Instructor: Terrance Millet
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Office Hours: MTR: 12:30-1:30 pm & W by appointment
Class time & Place: M: 2:00-4:50 p.m.: NSH 207
CRN: 34539
Prerequisites: WR 121 and a habit of reading poetry wherever you find it. If you don’t read it, you can’t write it well.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Hello, and welcome to all of you. The goal of this class is to bring poetry to life and to help you in the effort to write your own poems. The format will be based on the workshop model. We’ll study the elements of poetry, write poems, have them workshopped and discussed in class groups.

We’ll write one group of poems each in addition to a number of creative writing exercises. Each of you will have input and suggestions from the entire class on your work, and you can use the suggestions to rewrite the poems and hand in the final version, formatted professionally.

During the class, let’s explore statements such as this: Is poetry helpful and relevant, or is it just a form of entertainment? How can we interpret a poem so that we don’t spoil our enjoyment of it through “over-analyzing” it? How can we see the issues in our own lives reflected in the poetry we read, and, through an historical perspective, gain wisdom on how to live? Who are the great writers of poetry, and why are their poems great?

Here’s another question I’d like to explore with you: “What matters most—the author’s intent, or the reader’s response?” To begin, let’s start to think about issues that are relevant to you. While good poems have something to say and can entertain us with their message and with the skill with which they are assembled, an important question is this: are they just entertainment, or do they address the big issues that we as men and women struggle with—that indeed humankind has always struggled with—love and hatred, power and struggle, ambition, despair, conformity, self-invention, public and individual identity, fame, money, birth, death, failure, success, politics, fear and hope?

1 Or terrancemillet1@comcast.net
COURSE ASSIGNMENTS: You’ll have the opportunity to demonstrate your learning outcomes by accomplishing the following tasks:

1. **One** 5-page packet of 3 to 5 poems and **one** substantive rewrite of that group (200 points). Your packet has to be completed and circulated one week before it is scheduled to be workshopped and discussed in class. The rewrite will also be circulated for workshopping if there is time.

2. **One** letter or set of Workshop notes (written critique) on the **group of poems assigned to you to workshop in class**. You will be assigned packets for written feedback per class (Group A or Group B), and make TWO COPIES: one for the writer, and you will **email one copy to me** for appraisal and grading. These thorough, positive comments shall be worth 10 points each on a credit/no credit basis. They cannot be handed in late for credit.

3. **Oral Participation**: Your workshop participation (points taken off for generality, dominating, meandering, or arrogance) will count in my final summing up of your grade, in combination with the written analysis grade. This component includes your oral presentations of the group-led discussion of the text.

4. **Book Report** (100 points, 3-5 pages) on *A Poet’s Companion*. Write a comprehensive book report on this little book. Be prepared to talk about your interpretation in depth during the class, referencing the same criteria we use for workshopping our own work. Due at the end of week 2.

5. **One evaluative essay** (100 points) on what you’ve learned about reading and writing poetry in this class, the challenges, the breakthroughs, etc., with specific reference to your own work and one other author of your choice. This will be due during week 10.

6. **Portfolio** (50 points): Your revised poems, correctly formatted, a cover letter addressed to a publisher of your choice, an SASE, all in a manila envelope stamped and ready for mailing. I’ll check the contents and mail your submissions. This is due at class time in finals week.

Each student will have his or her group of poems discussed in the class workshop. We will organize this together. Remember to bring enough copies of your "workshop" collection for the class **on the date it is due**, which will be one week prior to its actual discussion date. All collections must be legibly typed, formatted professionally, and

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2 You’ll notice that groups are assigned specific packets. You must write your letter for the writer of the packet assigned to you and notate the ms. Be sure I get a copy of the letter. HOWEVER, you are meant to read ALL the poetry to be workshopped in class and make some marginal annotations for discussion and oral feedback. Come to class prepared. Read the material early and several times.

3 **WRITTEN CRITIQUES**: Each student must write a two-page response-letter to the author of each collection discussed in class. On the day a packet is to be discussed, bring to class your copy of the work, complete with your comments in the margins and a response letter stapled or paper-clipped to it. These letters should be typed and signed, WITH AN EXTRA COPY FOR ME. You may email a copy to me for grading BEFORE THE CLASS.

carefully proofread. Use Courier font only. Failure to get copies in on time means you'll miss your workshop experience and the grade. No exceptions. Failure to be present in these workshops will lower your grade substantially.

FORMAT:

• All manuscripts must be formatted properly to be accepted (see template for correct margins, courier font, title page, header data aligned top right, etc.).
• All critical work is to be formatted after the Chicago Style. See any handbook, our web site, or http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/p04_c10_s1.html for details.

LATE PAPERS & ABSENCES: Beyond one pardoned absence during the term, failure to attend class will be marked, and will affect your grade. This is a workshop, not a lecture, and your attendance is a key aspect of evaluation and input.

• If any piece of critical writing is late, the grade will drop by 1/3 per day. Again: in the case of a late collection, you will forfeit your workshop.
• Late peer critiques and analyses will not be accepted because they indicate your nonparticipation in the class discussion of the day.
• Do not beg for mercy,\(^5\) because the entire class depends upon you and your work being present.

If you are unable to attend class, email your work to me on that day. It’s important that you attend all classes. Again, every class will entail points towards your grade. Most of the work will be in-class discussion (class participation)—and you’ll be graded on this. The revision process occurring in class is crucial in developing skills in writing, and your team members will depend on you. Also, material is covered in class that is not in your texts.

THE WORKSHOP IN PRACTICE
The Details

READERS:
“Please type an end-letter to the author of each group of poems we discuss in workshop, and make smaller notes in the margins of the manuscript itself. Before attaching this letter to the collection, make a copy of it for me. No late critiques will be accepted, nor those written during class. I will read them, mark them "credit" in my grade book, and let you know if I see a problem. Please feel free to ask me for further advice or clarification during office hours.

In your letters and your oral remarks, begin by identifying the strengths of the poems and the assemblage. Name two or three (more than a sentence!) in the piece and give specific examples to support your impression. "I liked this" is dull and vague and will help no one. The idea here is to point out to the writer his or her best shot for a powerful, convincing, and authentic piece of writing.

If you are at a loss, simply point out a specific moment that caught your interest and explain what worked for you there. If the moment is not adequately developed, or has some other problem, please say so-but focus first and in detail on what the writer "did right," or try to explain what you think the writer was trying to accomplish. Then, you may elaborate on areas that you feel need more attention. Here are some sample areas to address. Choose one or two to focus on for each discussion-don't try to do them all! Work your way through each approach as the term progresses.

1. The poem's beginning: tell the writer what the opening did for you--what it promised, and to what degree he or she followed through on that promise.
2. Form: do you have a strong sense of the structure and form?
3. Point of view: can you define it? Is it consistently employed throughout the poems, or does it wobble and shift? What is the effect of that wobbling? What gets lost? (This question is a big one--give it some thought.) Is this the best point of view for the poem? Why or why not?
4. Detail, imagery and setting: are the details sharp, sensory, and strictly necessary to the poem's form and intent? What is extraneous? Or not adequately developed? Why would a stronger sense of detail and place benefit these particular poems? Be very specific.
5. Language and style: often it is the writer's language that makes a poem seem rushed or predictable, trumped up (melodramatic), or self-indulgent. Where is the writer's voice at its most believable? Give a specific example or two. Now ask yourself where the writer has fallen into overwriting, generality, abstraction, cliché-in a word: falseness. We all do it every day, but in this class, it is our work to recognize and zap it. We are looking for clear, vivid language and the voice of a living, breathing person. Good writing--fiction or non-fiction--has a spoken quality. Be on the look out for stiffness and false formality, or the equally false super-cool slang.
6. A test: does the writer seem more interested in him or herself than in the poem and its situation? If you feel this is the case, tactfully suggest what elements of the writing are clouding up the picture. Also be on the lookout for grammatical errors, typos, and
misspellings: you need not try to correct them all, but do point out any patterns or problems you noticed, and mark one or two in the manuscript. Our goal is to bring these down to a bare minimum, and to train ourselves to be careful in all matters of craft from large to small. You will be irritated by typos and carelessness in others' manuscripts. Therefore proofread your own before you submit.

7. The story line, or dramatic action: is there too much information/intent jammed in, so that the poem seems summarized rather than alive on the page? Where could the writer slow down? What (and who) could the writer throw out of the poem altogether—and why? Is there a rising action? A climax? Does the ending both surprise and seem the "only way" it could have ended? Does the progression of the poem make sense to you? Why or why not? Again, give an example to support your criticism.

WRITERS: Please sit quietly and stoically through discussion of your poems. Do not interrupt, explain, apologize, etc. Just listen and take notes, because sometimes the workshop discussion bears very little resemblance to the written comments. At the end of the discussion period, I'll give you a couple of minutes to ask any questions that weren't covered in the discussion. But again, please confine yourself to questions. After class, you can discuss your own hopes and fears with your classmates.

EVERYONE:
I've thrown a lot of questions and material at you here. I don't expect you to try to cover all of this when you write your critiques and talk in class. But I do expect you to use this sheet as a guideline. First read the student's work once through without marking it, then take a look at the critique sheet and focus on say, two out of the five areas of inquiry that seem most crucial. Your critiques, over time, should show a range of analyses—in one you might find yourself concentrating on language and point of view; in another, you will be concerned with the story line. Always, always, always, support your comments with specifics from the text, and explain what you mean. The only "mean critique" is the unsupported one, and that, finally, suggests that the analyst is not serious about the craft of writing. Remember: I am reading these very closely, for tone, specificity, support, and constructive analysis.”

CLASSROOM ATMOSPHERE: Writing is an intense process, a skill acquired through diligence and work. It is a personal act as well that demands honesty, focus, and openness. To help each other in this process, it’s important that an attitude of civility, a habit of positive suggestions, and a posture of support be the rule.

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6 We’re sharing Professor Marjorie Sandor’s guidelines for her creative writing courses at OSU. Our classes WR 241, 242, & 244) are accepted at OSU, and it’s important that we speak the same language. Thanks, Marjorie! ☺
NOTE: Submit your work to me electronically. E-mail it to me at terrancemillet1@comcast.net as attached documents in Microsoft WORD format only and in Courier 12 font. These assignments are due by class time on the due dates. You will get them back sooner than written work (which is due in class), and have the opportunity to get more feedback on them. Electronic submissions must be attached files with a subject line that begins with your last name, the class, the days, and the assignment, in that order. Otherwise, they will be returned to you unopened. For example: Hemingwaywr241TRstory#1.

Plagiarism Statement:
Do your own work! Using someone else’s work as your own, or using information or ideas without proper citations (which is called plagiarism) can lead to your failing the assignment of the class. Bibliographies (or Works Cited) AND in-text citation are required whenever you use outside sources, including Internet sources. Refer to your manual.

- Plagiarized work at LBCC is sent to the Dean of Students where it is filed. On the second such filing, the student is called to the Dean’s office and can be put on probation or expelled from the college. Be aware of the seriousness of plagiarizing.

Disability Statement:
Students who have emergency medical information that the instructor should know of, or who might need special arrangements in the event of evacuation, or students with documented disabilities who have special needs, should make an appointment with the instructor no later than the first week of the term. If additional assistance is required, the student should contact LBCC’s Office of Disabilities at 917-4789.

Waitlist Policy:
Students who are registered but not present for the first class, unless they have given the instructor prior notice, will be dropped from the class and their place assigned to students on the waitlist.

Resources:
My Web Page (http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/english/milletl/web.cfm?pgID=54) has a list resources and templates, including an important one to OSU’s M.F.A. program in creative writing.
Tentative Schedule
(Subject to revision, with notice)

Week 1:
M  Introduction to the text and course
  1. We schedule submissions. We talk about Poe’s “Single Effect” and tension in structuring a poem.
  2. In class creative writing exercise. We’ll write them and read them.

  Discussion of the components of poetry; we share perspectives. We’ll do an in-class freewrite about an experience and share these among ourselves. Bring some favorite poems for next class and be ready to talk about them.
  • We’ll write a poems about a significant personal event.
  • Then we’ll rewrite it from the third person point of view.

Week 2:
M  • Packets handed out:
    1. …………………………………... (Group A)
    2. …………………………………... (Group B)
    3. …………………………………... (Group A)
    4. …………………………………... (Group B)

  ➔ Book Report Due

  Discussion of selected sections from the text: The Poet’s Companion. We’ll discuss the dynamics of last week’s freewrites and share them.
  Another creative writing exercise: visual prompt.

Week 3:
M  No Class Monday: King Day 🌟

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Week 4:
M
• Packets handed out: #
  5………………………………… (Group A)
  6………………………………… (Group B)
  7………………………………… (Group A)

➤ Packets #1, 2, 3, 4 workshopped

Week 5:
M
• Packets handed out: #
  8………………………………… (Group B)
  9………………………………… (Group A)
  10………………………………… (Group B)

➤ Packet #5, 6, 7 workshopped

  Group B will lead a discussion of selected sections from the text: The Poet’s Companion.

Week 6:
M
• Packets handed out: #
  11. ……………………………….. (Group A)
  12. ……………………………….. (Group B)
  13. ……………………………….. (Group A)
  14. ……………………………….. (Group B)

➤ Packets 8, 9, 10 workshopped

  Group A will lead a discussion of selected sections from the text: The Poet’s Companion.
Week 7:
M  No Class Monday: President’s Day

Week 8:
M  • Packets handed out:
   15. .............................................. (Group A)
   16. .............................................. (Group B)
   17. .............................................. (Group A)

→ Packets # 11, 12, 13, 14 workshopped

Week 9:
M  • Packets handed out:
   18. .............................................. (Group B)
   19. .............................................. (Group A)
   20. .............................................. (Group B)

→ Packets 15, 16, 17 workshopped

   Group B will lead a discussion of selected sections from the text: The Poet’s Companion.

Week 10:
M  → Packets 18, 19, 20 workshopped

   Group A will lead a discussion of selected sections from the text: The Poet’s Companion.

Evaluative final essay due by Friday

Week 11: Finals week: Portfolio due in class
Group A:
1. .............................................
2. .............................................
3. .............................................
4. .............................................
5. .............................................
6. .............................................
7. .............................................
8. .............................................
9. .............................................
10. .............................................
11. .............................................
12. .............................................

Group B:
1. .............................................
2. .............................................
3. .............................................
4. .............................................
5. .............................................
6. .............................................
7. .............................................
8. .............................................
9. .............................................
10. .............................................
11. .............................................
12. .............................................