

# ENGL 213: Creative Writing

## Introduction to Poetry

Meeting: MWF 12:30-1:20 in Armstrong 407  
Sec. 001 CRN: 13995

Instructor: Rebecca Doverspike  
Email: rdoversp@mix.wvu.edu  
Office: Colson 309 – Office Hours: Fri: 10:30-12:30, and by appointment

### Course Description:

Welcome to English 213, a class all about poetry. In this course, you will write poetry, read and analyze the work of famous and contemporary poets in order to understand more about how poetry works, and how you can use these tools to develop your own poetic voice. You will also learn a range of poetic terminology to aid you in discussing and developing work throughout the semester.

This course is a creative writing workshop, meaning that we will work together as a classroom community to hone the creative potential of each individual. The workshop format requires each of you to learn the vocabulary necessary to enter into discussions of poetry, to be actively involved in class discussions every day, and to be willing to invest time and care—not only into the crafting of your own work, but also into critiquing the work of your fellow classmates.

Over the course of the semester, you'll write ten poems. Some of these poems will arise from guided prompts, and others will be more open-ended. To foster deep reading and engage with its relationship to your own poetry, you will also write several brief reading responses, two close-reading essays, a reflective midterm essay, and an artist's statement. You'll be given specific prompts for each of these assignments.

Keep in mind that poetry is an academic discipline. That isn't meant as a warning so much as an acknowledgement that part of poetry's meaningfulness involves work—studying, understanding, finding our true material and how we want to go to about expressing that, etc. I think it's a good and joyful kind of work, a discipline that makes transparent those connections between academic study and one's own life (as well as life at large), and I hope you will, too.

### Texts:

Andrews, Tom. *The Hemophiliac's Motorcycle*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1994. Print.

Howe, Marie. *The Good Thief*. New York: Persea Books, 1988. Print.

Koch, Kenneth and Kate Farrell. *Sleeping on the Wing: An Anthology of Modern Poetry with Essays on Reading and Writing*. New York: Vintage Books, 1982. Print.

Wright, James. *The Branch Will Not Break*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1963. Print.

### **The Workshop and Social Justice:**

For the first few weeks of the semester, we will concentrate on reading notable poets who have a lot to teach us about the craft. You will try your hand at imitating some of these famous poets.

After the first few weeks, I will give a lesson and poetry prompt related to the theme of the week each Monday, and we'll workshop in assigned groups Wednesdays and Fridays, alongside reading discussions. When it's your turn to hand out your poem, bring 20 copies to class.

Poetry, and all creative writing, requires a lot from us as individuals. We put a lot of ourselves on the line: our thoughts, our emotions, our way(s) of thinking about the world. To create a classroom community most beneficial to the work we wish to produce, respect and care in our conversations and workshops are of the utmost importance. In this class, we have the chance to communicate ideas and images that matter to us and our goal is to help everyone excel in crafting the material that compels them. Failure to treat each and every member of the class with respect is, of course, a breach of the university's core values/social justice policy. It also violates the central tenants of a creative writing workshop.

Thus, always offer thoughtful, respectful, and worthwhile critiques; put in the time to pinpoint, to the best of your ability, what exactly you believe is or is not working about each of your classmates' poems. Try to understand what the poem is trying to do, and help the poem become a better version of itself. Don't try to change the poem, or the poet, into something that it (or he or she) is not. Approaching workshop in this way will create a true community in which we can find meaning and joy in thoughtfully learning from one another.

### **Attendance:**

It's important that you're here, prepared, and on time. To get the most out of this poetry course, you must engage in a consistent process; presence is necessary.

You may miss up to three (3) class periods without penalty—save these for emergencies. For each subsequent absence, your grade will be lowered one full letter, and if you reach six absences you will fail the course.

Late work is not accepted. If you anticipate an issue with meeting a deadline or with attendance, it is your responsibility to speak with me.

## Course Goals:

- Actively and genuinely engage in the writing community; carefully complete all work (readings, writings, responses) on time and share your insights with your classmates.
- Practice your analytical skills; understand how poetry works and why. Understand what moves you about a poem, and become comfortable using poetic terminology to articulate/express that.
- Develop your poetic material and voice.
- Learn how to engage in, and benefit from, constructive criticism about your work (and the work of your others). Use workshop comments, and your own evaluations, to facilitate revision.
- Engage with poetry as a way to understand the world around you.

## Evaluation:

**50% Daily Work:** poems, close reading essays, reading responses, midterm reflective essay, etc.

**25% Participation:** workshop preparation (comments on poems), quizzes, classroom discussions, presentations, etc.

**25% Final Portfolio:** compilation of poems, major revisions of at least three poems, and an artist's statement

## Online Resources:

Poetry Foundation: [www.poetryfoundation.org](http://www.poetryfoundation.org)

The Academy of American Poets: [www.poets.org](http://www.poets.org)

Poetry Society of America: [www.poetrysociety.org](http://www.poetrysociety.org)

The Associated Writing Programs: [www.awpwriter.org](http://www.awpwriter.org)

Poetry Daily: [www.poetrydaily.org](http://www.poetrydaily.org)

Poets & Writers Magazine: [www.pw.org](http://www.pw.org)

## Schedule of Work

\*\*Subject to change according to progress

### Week One: Introduction to Poetry

	<p>W 1/8</p> <p>Course Introductions, Free-writing</p> <p>HW: Read <i>Sleeping</i> intro. (p. 3-23) &amp; reading response.</p>	<p>F 1/10</p> <p>Reading discussion, share responses.</p> <p>HW: Read Whitman (p. 25-38) and Dickinson (p. 39-46). Choose one of the exercises for imitation poem # 1.</p>
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### Week Two: Terminology

<p>M 1/13</p> <p>Vocabulary, share imitation poems</p> <p>HW: Read Yeats (p. 71-81)</p>	<p>W 1/15</p> <p>Reading quiz, in class writing, vocabulary practice</p> <p>HW: Read Rilke (p. 99-106) and Stevens (p. 107-122). Do both exercises for imitation poem #2.</p>	<p>F 1/18</p> <p>Practice vocabulary with imitation poems in workshop groups.</p> <p>HW: Read Appollinaire (p. 123-136) and Stein (p. 82-98), study for vocab. quiz.</p>
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### Week Three: Writing about Poetry

<p>M 1/20</p> <p>No Class: Martin Luther King Day</p>	<p>W 1/22</p> <p>Vocabulary quiz, reading discussion</p> <p>HW: Read Williams (p. 137-149).</p>	<p>F 1/24</p> <p>Reading discussion, writing about poetry, workshop basics</p> <p>HW: Read Pound (p.160-168) and do writing exercise for poem #3. Group 1: copies of poems</p>
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Week Four: Observation / Sustained Attention

<p>M 1/27</p> <p>Poem #4 prompt, reading discussion</p> <p>HW: Read Lawrence (150-159), reading response, comment on Group 1 poems</p>	<p>W 1/29</p> <p>Workshop Group 1, reading discussion (practice close-reading)</p> <p>HW: Read Eliot (p.169-180) and Lorca (p.203-213).</p>	<p>F 1/31</p> <p>Workshop Group 1, quiz, reading discussion, in-class writing</p> <p>HW: work on poem #4 Group 2: copies of poems</p>
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Week Five: Image & Sound

<p>M 2/3</p> <p>Poem-mapping activity, assign close-reading essay #1, poem #5 prompt</p> <p>HW: Read Cummings (197-202) and Ginsberg (p.225-238), comment on Group 2 poems</p>	<p>W 4/5</p> <p>Workshop Group 2, reading discussion</p> <p>HW: Asbury (p.254-267) and Snyder (p.268-272)</p>	<p>F 2/7</p> <p>Workshop Group 2, reading discussion / in-class writing</p> <p>HW: Read Jones (276-283), comment on Group 1 poems Group 3: copies of poems</p>
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Week Six: Syntax & Line by Line

<p>M 2/10</p> <p>reading discussion, poem #6 prompt</p> <p>HW: Andrews p. 3-9, reading response, comment on Group 3 poems</p>	<p>W 2/12</p> <p>Workshop Group 3 reading exercises</p> <p>HW: Andrews p. 13-18</p>	<p>F 2/14</p> <p>Workshop Group 3, reading discussion, close reading essay #1 due</p> <p>HW: Andrews p. 19-31, reading response Group 4: copies of poems</p>
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Week Seven: Metaphor

<p>M 2/17</p> <p>Reading discussion, metaphor activity, poem prompt #7, close-reading essay #1 due</p> <p>HW: Andrews p. 35-50, comments on Group 4 poems</p>	<p>W 2/19</p> <p>Group 4 Workshop, reading discussion</p> <p>HW: Andrews: p. 53-end, reading response</p>	<p>F 2/21</p> <p>Group 4 Workshop, reading discussion, in-class writing, Reflection Essay prompt</p> <p>HW: Work on poems &amp; Reflection</p>
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Week Eight: Reflection (Midterm)

<p>M 2/24</p> <p>In-class writing, reflection activities</p> <p>HW: Finish Reflection Essay Group 1: copies of poems</p>	<p>W 2/26</p> <p>Reflection essay due</p> <p>HW: Reading TBA, comment on Group 1 poems Groups 2 &amp; 3: copies of poems</p>	<p>F 2/28</p> <p>No Class: Writing Day!</p>
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Week Nine: Workshop Extravaganza

<p>M 3/3</p> <p>Group 1 workshop, in-class writing</p> <p>HW: comment on Groups 2 &amp; 3 poems Group 4: copies of poems</p>	<p>W 3/5</p> <p>Workshop Group 2 &amp; 3</p> <p>HW: comment on Groups 3 &amp; 4 poems</p>	<p>F 3/8</p> <p>Workshop Group 3 &amp; 4</p> <p>HW: Write, and have a lovely break! Group 1: copies of poems</p>
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Week Ten: SPRING BREAK

M 3/10	W 3/12	F 3/14
No Class	No Class	No Class

Week 11: Form & Rhythm

M 3/17	W 3/19	F 3/21
Poem #8 prompt HW: Read Wright p. 11-20, reading response, comment on Group 1 poems	Workshop Group 1, reading discussion HW: Read Wright p. 21-32	Workshop Group 1, reading quiz & discussion HW: Read Wright p. 33-40 Group 2: copies of poems

Week 12: Line by Line

M 3/24	W 3/26	F 3/28
Workshop Group 2, Poem #9, reading discussion HW: Read Wright p. 41-49, comment on Group 2 poems	Workshop Group 2, assign close-reading essay #2, reading discussion HW: Read Wright p. 50-end, reading response prompt	Workshop Group 2, reading discussion HW: Finish reading response Group 3: copies of poems

Week 13: Lyric Poetry

<p>M 3/31</p> <p>Lyric poetry discussion, Wright reading response due</p> <p>HW: Read Howe p. 3-13 comment on Group 3 poems</p>	<p>W 4/2</p> <p>Workshop Group 3, reading quiz, discussion</p> <p>HW: Read Howe p.15-23</p>	<p>F 4/4</p> <p>Workshop Group 3, reading discussion</p> <p>HW: Read Howe p. 24-35 Group 4: copies of poems</p>
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Week 14: Arse Poetica

<p>M 4/7</p> <p>Poem #10, Close-reading essay #2 due</p> <p>HW: Read Howe p. 36-41, comment on Group 4 poems</p>	<p>W 4/9</p> <p>Workshop Group 4, assign Artist Statement</p> <p>Howe: Read p. 43-end, reading response Groups 1 &amp; 2: copies of poems</p>	<p>F 4/11</p> <p>Workshop Group 4</p> <p>HW: comment on Groups 1 &amp; 2 poems Groups 3 &amp; 4: copies of poems</p>
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Week 15: Workshop Extravaganza / Revision

<p>M 4/14</p> <p>Workshop Groups 1 &amp; 2</p> <p>HW: Comment on Groups 3 &amp; 4 poems</p>	<p>W 4/16</p> <p>Workshop Groups 3 &amp; 4</p> <p>HW: work on Artist Statement and portfolio</p>	<p>F 4/18</p> <p>No Class: Friday before Easter Recess</p>
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Week 16: Culmination

<p>M 4/21</p> <p>Peer-review artist's statement, Read favorite poems you've written</p> <p>HW: Work on portfolio</p>	<p>W 4/23</p> <p>Continue favorite poem readings</p> <p>HW: Finish portfolio</p>	<p>F 4/25</p> <p>Portfolio Due at the beginning of class.</p>
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