

**Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies  
Dept. of English - Creative Writing Program  
Course Description**

**Course:** AP/EN 4620 6.0 Senior Poetry Workshop

**Terms:** F/W 2019-20

**Course Instructor:** Prof. Patricia Keeney      **Email:** [patdon@yorku.ca](mailto:patdon@yorku.ca)

**Course Location:** Vari Hall 1152

**Time:** Mondays 11:30 am - 2:30 pm

**Prerequisite / Co-requisite:** Creative major/minor or permission of the Program Coordinator

**Course Description:**

This course offers students who are seriously engaged in the practice of poetry the opportunity to explore their strengths and develop the range of their skills in the company of other poets. Students will be encouraged to read broadly and examine their own work in relation to the work of noteworthy poets from across a broad range of methods and approaches. At the Senior level, students are expected to be committed to reading poetry, writing poetry, editing poetry, and being involved in the poetry community.

**Organization of the Course:**

**Workshop Process:** The preparation of copies of original work (assigned exercises) to be shared with the class via DOC cam for reading and discussion. Students are encouraged to read their poems aloud as a first step in presentation. *Note: Vocalization enriches the presentation of original imaginative writing since the medium of your verbal art is language in all its music and meaning.*

Print copies to be shared for purposes of commenting on peer work. Editorial suggestions by students to their peers should be given in two formats: vocally in class and in print the following week.

In-class student work-shopping will rotate, over the terms so that everyone will have poems work-shopped but not necessarily every assignment. (If a student is not present when his/her work is scheduled to be work-shopped, only written feedback can be provided).

**Participation in our weekly discussions** of poetry by professional poets and prepared response to assigned poems.

**Course Learning Objectives:**

Students are expected to refine their writing skills and experiment with various poetic forms and subject matter throughout the term. Students should also be engaging in meaningful and constructive analyses of poetic concerns and specific poems both in class discussions and in workshop processes

and apply these discoveries to their own work and the work of their classmates in an atmosphere that encourages all to explore and risk creatively. Success in the course is dependent upon active participation in class, be it in discussion, in-class reading or workshop.

### **Evaluation:**

**Workshop Process: and Assigned Exercises: 25%.** Students are expected to complete a number of exercise poems (at least 3 per term) for in class work-shopping.

### **Grading of poetry assignments:**

*We will attempt to consider three elements of creative work: process, improvement, and achievement. PK will return each assignment (usually the following week) with one of these designations: check sign = satisfactory; plus sign = excellent; minus sign = does not fulfill the basic assignment. Written commentary by students should also be returned the following week.*

**Final Portfolio: 30%.** 6-8 poems plus an optional short prose introduction to the portfolio. To be forwarded electronically. If you want to include one or two “longer” poems instead of the 6-8 shorter ones, please discuss with PK. The portfolio may include work written since the beginning of the term and/or new work. You are looking at what best represents you as a poet at the time of handing in your portfolio. Please, no more than 15 pages.

**Research Project: 15%.** A short essay (3-5 pages) on a Canadian poet with who has been publishing for at least 10 years and who has at least 3 books out.

**Research Project: 15%.** Short review (500 words) of a new book of Canadian poetry, Consult Arc Poetry Magazine for guidelines.

**Research Project: 15 %.** A 2-page review of a professional poetry reading or event. They happen all over Toronto and environs (including the big one at Harbourfront) and at York

### **Reading List:**

Required:

*The Norton Anthology of Contemporary Poetry, vol 2*

**Some Highlights for inspiration and discussion: (Please read the essays on Poetics at the back of our anthology that accompany particular writers). Note: Class dates are to be used as guidelines only, allowing for a more organic approach when necessary to give us some flexibility re: time spent on each item (whether student poem or anthology poem) and the option of concentrating our efforts on what seems most relevant.**

### **TERM 1**

**Sept. 9.** Introduction to the course and each other

**Sept. 16.** Sharing of student poems in class. Each student brings in a finished poem to read and show on DOC cam. Discuss process. Also, bring in one piece from a published poet that has influenced you.

**Sept. 23. The Nature Poem Exploded**  
Dylan Thomas: Soul singer

Ted Hughes: The psychic drama of the physical world  
Assignment 1. The “nature” poem re-visited.

**Sept. 30.** Workshopping of Assignment 1.

**Oct. 7.** Workshopping of Assignment 1.

For guest session on **Oct 21**, each student choose a poet from the anthology not on our reading list and prepare a short response to that poet, illustrating briefly from the work. To be discussed in class. Also to be **handed in**.

**Oct 14. Reading Week.**

**Oct. 21. Guest.** Discussion of poets chosen by students from **Oct 7**

**Oct 28. The Art of Anger**

Adrienne Rich

Assignment 2. Poem inspired by Adrian Rich.

**Nov 4.** Workshop Assignment 2.

**Nov 11.** Workshop Assignment 2.

**Nov 18. The Confessionals**

Robert Lowell

Sylvia Plath

Assignment 3. Write a “confessional” poem.

Read up on this mode in our general introduction and the individual intros to Plath and Robert Lowell.

**Nov 25.** Workshop assignment 3.

**Dec 2.** Workshop assignment 3.

**TERM 2**

**Jan 6. Exploring Voice: Contrasts**

Philip Larkin. Conversational.

P.K. Page. A Visionary of the Senses

Assignment 4.

**Jan 13.** Workshop Assignment 4.

**Jan 20.** Workshop Assignment 4.

**Jan 27.** Research Project.

**Feb 3.** Research Project.

**Feb 10.** Research Project.

**Feb 17.** Reading Week.

**Feb 24. Synthesizing Cultures.**

Rita Dove  
Assignment 5.

**March 2.** Workshop assignment 5.

**March 9.** Workshop assignment 5.

**March 16. Mixing Genres. Working with Myth**  
Anne Carson.  
Assignment 6.

**March 23.** Workshop assignment 6.

**March 30.** Workshop assignment 6.

**April 6.** Last class.

*Supplemental Poetry Assignment Suggestions*

**Extended Metaphor Poem**

**Formal poem**

**Poem in the style of a favourite poet**

**Poem on the Theme of Home**

**Persona Poem or Dramatic Monologue: become somebody else in circumstance and voice**

**Elegy or Eulogy**

**Autobiographical Poem**

**Period Piece (incorporating the values/voice of a particular cultural moment)**

**Travel Poem**

**Relationship Poem**

You are invited to mix and match – a travel poem that is a sonnet – a relationship poem that uses an extended metaphor – see how the published poets mix it up – find out what works – explore, enjoy!