

# English 213

Mark Brazaitis, ENGL 213, Fall 2007, Creative Writing: Poetry

**ENGLISH 213/001**

**Professor Mark Brazaitis**

**Office: 458 Stansbury**

**Office telephone: 293-3107 ex. 33402**

**Office Hours: Tuesday (2:30-4), Thursday (2:30-4) and by appointment**

**Email: mbrazait@mix.wvu.edu**

**Class Hours: TTh 11:30-12:45**

**Class Location: 47 Stansbury Hall**

Objective: In this class, you will learn to become a poet. To become a poet, you must dedicate yourself to both writing and reading poetry, and this class will allow you (read: require you) to do both.

Requirements: Over the course of the semester, you will read more than one hundred poems and write at least six, which you will collect in a mini-chapbook. You will be expected to master poetic terminology. You will be required to write an in-depth analysis of two of the poems on our reading list. You will also write two poems inspired by (or in imitation of) two of the poems on our reading list. In addition, you will be expected to participate in classroom discussions and give written feedback to your fellow students on their work.

Texts: *The Poet's Companion: A Guide to the Pleasures of Writing Poetry* (by Kim Addonizio and Dorianne Laux); *Tell Me* (by Kim Addonizio); *You & Yours* (by Naomi Shihab Nye); *Dein Cai Dau* (by Yusef Komunyakaa); and *The Owl Question* (by Faith Shearin).

Grades: Grades in this class will be based on the following: attendance and participation (20 percent); two tests on poetic terms and readings (30 percent); analyses of two poems from our reading (20 percent); two imitation poems (10 percent); four or more of your original poems to be critiqued in class and collected in a mini-chapbook along with your imitation poems (20 percent).

Attendance: Attendance will be graded as follows: 0-2 absences (A); 3-4 absences (B); 5-7 absences (C); 8 or more absences (F). Grading Key: 100=A+; 94-99=A; 90-93=A-; 85-89=B+; 83-84=B; 80-82=B-; 75-79=C+; 73-74=C; 70-72=C-; 65-69=D+; 63-64=D; 60-62=D-; 59 and below=F.

Extra credit: You may attend and write a one-page review of the two "special events" listed below. A review consists of a summary of the event as well as your opinion of the event. (Please type your review.) Each of the extra credit assignments counts for three extra points on one of your tests.

## Class Schedule and Day-to-Day Assignments

Tuesday, August 21 Get acquainted

Thursday, August 23 Review poetic terms. Read: “Shall I Compare Thee,” “What Lips My Lips Have Kissed, and Where, and Why,” “To My Mother,” “Tonight I Can Write,” and “I, Too.”

Tuesday, August 28 Review poetic terms. Read: “We Real Cool,” “Let Evening Come,” “Tiara,” “Wild Nights,” and “Funeral Blues.”

Thursday, August 30 Review poetic terms. Read: “I Saw in Louisiana a Live-Oak Growing,” “Blood in the Water,” “Homage to My Hips,” “The Girl,” and “Want.”

Tuesday, September 4 Review poetic terms. Read: “Non Sum Qualis Eram Bonae sub Regno Cynarae,” “When I Heard the Learn’d Astronomer,” “Morning Ride on the Yamanote Line,” “Long Walk Home,” and “What Grief Does.”

Thursday, September 6 **Test** on poetic terms and class readings.

Tuesday, September 11 Read: “Writing and Knowing” (page 19) and “The Family: Inspiration and Obstacle” (page 30) in *The Poet’s Companion* and the following five poems by Yusef Komunyakaa: “Tunnels” (page 5), “Somewhere Near Phu Bai” (page 7), “One More Loss to Count” (page 22), “Nude Pictures” (page 25) and “A Break from the Bush” (page 27).

Thursday, September 13: Read: “Death and Grief” (page 39) and “The Shadow” (page 56) in *The Poet’s Companion* and the following five poems by Kim Addonizio: “Virgin Spring” (page 31), “The Divorcee and Gin” (page 45), “The Revered Poet Instructs...” (page 57), “Fine” (page 82) and “One Night Stands” (page 85).

Tuesday, September 18 Read: “Witnessing” (page 64) and “Poetry of Place” (page 74) in *The Poet’s Companion* and the following five poems by Naomi Shihab Nye: “Headache” (page 30), “Please Describe How You Became a Writer” (page 31), “Bucket” (page 32), “Tell Me About Yourself When You Were 17” (page 35), and “The Day” (page 52).

Thursday, September 20 Read: “Images” (page 85) and “Simile and Metaphor” (page 94) in *The Poet’s Companion* and the following five poems by Faith Shearin: “Piano Lesson” (page 5), “Desire” (page 24), “Hunger” (page 46), “Becoming Mother” (page 49) and “On Halloween” (page 53).

Tuesday, September 25 Read: “The Music of the Line” (page 104), “Voice and Style” (page 115), “Meter, Rhyme, and Form” (page 138), “Repetition, Rhythm, and Blues” (page 151), “More Repetition: Villanelle, Pantoum, Sestina” (page 161), “A Grammatical Excursion” (page 171) and “The Energy of Revision” (page 186) in *The Poet’s Companion*.

Thursday, September 27 **Test** on *The Poet’s Companion* as well as the four poets we discussed (Addonizio, Komunyakaa, Shihab Nye, and Shearin).

**Special Event:** Thursday, September 27th, at 7:30 p.m. in the Gold Ballroom of the Mountainlair, fiction writer Erin McGraw will be reading.

Tuesday, October 2 **Due:** an analysis of one of the following five poems by Yusef Komunyakaa (or a poem of your own modeled after one of his five poems): “Communique” (page 30), “The Edge” (page 32), “Prisoners” (page 35), “Eyeball Television” (page 39), and “Facing It” (page 63). **Note:** An analysis should be between one and five typed, double-spaced pages. It should have a title. If you write a poem modeled after a Komunyakaa poem, it can be any length but should imitate the style and/or address the subject matter of the poem you are modeling it after. Give your poem a title. Please note: You must write a total of two analyses and two imitation poems relating to the four poets (Komunyakaa, Addonizio, Shihab Nye, and Shearin) we are studying. So if, for example, you write an analysis of a Komunyakaa poem, you have one analysis and two imitation poems to go.

Thursday, October 4 **Due:** an analysis of one of the following five poems by Kim Addonizio (or a poem of your own modeled after one of her five poems): “Siamese” (page 30), “The Embers” (page 53), “What Do Women Want?” (page 74), “Getting Older” (page 86), and “For Desire” (page 87).

Tuesday, October 9 **Due:** an analysis of one of the following five poems by Naomi Shihab Nye (or a poem of your own modeled after one of her five poems): “Your Weight, at Birth” (page 53), “For Mohammed Zeid of Gaza, Age 15” (page 54), “The Sweet Arab, the Generous Arab” (page 57), “Why I Could Not Accept Your Invitation” (page 58), and “Interview, Saudi Arabia” (page 65).

Thursday, October 11 **Due:** an analysis of one of the following five poems by Faith Shearin (or a poem of your own modeled after one of her five poems): “Childhood” (page 8), “What I Like” (page 14), “Retriever” (page 17), “The Unexpectant” (page 27), and “My Portrait” (page 39).

Tuesday, October 16 **Due:** First poem. (Bring enough copies for everyone in the class plus a copy for the professor).

Thursday, October 18 Workshop

**Special Event:** Monday, October 22nd, at 7:30 p.m. in the Gold Ballroom of the Mountainlair, creative nonfiction writer Brenda Miller will be reading.

Tuesday, October 23 Workshop

Thursday, October 25 Workshop

Tuesday, October 30 Workshop **Due:** Second poem. (Bring enough copies for everyone in the class plus a copy for the professor).

Thursday, November 1 Workshop

Tuesday, November 6 Workshop

Thursday, November 8 Workshop

Tuesday, November 13 Workshop

Thursday, November 15 Workshop **Due:** Third poem (Bring enough copies for everyone in the class plus the professor).

*Thanksgiving Break --- Enjoy*

Tuesday, November 27 Workshop **Due:** Fourth poem (Bring enough copies for everyone in the class plus the professor).

Thursday, November 29 Workshop

Tuesday, December 4 **Due:** a collection of the six poems you wrote for this class (including the two imitation poems). The poems should be revised based on the comments you received from your classmates and your professor.

Thursday, December 6 Class reading of work

### **Core Values/Social Justice at West Virginia University**

The following core values establish the foundation for Social Justice at West Virginia University.

Every person has intrinsic worth and dignity;

Respect for the law is fundamental;

Freedom from fear is universal;

A climate of opportunity, mutual respect, and understanding engenders a feeling that the future should be shared by all community members;

There is an absence of discrimination and harassment based on age, color, disability, ethnic origin, marital status, pregnancy, race, religious beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, and veteran status; and

The rich diversity of people, their cultures, and the bonds that tie people together are appreciated and celebrated.