

Intermediate Poetry Workshop

AP/EN 3620 6.0 A (Y)
Fall-Winter 2019-2020

Dr. Andy Weaver
Time: Tues, 2:30-5:30 pm
Location: Vari Hall 2016

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office hrs: Tues 11:00-1:00

(NOTE: office hours are on a drop-in, first-come/first-served basis; appointments during office hours need not and cannot be set; if office hours conflict with your schedule, email me to try to make other arrangements to meet me at my office.)

Area(s): N/A

Period: N/A

Category: N/A

Credit Exclusion(s): Prior to FW 09: AS/EN 3645 6.0

Prior to FW 08: AS/HUMA 3645 6.0

Prerequisite: For English Majors/Minors only: AP/EN 1001 3.0 (with a grade of C (60%) or higher) AND AP/EN 1002 3.0 (with a grade of C (60%) or higher).

Open To: All spaces reserved for Yr 03 CRWR majors. Some spaces may be available to non-CRWR students by application only.

Enrolment: 25

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 explore a variety of issues associated with poetics; special emphasis in the winter term will be placed upon sound and experiment. 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.

Students are expected to refine their writing skills and experiment with various poetic forms and subject matter throughout the course. Students will also engage in meaningful and constructive analyses of poetic concerns and specific poems in class discussions. We hope that each poet will be challenged and inspired, by the example of others, to write something deeper, stronger, and truer than before. To help this happen, teacher and students work together to create an atmosphere in which all are encouraged to go beyond the limitations of their previous work. Expectations for the writing process in this course include substantial evidence of engagement in revising and editing in the final writing portfolio. Students are expected to generate extensive material throughout the term and year in order to be able to select the most promising pieces for revision. Success in the course is dependent upon active participation in class.

Required Books:

Jen Bervin, *Nets* (Ugly Duckling Press, ISBN 9780972768436)

Liz Howard, *Infinite Citizen of the Shaking Tent* (McClelland and Stewart, ISBN 9780771038365)

Erin Moure, *Sheep's Vigil by a Fervent Person* (Anansi, ISBN 9780887846601)

Harryette Mullen, *Sleeping with the Dictionary* (U of California P, ISBN 9780520231436)

Claudia Rankine, *Citizen* (Graywolf, ISBN 9781555976903)

Lyn Hejinian, *My Life and My Life in the Nineties* (Wesleyan, ISBN 9780819573513)

Jordan Abel, *Injun* (Talonbooks, ISBN 9780889229778)

Eric Schmaltz, *Surfaces* (Invisible ISBN 9781988784052)

Sina Queyras, *My Ariel* (Coach House, ISBN 9781552453544)

Adam Dickinson, *Anatomic* (Coach House, ISBN 9781552453643)

Layli Long Soldier, *Whereas* (Graywolf, ISBN 9781555977672)

Tess Liem, *Obits*. (Coach House, ISBN 9781552453766)

Other materials will be introduced throughout the term in online or handout form.

Course Requirements:

Weekly poetic assignments	45%
Class and workshop participation	15%
Fall Term Portfolio (due electronically on December 11)	20%
Winter Term Portfolio (due electronically on April 9)	20%

Class participation: It will be difficult for students to do well on the participation grade if they miss more than one or two classes during the term, or if they are frequently late.

Students should realize that attendance includes completing the preparatory work needed to participate in each class. All readings must be completed before the relevant class, and attention should be focused on all lectures, class discussions, and workshops; in-class writing may be assigned, in which students will be expected to think critically and/or creatively about course texts. A student's participation grade is determined according to how s/he performs in all of these aspects; this mark is not simply a register of how many questions you answer or ask in class.

Students must take an active role in their education in this course; this means that they should contribute towards a positive academic atmosphere that is attentive to everybody's learning needs and that they should treat each other with respect and courtesy. A classroom should be a place to learn and to debate, which means listening is as important as speaking. Furthermore, throughout this course we may be dealing with topics on which students may hold deep personal beliefs or opinions; all students must treat fellow students and their opinions with respect. This does not mean we must all agree (in fact, lively discussion and debate are greatly encouraged); it simply means that students should show respect and tact to each other when these differences of opinion arise. Students should maintain an open mind towards both their own views as well as the views of others in the classroom. At no point will sexist, racist, or homophobic language or ideas be tolerated. Please act appropriately.

Workshop Participation and Leadership: Each student will workshop a poem once each the term. Each time, the student will choose one poem to submit for a 20-minute class discussion. You must submit this poem electronically by the Thursday night before workshop, or in hard copy in the class preceding the workshop. In addition, you are expected to participate thoughtfully and extensively in the workshops of your peers. Lastly, each of you will be responsible once per term for leading the workshop discussion on a poem of one of your peers. It will be your responsibility to guide and manage discussion of your classmates' work.

NOTE: If you are not present when your work is scheduled for workshop, only written feedback will be provided, and discussion of the work as a class is forfeited.

Assigned Exercises: Students will be required to complete and turn in at least one exercise per week, due at the start of class. These exercises must be handed in as hard copies at the beginning of the appropriate class. I will read these exercises, which will sometimes but not always be complete poems, and will usually but not always comment on them. I will not issue letter grades for individual assignments. Instead, the grading scheme for individual assignments will be "-√+," where √++ is excellent (A/A+), √+ is very good (B/B+), √ is OK but you can do better (C/C+), and √- is unsatisfactory (D/E). Missed exercises will incur grade penalties.

Fall and Winter Term Portfolios: 20% each. Your term portfolios should consist of no fewer than 5 and no more than 10 revised poems drawn from your work during the course, plus a short prose statement (300-500 words) about your work as a whole throughout the term.

Whereas the weekly assignments are exercises, the final portfolio is composed of poems—that is, polished and carefully revised work. This work will ideally consist of extensively revised versions of exercises submitted for those weekly assignments. Of course, your revisions of them may render them completely different from the originals, as long as those changes have emerged in some way from my written or verbal comments or from class discussions. I also encourage you to include poems you've workshopped, but only if you've revised them since. Students must keep and include earlier drafts of the polished poems, so keep track of your revisions throughout the term. Each polished poem should be followed in the portfolio by the earlier drafts of that poem. Students must also include a short paragraph for each polished poem, summarizing the nature and reasoning behind the edits performed.

You may include work written during the term that you did not submit as exercises, or work written prior to the course that you have revised so extensively during this term that it feels like an entirely new poem. You may not,

however, submit old work, especially work that was counted in an earlier class, if the revisions are relatively minor. Keep in mind, in any case, that much of your grade is based on the quality of your revisions and improvement; thus you will be at a disadvantage if I have not seen and commented upon prior versions of the poems you include.

The short prose statement is meant to give you an opportunity to think out loud about your work, and to communicate to me your sense of yourself as a writer of poetry. The statement should be at least 300 words. It must include a self-assessment, in which you think about what you have accomplished or learned throughout the term. In addition, you might wish to (but don't have to) address questions including (but not limited to) the following: What are the goals of your writing, and have those goals changed? What assignments were most or least engaging, and why? What aspects of your poetry are you most or least happy with, and why? What was your thought process in revising the poems? Which writers were most helpful for you or resonated most with you during the term?

Portfolios will be graded both on the merit of the finished poems themselves and on development from earlier drafts. The prose statement will count as no more than 10% of the total portfolio's grade, and will be marked on quality and clarity of expression, as well as on the thoughtfulness that it exhibits about your work.

Please follow this format for your portfolios, with each step starting on a new page:

- Title Page for the portfolio (including a title for the collection as a whole)
- Prose Statement
- Table of Contents
- Poems
 - First Finished Poem
 - Earlier Drafts of that poem
 - Brief statement (3-5 sentences) summarizing your edits, goals for the poem, concerns you might have, opinions of strong/weak points in the poem, etc.
 - Second Finished Poem
 - Earlier Drafts of that poem
 - Brief statement summarizing your edits, goals,....
 - etc.

Grading:

This course will be graded relatively holistically, along three axes: process, improvement, and achievement. By process I mean how much energy and engagement you put into every aspect of the course, from participation through the final portfolio. By improvement I mean how your work improves and deepens over the arc of the course, including your readiness to solidify basic skills, take risks, and adopt more ambitious goals. By ability I mean how much you are able to accomplish in the course, in terms of the quality of your poems. My ideal student is one who participates generously, takes on exciting poetic challenges, and meets the expectations of those challenges. The grading scheme for the portfolio and the course as a whole conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ = 7, C+ = 5, etc.). Assignments will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 90 to 100, A = 80 to 90, B+ = 75 to 79, etc.) (For a full description of York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar - http://calendars.registrar.yorku.ca/pdfs/ug2004cal/calug04_5_acadinfo.pdf)

Additional Information:

Students must complete all course requirements in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

Assigned readings are mandatory.

Classes begin promptly.

Students are responsible for collecting work distributed during an absence and must come to class prepared to discuss the work.

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information, available on the University Secretariat webpage (see "Policies, Procedures and Regulations") - <http://secretariat-policies.info.yorku.ca/> :

- Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities (Guidelines, Procedures and Definitions)
- Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities (Policy)
- Academic Accommodation for Students' Religious Observances (Policy, Guidelines and Procedures)
- Academic Honesty (Policy)
- Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities (Regulation)

Schedule of Classes

We may alter the readings schedule at any time depending on the needs of the class; it is thus crucial that you attend class in order to be sure of your assignment for the coming week.

Fall Term

[Note: authors preceded by an asterisk can be found by searching at poetryfoundation.org]

September 10: Introductions

September 17: Sound I: Rhythms and meters [NOTE: sign up for first round of workshops in class today]

Reading:

*Elizabeth Bishop, "One Art" "Visits to St. Elizabeths"

*E. E. Cummings, "anyone lived in a pretty how town"

*Langston Hughes, "Harlem," "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," "The Weary Blues"

*Robert Frost, "Birches"

*Theodore Roethke, "My Papa's Waltz," "The Waking"

Marianne Moore, "To A Steamroller," "Poetry," "The Fish," "The Paper Nautilus" (google Moore and titles)

W. H. Auden, "As I Walked Out One Evening" (google the title)

[Note: Sept 17th is the last date to enroll in Fall and Year courses without the instructor's permission]

September 24: Sound II: euphony

Reading:

*W.B. Yeats, "When You Are Old," "The Second Coming," "Among School Children"

*Gwendolyn Brooks, "We Real Cool," "The Bean Eaters," "The Blackstone Rangers"

*Harryette Mullen, "[go on sister sing your song]," "[if your complexion is a mess]," "[Kills bugs dead.]," "[up from slobbery]"

Christian Bök, Excerpts "A," "E," "I," "O," and "U" from *Eunioa* (online at

<http://poemsandpoetics.blogspot.com/2009/07/christian-bok-excerpts-from-eunioa.html>)

October 1: Imagery

Workshop 1

*William Carlos Williams, "Danse Russe," "Poem ("As the cat...)," "The Red Wheelbarrow," "Queen-Anne's-Lace"

*Amy Lowell, "The Pike," "Patterns," "Venus Transiens," "The Pond"

*Ezra Pound, "In a Station of the Metro," "The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter," "Portrait d'une Femme"

*Elizabeth Bishop, "The Armadillo," "At the Fishhouses," "Filling Station"

October 8: Poiesis I: Expression

Workshop 2

Reading:

*Frank O'Hara, "Ava Maria," "The Day Lady Died," "The Eyelid Has Its Storms," "Poem ["The eager note on my door said, 'Call me,']]" "Saint," "To the Harbormaster"

*Anne Sexton, "The Double Image," "The Operation," "Sylvia's Death"

*Sylvia Plath, "Ariel," "The Colossus," "Daddy," "Lady Lazarus"

Alden Nowlan, "The Bull Moose" (google Nowlan and title)

October 15 NO CLASSES or OFFICE HOURS HELD [Fall Reading Week]

October 22: Poiesis II: Observation and description

Workshop 3

Reading:

*Charles Reznikoff, "Autobiography: New York," "A Deserter," "Domestic Scenes"

*George Oppen, "Of Being Numerous: Sections 1-22"

*Lorine Niedecker, "[He Lived—Childhood Summers]," "Paean to Place," "Poet's work," "[Popcorn-can cover]"

[Note: October 22nd is the last date to enroll in Year courses with instructor's permission]

October 29: Poiesis III: Diction

Workshop 4

Reading: Liz Howard, *Infinite Citizen of the Shaking Tent*

November 5: Poiesis IV: Procedure

Workshop 5

Reading: Harryette Mullen, *Sleeping with the Dictionary*

November 12: Poiesis V: Translation

Workshop 6

Reading: Erin Mouré, *Sheep's Vigil by a Fervent Person*

November 19: Poiesis VI: Subtraction and Cut-ups

Workshop 7

Reading: Jen Bervin, *Nets*

Tom Phillips, random selections from "Humument slideshow" from *A Humument* [online at <http://www.tomphillips.co.uk/humument>]

November 26: Ekphrasis, generant texts, reading-writing

Workshop 8

Reading:

*Ezra Pound: Cantos I and LXXXI

*Robert Duncan: "The Fire," "A Poem Beginning with a Line by Pindar," "Poetry, a Natural Thing," and "from Dante Etudes, Book One: We Will Endeavour"

John Cage: listen to at least the first 20 minutes of "Writing for the Second Time Through Finnegans Wake by John Cage" (online at Vimeo.com)

W.H. Auden: "Musee des Beaux Arts" (search online)

William Carlos Williams: "Landscape with the Fall of Icarus" (search online)

Anne Sexton, "The Starry Night" (search online)

December 3: Intertextuality

Small group edits/portfolio preparation

Reading: Sina Queyras, *My Ariel*

Fall Term Portfolio Due December 10; submit via email, with the portfolio as a single .docx attachment

Winter Term

January 7: Poetry as research [NOTE: sign up for second round of workshops in class today]

Group discussion on first term (favourite material; problems) start/stop/continue exercise

Reading: Adam Dickinson, *Anatomic*

January 14: Visual/concrete poetry

Group discussion on the role of poetry in society

Reading: Eric Schmaltz, *Surfaces*

Mary Ellen Solt, "Flowers in Concrete" (online at Ubuweb)

January 21: Sound poetry

Workshop 1

Reading:

Kurt Schwitters, *Ursonnate* (online at Ubuweb: listen to parts of several different versions, esp. Schwitters's, Christopher Butterfield's and Christian Bök's)

The Four Horsemen, "Emotional Poetry" (online at Youtube)

Paul Dutton performs Snare, Kick, Rack, and Floor (Youtube)

5 Selections from *Carnivocal* (google, listen to at PennSound)

January 28: Black Mountain

Workshop 2

Reading:

- *Charles Olson, “As the Dead Prey Upon Us,” “The Kingfishers,” “I, Maximus of Gloucester, to You,” “Maximus, to himself” and also the essay “Projective Verse”
- *Denise Levertov, “Ache of Marriage,” “At the Justice Department November 15, 1969,” “Claritas,” “Come into Animal Presence,” “Everything that Acts Is Actual,” “Matins,” “Pleasures”
- *Robert Duncan: “Childhood’s Retreat,” “A Little Language,” “My Mother Would Be a Falconess,” “Often I am Permitted to Return to a Meadow,” “A Storm of White,” “This Place Rumored to Have Been Sodom”

NOTE: February 3rd is the last day to withdraw from full-year courses without receiving a grade. Students who do not officially withdraw from a full-year course by this withdrawal deadline will receive a grade, even if they have not attended or done course work. Students who withdraw from a course during the Course Withdrawal Period (Feb 4th-Apr 5th for a full-year course) will receive a grade of “W” on their transcript.

February 4: New York School

Workshop 3

Reading:

- *John Ashbery, “And Ut Pictura Poesis Is Her Name,” “Farm Implements and Rutabagas in a Landscape,” “The Instruction Manual,” “Paradoxes and Oxymorons,” “Pyrography,” “Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror,” “Soonest Mended,” “The Tennis Court Oath,” “These Lacustrine Cities,” “Wet Casements”
- *Frank O’Hara, “Meditations in an Emergency,” “Personal Poem”
- *Eileen Myles, “An American Poem,” “Each Defeat,” “A Gift for You,” “The Honey Bear,” “Movie,” “Peanut Butter,” “Snakes”

February 11: Black Arts Movement and African American identity poetry

Workshop 4

Reading:

- Amiri Baraka: “Black Art,” “Black Dada Nihilismus,” “A Poem for Black Hearts,” (all at www.genius.com) and “AM/TRAK (at www.eclipsearchive.org)
- *Etheridge Knight (read entire collection at www.poetryfoundation.org)
- *Sonia Sanchez, “Haiku and Tanka for Harriet Tubman”
- *Lucille Clifton (read entire collection at www.poetryfoundation.org)

February 18: NO CLASSES or OFFICE HOURS HELD [Winter Reading Week]

February 25: Poetry as Politics: Content (1): Cultural Trauma

Workshop 5

Reading: Layli Long Soldier, *Whereas*

March 3: Poetry as Politics: Content (2): Identity Politics

Workshop 6

Reading: Claudia Rankine, *Citizen*

March 10: Poetry as Politics: Content (3): Feminism

Workshop 7

Reading:

- *Audre Lorde, (read entire collection at www.poetryfoundation.org)
- Adrienne Rich, “Twenty-one Love Poems” (at <https://genius.com/Adrienne-rich-twenty-one-love-poems-annotated>), as well as (search online) “Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers,” “Diving Into the Wreck,” “Power”

March 17: Poetry as Politics: Form (1)

Workshop 8

Reading: Lyn Hejinian, *My Life*

March 24: Poetry as Politics: Form (2)
Small group edits/portfolio preparation
Reading: Jordan Abel, *Injun*

March 31: Thinking about a first book
Small group edits/portfolio preparation
Reading: Tess Liem, *Obits*.

Winter Term Portfolio Due April 7; submit via email, with the portfolio as a single .docx attachment

Guidelines for Workshops

Each student will workshop one poem and receive approximately 20 minutes of discussion once each term.

For the student being workshopped: Choose one poem from among the assignments that you've already written for the course, from the poems due during the week of the workshop, or something that you've written expressly for the workshop. This poem should probably not be your best, most finished, flawless, and brilliant poem, though the temptation to choose that one will be intense. I'd prefer that you make a selection that the class can actually help you revise, and comments on which will be constructive for you in thinking constructively about your writing. Nor, by the same token, should you workshop a poem that you personally don't have much investment in. Try to choose one that you like a lot, that you think is already of interest, but that could use some more thinking and might benefit from some solid peer analysis.

Email your poem to the other students and the instructor (using the class email list) by THURSDAY NIGHT before the workshop, thus giving your classmates plenty of time to read the poem, OR in hard copy in the class preceding the workshop.

During the class discussion of your poem, you are free to speak if you wish—to clarify, ask or respond to questions, explain your specific intentions or goals, etc. But in general you should listen instead of talk, and you should take notes about what people say. This is your chance to receive feedback, not to argue or prove a point.

For the workshopers: When you read your classmates' poems, *really* read them (that means read them at least three times). Come to workshop prepared to delve into them. Come with questions, opinions, and well-considered reactions, not just hasty first impressions. Come prepared to offer helpful criticism, but also be ready to tell your colleague exactly what you liked and what worked for you in the poem. Consider what sorts of suggestions for revision would be most helpful to you as a writer, and try to frame your own suggestions accordingly. Think about the relationship between the poem and its assignment, as well as to the other poems and models with which we've discussed. And think about the poems of different classmates in relation to each other and to your own work. Workshops, obviously, are only as effective as the preparation that students bring to them.

For the workshop leader: Each of you will be in charge of running the workshop for one of your peers in each term. It will be your responsibility to guide and manage discussion of your classmates' work.

Decide on some paths through the poem that you'd like to take: points you think are important to introduce or questions you think will help get to the heart of the poem. You may not need to bring these up if the discussion is already flowing nicely, but make sure you have them in reserve if the workshop lags or gets off topic.

If you think it might be helpful to compare this poem to a particular published poem that we've read in class or that you know from your own reading, don't hesitate to bring it in. Do this only if you think that looking at the other poem might illuminate particular questions about the student poem being workshopped.

Be assertive, but refrain from dominating the discussion. Think of yourself as a guide to the poem.

Workshop Schedule

FALL TERM

1. Oct 1

Workshopper

1.

2.

3.

Leader

1.

2.

3.

2. Oct 8

Workshopper

1.

2.

3.

Leader

1.

2.

3.

3. Oct 22

Workshopper

1.

2.

3.

Leader

1.

2.

3.

4. Oct 29

Workshopper

1.

2.

3.

Leader

1.

2.

3.

5. Nov 5

Workshopper

1.

2.

3.

Leader

1.

2.

3.

6. Nov 12

Workshopper

1.

2.

3.

Leader

1.

2.

3.

7. Nov 19

Workshopper

1.

2.

3.

Leader

1.

2.

3.

8. Nov 26

Workshopper

1.

2.

3.

Leader

1.

2.

3.

WINTER TERM

1. Jan 21

Workshopper

Leader

1.

1.

2.

2.

3.

3.

2. Jan 28

Workshopper

Leader

1.

1.

2.

2.

3.

3.

3. Feb 4

Workshopper

Leader

1.

1.

2.

2.

3.

3.

4. Feb 11

Workshopper

Leader

1.

1.

2.

2.

3.

3.

5. Feb 25

Workshopper

Leader

1.

1.

2.

2.

3.

3.

6. Mar 3

Workshopper

Leader

1.

1.

2.

2.

3.

3.

7. Mar 10

Workshopper

Leader

1.

1.

2.

2.

3.

3.

8. Mar 17

Workshopper

Leader

1.

1.

2.

2.

3.

3.

List of Weekly Assignments: Students must complete and turn in one exercise per week. The exercises are due as hard copies at the beginning of the appropriate class. See “Assigned Exercise” above for more detail. The assignments are designed to get students to try their hand at the material we discussed in the class before the assignment is due, so you should think about general ideas in advance, but do not seriously engage with the assignment before we discuss the readings. **Each assignment must also include a paragraph explaining precisely how the poem meets the assignment’s requirements.**

Due September 17: Write a poem that either directly or indirectly describes your poetic style.

Due September 24: Write a poem (of at least 10 lines) that has a fixed rhythm.

Due October 1: Write a poem that foregrounds euphony in a myriad of ways.

Due October 8: Write a poem that foregrounds imagery in a myriad of ways.

Due October 22: Write a poem that foregrounds direct, clear expression.

Due October 29: Write a poem that foregrounds direct observation and description.

Due November 5: Write a poem that foregrounds heightened diction.

Due November 12: Write a poem by using a procedural method; explain that method precisely in your statement.

Due November 19: Write a poem that is a translation; include the original text on a separate page.

Due November 26: Write a poem through subtraction; include a copy of the original text on a separate page.

Due December 3: No assignment; instead, work on preparing your portfolio for small group discussion in class.

Due January 7: Write a poem that foregrounds its intertextuality; directly state the intertext(s) in your statement.

Due January 14: Write a poem that relies on some form of research; directly explain the research in your statement.

Due January 21: Write a visual or concrete poem.

Due January 28: Write a sound poem.

Due February 4: Write a poem that enacts in some way the aesthetics of the Black Mountain school.

Due February 11: Write a poem that enacts in some way the aesthetics of the New York school.

Due February 25: Write a poem that directly or indirectly addresses your own racialized identity; try to incorporate, as did BAM writers, one or more specific elements of your own racial group’s historical identity in the poem’s *form*.

Due March 3: Write a poem that addresses in some way a cultural or group trauma.

Due March 10: Write a prose poem that addresses a socio-political issue in the world today that concerns you.

Due March 17: Write a poem that addresses a gendered identity (your own or a more generalized identity), in which you attempt to relate your own experiences to a larger socio-political issue.

Due March 24: Write a non-narrative poem specifically based on your own autobiography.

Due March 31: No assignment; instead, work on preparing your portfolio for small group discussion in class.