

Gerry LaFemina, ENGL 213, Fall 2002, Creative Writing: Poetry

English 213 Creative Writing: Poetry

M-W-F 12:30-1:20 & 1:30-2:20

Office Hours: M-W 2:30-3:30

Gerry LaFemina

Office St 463 ~ ext 453 ~ (h) 304 296 8395 ~ gerry.lafemina@mail.wvu.edu

This class is designed to introduce you to the craft of writing poems with an emphasis on contemporary poetic readings, the workshop method, and elements of craft. Students are expected to write 8-10 poems for workshop and hand in a portfolio of 8 finished poems at class end. Also, students are expected to keep up with the readings and produce three short response papers to the full-length collections of poetry.

Texts:

Daniels, Jim and Jerry Costanzo. *American Poetry: the Next Generation*. Pittsburgh: CMU Press, 2000.

Hayes, Terrance. *Hip Logic*. New York: Mammoth Books, 2002.

Waring, Belle. *Dark Blonde*. Louisville: Sarabande, 1999.

Waters, Michael. *Green Ash, Red Maple, Black Gum*. Rochester: BOA Editions, 1997.

Goals:

- ~ demonstrate an understanding of poetry as a craft and fine art form connected to the idea of self-expression and self-exploration;
- ~ develop a voice of yourself as writer;
- ~ display an appreciation and understanding of the art form;
- ~ demonstrate an understanding of various aspects of poetic craft, including metaphor, image, line, meter, form, music, and free verse;
- ~ show the ability to revise work and to be able to explain how revision improved a given poem;
- ~ critique poems for style as well as for content;
- ~ lead discussions about work when asked.

Objectives:

How will this be done? To gain greater ability as craftspeople, we will participate in a variety of exercises, discussions, close-readings, writing and workshop. Furthermore, practice of preexisting techniques and writing in fixed forms will all develop and sharpen skills already learned or inherent. Topics discussed will include: metaphor, lineation and the use of the

staggered line, imagery, symbolism, music, rhythm, form, assonance, consonance, alliteration, rhythm, meter, stanza usage, personification, and other aspects of craft. Lastly, we will have visits from established writers who will participate in workshop and the discussion of poetry.

Grading:

- ~ 50% of your final grade will be based on the poems you hand in to class and the revisions of 8 of these poems in your portfolio;
- ~ 10% of your final grade will be based on your participation in workshop;
- ~ 20% of your final grade will be based on your one page responses to the texts;
- ~ 10% of your final grade will be based on your class leadership;
- ~ 10% of your final grade will be based on your class preparedness and professionalism.

Class Description:

This course is an in-depth and introductory course in poetry writing, and, as such, it is assumed that the student has some basic knowledge of poetic craft and an interest in poetry as an art. Students will write a minimum of eight poems in the fifteen week semester, read poetry, write several brief (one page) reviews (which students will upload to Amazon.com) of the poetry collections assigned, and hand in a portfolio of finished (revised) poems at semester end. Students will workshop each other's work with myself acting as facilitator and workshop leader. Students will also meet with me individually every other week in private conferences about their work and to tailor reading assignments to their particular interests and styles.

The small, workshop-style class will give students plenty of opportunity to focus on literature and exercises that will help students hone their skills in a variety of poetic elements. As in all workshops, you are expected to participate fully in the discussion of each other's work, and to use the discussion to inform your own revisions. Students will develop a portfolio of work which will include a brief discussion of the changes made in the drafts of the poems.p poems for class and/or conference.

The texts were chosen to give you both a primer for writing and discussing poetry and to get an overview of some contemporary poets and their work. One of the ways we become better writers is by reading the work of successful contemporaries. Students will also each pick one poet from *American Poetry: the Next Generation* to discuss before the class.

Schedule of Events

8-26-02 Introduction to class (one more time)

Assignment: TBA

8-28-02 Discussion of poems/ how they work

8-30-02 Writing

prompts

9-4-02 Discussion of poems

9-6-02 Writing

prompts

9-9-02 First poems due

Discussion of Jeffrey McDaniel, Penelope Pellizon, and Allison Joseph

9-11-02 Workshop

9-13-02

Workshop

9-16-02 Second poems due

Discussion of Brian Henry, Laura Kasischke, Sean Thomas Dougherty

9-18-02 Workshop

9-20-02 Workshop

9-23-02 Third poems due

Discussion of Catie Rosemurgy, Denise Duhamel, Virgil Suarez

9-25-02 Workshop

9-27-02 Workshop

9-30-02 Fourth poems due

Discussion of Margot Schilpp, Peter Markus, and Mary Ann Samyn

10-2-02 Workshop

10-4-02 Workshop

10-7-02 Student led discussion

10-9-02 Student led discussion

10-11-02 Student led discussion

10-14-02 Fifth poems due

Begin student led discussions begin

10-16-02 Workshop

10- 18-02 Workshop

10-21-02 Catch-up workshop

10-23-02 Revision workshop

10-25-02 Revision workshop/ prompts

10-28-02 Sixth poems due

On discussing collections of poetry

10-30-02 Workshop

11-1-02 Workshop

11-4-02 Seventh poems due

Discussion of Michael Waters

11-6-02 Workshop

11-8-02 Workshop

11-11-02 Eighth poems due

Discussion of Belle Waring

11-13-02 Workshop

11-15-02 Workshop

11-18-02 Ninth poems due

Discussion of Terrance Hayes

11-20-02 Workshop

11-22-02 Workshop

12-2-02 Last day for one page responses

Workshop

12-4-02 Workshop (if necessary)

12-6-02 Portfolios due