Fall 9-1-2000

ENCR 511.02: Graduate Poetry Workshop

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Syllabus

Requirements:

1) At least 8 original poems, to be copied for the rest of the class and handed in about once every other week for class discussion.

2) Detailed written comments on every poem as it is presented to the workshop.

3) Generous and thoughtful participation in classroom discussions of each poem.

4) At least 4 revisions of poems chosen from the 8 originals first presented.

5) The completion of all but two of the assigned exercises.

6) A written statement of each student’s individual “aesthetic” as it stands at present.

7) A 1-2 page written report on an article about or criticism of a poet, poem, poetry book, etc., which was written within the last 2 years. In addition the written report, which is to be handed in to the instructor, student – time permitting – should be prepared to give a brief oral presentation on the work in question to the class.

8) A brief recitation and discussion of a poem which the student has previously memorized.

9) A paragraph to be written on each of the individual student's peers' progress in poetry – its strengths, weaknesses, overall character, etc. – and handed in at the end of the semester.

10) At least two individual conferences with the instructor.

11) No more than one unexplained absence.

12) A “Final Portfolio” which will be presented to the instructor at the conclusion of the course, and which will include all original poems, (with the criticisms written on them by the student's peers), revisions, exercises, and written reports.

The goals of this 511 workshop are basically the same as they are for the 411 advanced undergraduate workshop: i.e., through the exacting and difficult task of classroom analysis of student poems -- not to mention the creation of the poems themselves -- to help students learn to express themselves with, as the poet, critic, and former Librarian of Congress Consultant in Poetry Randall Jarrell says, “an attitude that is a mixture of sharp intelligence and of willing emotional empathy, at once penetrating and generous”, in order to create poems which are, as the great critic R.P. Blackmur says, “distinguished from the manufacture of verse by the animating presence in the poetry of a fresh idiom: language so twisted and posed in a form that it not only expresses the matter in hand but adds to the stock of available reality.”