violence Against Women Act,
  ▪ Campus SAVE Act.
• Works with the Office of the General Counsel to investigate and respond to external complaints (e.g. EEOC, OCR).

The many terms and definitions that surround sexual misconduct issues can be confusing and may create unintended barrier to reporting incidents of sexual misconduct.

It is important to remember, only those options clearly identified as confidential assistance can keep your information private. Generally, any person not identified as a confidential reporter is required to report an incident that is reported to them. This requirement is intended to protect members of the campus community, visitors and guests from criminal and discriminatory behavior.

Accommodations

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 your instructors and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations, and no accommodations can be made except through the ODS. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.