

English 213 Spring 2015, Section 001, CRN 13712

MWF 930-1020am, Armstrong 407

Instructor: Xin Tian Koh (xikoh@mix.wvu.edu)

Office: Colson 230

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 10.20am-11.20am, or by appointment.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Kenneth Koch and Kate Farrell. *Sleeping on the Wing*.

Margaret Atwood. *Morning in the Burned House*.

Franz Wright. *Earlier Poems*.

Kim Addonizio. *Ordinary Genius: A Guide For The Poet Within*.

Kazim Ali. *The Far Mosque*.

A writing journal (with pages that can be torn out).

Use of eCampus and email daily.

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“Poetry is an intimate act. It's about bringing forth something that's inside you--whether it is a memory, a philosophical idea, a deep love for another person or for the world, or an apprehension of the spiritual. It's about making something, in language, which can be transmitted to others--not as information, or polemic, but as irreducible art.”

— Dorianne Laux, *The Poet's Companion: A Guide To The Pleasures Of Writing Poetry*

“Poetry is the smallest way – it is a small, small way, but it is a way indeed – that the individual body can express its own personhood and value in the face of faceless systems.”

— Kazim Ali

Welcome to English 213! English 213 is about what poetry is, does, can be, and can do. Each week, we will focus on a different element of poetry or topic in poetry, read related (or unrelated) poems, and write a corresponding poem. In this class, you will read, write, share, and workshop poems, and also read and write prose about poetry to achieve the following **course goals**:

- Learn to be a member of the writing community by actively engaging in workshops and discussions.
- Develop writing and reading processes for poetry.
- Acquire a vocabulary for discussing poetry.
- Practice critical thinking and thoughtfulness when reading and responding to the work of classmates and published writers.
- Similarly, learn to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in your work.
- Learn to revise your work based on workshop comments and your own evaluation.

We will read a selection of poets who offer different ways of thinking about poetry. We will also read essays on poetry to see how writers conceive of poetry and poems, and write four of your own. You will also try your hand at writing 10 poems based on assignments I give you.

This class uses the **workshop model**, which means we will work together as a community to strengthen each participant’s creative potential. To benefit from the workshop model, you will have to learn how to be a successful writing community member, including: learning the vocabulary of poetry, craft, and topics in writing, learning about the history of and wider discussions about poetry, active, thoughtful contributions, and investing time and effort in all your work and your feedback on classmates’ work.

This is not a songwriting course. While honing your poetic craft may assist in songwriting, the two disciplines are very different. For this reason, all submitted work will be evaluated as poetry.

Grading:

40% — Poems & Participation: includes 10 poems, comments on classmates’ poems, participation in daily class discussions, participation in weekly eCampus discussions, etc.

40% — Critical Writing & Quizzes : includes 4 essays (reading responses and close readings), in-class quizzes, etc.

20% — Final Portfolio (containing 5 revised poems, one new poem, and an introduction)

Grading Scale: 90-100= A, 80-89= B, 70-79= C, 50-69= D, 0-49 = F.

Assignment	# of assignments	Points each	Total points possible: 1000	Percentage of total grade (100%)
Poems	10	25	250	
Participation in eCampus discussion	10	2	20	
Participation in each week’s class discussion	15 weeks	2	30	
Workshop comments (verbal and written, every workshop day)	# of workshops TBD	TBD	100	
Subtotal: 40%				
Essays	4	50	200	
Quizzes	15	10	150	
Mid-term in-class exam	1	50	50	
Subtotal: 40%				
Final portfolio- revised poems	5	20	100	
Final portfolio- one new poem	1	50	50	
Final portfolio introduction	1	50	50	
Subtotal: 20%				
Total: 100%				

You will be producing a lot of creative and critical work, and only the latter will be traditionally graded (letter grades, X amount of points, etc.). However, as the grade breakdown reflects, the creative work is still part of your grade. Creative work will receive credit based on timely completion and following directions.

Poems: 10 poems will be due throughout the semester. Poems must be submitted in hard copy. Make sure you provide one typed copy for everyone in the class. Electronic copies are not acceptable. New poems will be due in class starting on Wednesday, January 21st, and subsequently, on most Mondays. They will be workshopped on Fridays starting on Friday, January 30th.

Comments on Classmates' Poems: You will share your reading responses and your feedback on each other's poems in class during workshop. In return, you will receive your classmates' comments on your work that will hopefully aid you in revision.

Class and eCampus discussions: will be thoughtful and considerate. eCampus discussion questions will be posted almost every week.

Critical Writing & Quizzes: Four essays responding to the texts will be due throughout the semester. Two are reading responses, and two are close readings. There will be weekly in-class quizzes throughout the semester.

Mid-term: There will be an in-class mid-term written exam, including short-answer questions and a close reading of a poem we've read beforehand for class.

Final Portfolio: Your final portfolio will contain an introduction about how your favorite poet/s from the texts and how this class teaches you about your own writing and style. This course is designed to teach you that poetry is about thoughtful craft, awareness, integrity, revision, and admiration.

Navigating the Workshop & Social Justice

We will be workshopping poems every Friday starting from Friday, January 30th onwards. You will be writing many poems throughout the semester. Of these poems, 10 will be workshopped by your peers. If you have poems that you do not wish to revise or hear criticism about, then you shouldn't submit them to workshop. The poems you submit to workshop should be poems you want feedback on.

WVU is committed to social justice. This class aims to be a supportive environment in line with WVU's commitment to social justice, based on open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Accessibility Services (304-293-6700). For more information on West Virginia University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see <http://diversity.sandbox.wvu.edu/ddej>.

Social justice is also very important to the workshop model. In art, including in poetry, a writer puts themselves on the line. Poems often contain personal experiences, thoughts, feelings, and ways of seeing the world. Respect is essential to building a writing community in which we can all grow, especially when dealing with the personal. Respond to poems thoughtfully.

Writing Studio: The WVU Writing Studio strives to help all members of the university community learn more about writing and become better writers. Their professional and friendly consultants work with writers one-to-one on all stages of the writing process, from note-taking and pre-writing to revision strategies and proofreading techniques. Because the Writing Studio works to teach students ways to improve their own writing, consultants will not proofread, edit papers, or discuss grades. It is helpful to bring your assignment prompt with you on your visit. To make an appointment, call 304.293.5788 or visit <http://speakwrite.wvu.edu/writing-studio>.

University Counseling Services: The Carruth Center provides resources to help manage stress, improve relationships, make healthy lifestyle choices, and face new challenges and transitions. The Center is in the newly constructed Health and Education Building, 390 Birch Street, located on the Evansdale campus adjacent to the Student Recreation Center. Its website is <http://well.wvu.edu/ccpps>, and its phone number (answered 24 hours) is 304-293-4431.

Policies & Procedures

• **Attendance:** Participation is an extremely important element of fostering a writing community, and you cannot participate if you do not attend. Illnesses happen, as do emergencies. This is why **you may miss three classes without penalty. The fourth absence will compromise your final overall final class grade as much as one full letter grade. If you miss six or more classes, you will fail the course. Excessive tardiness will also negatively affect your grade.**

• **Late Work:** Late work will not be accepted, and will receive a zero. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to ensure that your work is turned in on time. If you anticipate any issues with meeting a deadline, it is your responsibility to speak with me before the deadline in question has passed.

• **Plagiarism:** Please don't. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty may result in failing an assignment, failing the course, or more serious measures.

Online Resources:

The Academy of American Poets: www.poets.org

Poetry Society of America: www.poetrysociety.org

The Association of Writers and Writing Programs: www.awpwriter.org

Poetry Daily: www.poetrydaily.org

Poets & Writers Magazine: www.pw.org

Poetry Foundation: www.poetryfoundation.org

Schedule of Work

Week 1: *Sleeping on the Wing*

Monday, Jan. 12

Course introduction.

What is a poem?

Homework: Read Koch's introduction, Whitman and Dickinson

Wednesday, Jan. 14

Elements of poetry: image, simile, and metaphor (*OG*)

Homework: Read Hopkins and Rimbaud

Friday, Jan. 16

Starting a poem (*OG*)

Types of poetry: the ode

Homework: Prompt 1

Week 2: *Sleeping on the Wing*

Wednesday, Jan. 21

Elements of poetry: the line

Description (*OG*)

Turn in Poem 1.

Homework: Read Rilke, Stevens, and Williams

Friday, Jan. 23

Types of poetry: the sonnet

Workshop introduction

Homework: Prompt 2

Homework: Read Lawrence, Eliot, and Cummings

Week 3: *Sleeping on the Wing*

Monday, Jan. 26

Elements of poetry: sound (meter, syntax, rhyme, assonance, alliteration, onomatopoeia) (*OG*)

Turn in Poem 2.

Homework: Read Garcia Lorca, Ginsberg, and O'Hara

Wednesday, Jan. 28

Types of poetry: the elegy

Homework: Read Ashbery, Snyder and Baraka

Friday, Jan. 30

Workshop

Homework: Essay 1

Week 4: *Sleeping on the Wing*

Monday, Feb. 2

Elements of poetry: the stanza

Homework: Read Yeats and Pound

Wednesday, Feb. 4

Types of poetry: poetic forms, the sestina and villanelle

Turn in Essay 1.

Homework: Read OG 127-144.

Friday, Feb. 6

Workshop

Homework: Prompt 3

Homework: read parts I and II of Atwood, up to page 41

Week 5: *Morning in the Burned House (Atwood)*

Monday, Feb. 9

Elements of poetry: first/second/third person narrative voice

Workshop

Turn in Poem 3.

Wednesday, Feb. 11

Identity (*OG*)

Types of poetry: free verse

Friday, Feb. 13

Workshop

Homework: Prompt 4

Homework: Read parts III, IV, and V of Atwood

Week 6: *Morning in the Burned House (Atwood)*

Monday, Feb. 16

Atwood discussion

Workshop

Turn in Poem 4.

Wednesday, Feb. 18

Workshop

Friday, Feb. 20

Workshop

Homework: Essay 2

Week 7: *Morning in the Burned House* (Atwood)

Monday, Feb. 23

Elements of poetry: formality and register

Wednesday, Feb. 25

Topics in poetry: the persona poem (*OG*)

Turn in Essay 2.

Friday, Feb. 27 (Mid-Semester)

Mid-term exam

Workshop

Homework: Prompt 5

Homework: Read the first half of Wright

Week 8: *Earlier Poems* (Wright)

Monday, Mar. 2

Topics in poetry: time; tone, humor and irony (*OG*)

Turn in Poem 5.

Wednesday, Mar. 4

Types of poetry: the prose poem

Friday, Mar. 6

Workshop

Homework: Prompt 6

Homework: Read the second half of Wright

Week 9: *Earlier Poems* (Wright)

Monday, Mar. 9

Types of poetry: non-Western forms

Turn in Poem 6.

Wednesday, Mar. 11

Topics in poetry: relationships— the self and the world

Friday, Mar. 13

Workshop

Homework: Essay 3 (Close Reading) (*OG*)

Week 10: *Earlier Poems (Wright)*

Monday, Mar. 16

Topics in poetry: death and loss

Wednesday, Mar. 18

Topics in poetry: faith, belief, and disbelief
Turn in Essay 3.

Friday, Mar. 20 (Last Day To Drop)

Workshop

Homework: Prompts 7 and 8

Homework: Read Kazim Ali (whole book)

March 21-March 29: Spring Recess

Week 11: *The Far Mosque (Kazim Ali)*

Monday, Mar. 30

Topics in poetry: pain, sickness and health (*OG*)
Turn in Poems 7 and 8.

Wednesday, Apr. 1

Topics in poetry: family

Week 12: *The Far Mosque (Kazim Ali)*

Monday, Apr. 6

Topics in poetry: cultural references

Wednesday, Apr. 8

Workshop

Friday, Apr. 10 Workshop

Homework: Prompt 9

Essay 4 (Close Reading) (*OG*)

Week 13: *The Far Mosque (Kazim Ali)*

Monday, Apr. 13

Topics in poetry: race, gender, class, and privilege (*OG*)
Turn in Poem 9.

Wednesday, Apr. 15

Topics in poetry: love and joy (*OG*)

Turn in Essay 4.

Friday, Apr. 17

Workshop

Homework: Prompt 10

Week 14

Monday, Apr. 20

Class in the downtown library, room TBA

Publishing and literary journals

Formatting and cover letters

Turn in Poem 10.

Wednesday, Apr. 22

Topics in poetry: revising and editing

Friday, Apr. 24 Workshop

Week 15

Monday, Apr. 27 and Wednesday, Apr. 29

Workshop

Friday, May 1

Final Poetry Reading and Discussion

Final Portfolios due today in class
