

Fall 9-1-2018

## CRWR 411.01: Advanced Poetry Workshop

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**EVERYDAY POETRY: ADVANCED POETRY WORKSHOP – CRWR 411**  
**University of Montana Fall 2018**

**Instructor:** Stacy Szymaszek

**Contact:** [szymaszekstacy@gmail.com](mailto:szymaszekstacy@gmail.com) (will let you know when UM email is set up)

**Course Time/Day/Room:** Thursdays 3:30pm – 6:20pm ECK(LA)233

**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 2pm-5pm & by appointment / ECK(LA)231

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*“Writing for me is a kind of daily practice. Even if you don’t have anything to say, you keep your hand in...” – Joanne Kyger*

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

The primary objectives of this workshop are 1) to enjoy poetry, with a focus on poetry that uses everyday life as subject matter. To that end, we will read both widely and closely. As we explore, we will ask many questions such as: why is poetry important? What does poetry do? What is a poem? What does poetry teach us about language, time, our surroundings, and/or ourselves? And 2) to focus on your work-in-progress. Discussions will center on form and stylistic refinement, with emphasis on revision. I encourage you to schedule frequent individual conferences with me.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

Through studying, discussing and emulating some of the approaches poets have taken, you will become self-motivated readers and disciplined writers of poetry that takes risks with form and content. By the end of the class, you will have a strong final manuscript. Using the classroom as an incubator to support your own searching, developing, and coming into your own sense of what matters in your work, as well as the self-possession to use your experience and everyday life as subject matter, are the most important goals of this workshop.

Required work to achieve these objectives will include:

- Read and annotate weekly readings
- Engage in all in-class writing, discussion, and other individual and collaborative activities
- Write brief weekly responses to the work we read (1/2 -1 page)
- Work on poems to be included in your final manuscript
- Revise poems through peer review, self-assessment, and my feedback

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Harryette Mullen – *Urban Tumbleweed*

Joe Brainard – *The Collected Writings of Joe Brainard*

Joanne Kyger – *On Time*

Available at the UM Bookstore.

In addition to the three required books, I will provide supplementary reading packets as PDFs.

### **STRUCTURE:**

Along with the reading and writing of poetry and the written responses, each class will have a ten-minute focus freewrite (I will provide a theme or a stylistic consideration that relates to our reading as a frame of reference). These writings can be used to develop your final manuscript. For your final manuscript, you will come up with a writing project of your choosing at the beginning of the semester. If you would like to discuss ideas for your project we can do so during my office hours.

Basic structure for classes (subject to revision if needed):

- Reading texts aloud
- Focused freewrite
- Sharing freewrite (in class) or new poems (out of class assignments)
- Discussion (in groups of 4 depending on size of group)\*
- Discussion full class

\*I will organize 4 students to work in groups for half an hour each class, then come together to workshop a poem from each group in a collaborative fashion. This will allow each student to receive feedback from your group and rotational feedback from the class at large.

All course work (unless stated otherwise) must be typed or computer printed on standard white paper. If you know you will be sharing your work with the class, be sure to make the appropriate number of copies to hand out. While there will be writing assignments as well as reading texts aloud in class, you will be expected to do most of your writing and reading for the course on your own time.

### **GRADING:**

35% in-class participation, 20% weekly assignments/responses (on time), 20% mid-semester portfolio, and 25% final manuscript. I expect full participation and will allow for only two absences.

### **POLICY ON ABSENCES AND LATENESS:**

The standard policy is that more than three absences in a fourteen-week term may result in a grade of "no credit." You must arrive on time for class and stay until dismissal. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. If there is an emergency please speak to me about it as soon as you can.

### **CULTURAL OR CEREMONIAL LEAVE:**

"Cultural or ceremonial leave allows excused absences for cultural, religious, and ceremonial purposes to meet the student's customs and traditions or to participate in

related activities. To receive an authorized absence for a cultural, religious or ceremonial event the student or their advisor (proxy) must submit a formal written request to the instructor. This must include a brief description (with inclusive dates) of the cultural event or ceremony and the importance of the student's attendance or participation." For full information on this and other [academic policies and procedures](http://catalog.umt.edu/academics/policies-procedures/) see: <http://catalog.umt.edu/academics/policies-procedures/>.

**OFFICE HOURS/CONTACTING ME:**

I encourage you to meet with me if you wish to discuss your work, an idea, or simply need additional support. You may also request an appointment outside of office hours. When you email me, I will do my best to get back to you within 24 hours. Please put CRWR 411 in the subject line of your emails.

**CLASS DECORUM:**

My preference is that you shut down and store all electronic devices during class unless our work calls for them, however I will only make a point of asking you to put a device away if you appear distracted or are distracting others. Beverages are okay, but please refrain from eating in class. During discussions, we will work toward a lively, engaged style of conversation that allows for balanced, respectful sharing of questions, opinions, feedback, and debate.

I encourage you to exchange University of Montana e-mail addresses with your peers as you will be getting to know each other through your own work and responses. Since we are creating a conscientious and supportive environment, I trust that you will be mindful and respectful of each other and your shared work and will not discuss the work with persons outside of our workshop unless you have permission from the author.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**

Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course. Please speak with me after class or during my office hours. Please be prepared to provide a letter from your DSS Coordinator, so I can do my best to support you.

**NAME/ PRONOUN STATEMENT:**

I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate/preferred name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference.

**SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY:**

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty—in as much as they keep the individual student as well as the collective community from learning—will result in an automatic F and may entail a variety of other sanctions up to and including expulsion from the University. If you are unsure about your rights and responsibilities, please take the time to consult the [student conduct code](#) on the University of Montana's web site.

**COURSE CALENDAR (SUBJECT TO REVISION):**

August 28: Introduction to course and overview of syllabus  
Notebook strategies (three column method)  
from Joe Brainard's "Some Train Notes" (pg. 266)  
"Self-Portrait: 1971" (pg. 359)  
Assignment for next class, write a self-portrait poem  
(future homework will be given at the end of each class)

September 4: The poem as diary or journal  
Joe Brainard's I REMEMBER (sections assigned from collected) +  
Shane Allison's I REMEMBER (handout)

September 11: The poem as diary or journal continued (handout)

September 18: Joanne Kyger's On Time  
A study of line breaks

September 25: Joanne Kyger's On Time continued  
Using current events in poetry

October 2: The structured walk (we'll be going outside for this)  
Walking poems (trying out the three column method in notebook)  
*Urban Tumbleweed* by Harryette Mullen + handout

October 9: Harryette Mullen continued

October 16: Mid-semester portfolio due  
Constrained writing  
*20 Lines a Day* by Harry Mathews  
*The Helens of Troy, New York* by Bernadette Mayer (handout)

October 23: Place  
*An Attempt at Exhausting a Place in Paris* by Georges Perec  
"Wintergreen Ridge" by Lorine Niedecker  
*Into and Out of Dislocation* by C.S. Giscombe (handout)

October 30: Place poems continued  
(I will be absent/sub. teacher)

November 6: Philip Whalen and the self-portrait poem

November 13: Elegies / eulogies  
giovanni singleton, Kamau Brathwaite and others (handout)

November 20: (Thanksgiving no class)

November 27: Bernadette Mayer's Writing Experiments (handout)

December 4: Entire class reserved for workshopping

December 11: In class poetry reading

**Portfolios due by email by 11:59pm**