

**EN 531 Forms in Poetry II**  
**Professor:** Dr. L. Lamar Wilson  
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**Fall 2022:** M, 5-7:30 p.m. CST  
**Office:** By appointment  
**Hours:** By appointment  
(Gchat @proflamarwilson)

### **Required Materials**

Computer with a video camera or webcam or digital camera w/video

### ***Poetry Collections***

*The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyam*, Omar Khayyam/Edward FitzGerald (1120, 1859)  
*Call Me Ishmael Tonight: A Book of Ghazals*, Agha Shahid Ali (2003)  
*Indivisible: An Anthology of Contemporary South Asian American Poetry*, ed. Neelanjara Banerjee et al. (2010)  
*Goodbye Lyric: The Gigans & Lovely Gun*, Ruth Ellen Kocher (2014)  
*An Art, A Craft, A Mystery*, Laura Secord (2022)

### ***Craft Texts***

*An Exaltation of Forms: Contemporary Poets Celebrate the Diversity of Their Art*, ed. Annie Finch (2002)  
*The Book of Forms*, ed. Lewis P. Turco (2012 edition)  
*Poetic Form*, ed. David Caplan (2007)  
*A Little Book on Form*, ed. Robert Hass (2017)

### ***Recommended Craft Texts***

*The Making of a Poem*, ed. Eavan Boland and Mark Strand (2001)  
*The Art of Syntax: Rhythm of Thought, Rhythm of Song*, ed. Ellen Bryant Voigt (2009)  
*The Poet's Companion: A Guide to the Pleasures of Writing Poetry*, ed. Kim Addonizio and Dorianne Laux (1997)

### **Student Authentication**

Student authentication will be achieved in two ways according to MUW policy: through each student's unique Student ID and Password in the MUW Learning Management System (Canvas) and through one additional student identification technique within the course that the academic program has approved. This second method of student authentication in EN 531: Forms in Poetry II will involve participation in weekly video conferences and semimonthly individual conferences. Students will post a picture of their photo ID in the MFA in Creative Writing Program Lounge, which will be matched with their image on the video.

### **Course Content**

EN 531 is a graduate course in writing poetry with an emphasis on its formal conventions and innovations. We will study the roots of several received non-Western forms—including the haiku, tanka, haibun, ghazal, pantoum, and rubáiyát—and more recent (re)inventions, particularly by writers of color and non-traditional writers who blend poetry and prose, centering their prosody in our discussions. Because we don't speak the original languages within which these Eastern forms were invented, we will engage Western interpolations of them and wrestle with the inevitable pratfalls of appropriation and projection. We'll write publicly and privately each week, but with space to share our private writing every other week, so you'll have a week of respite to digest all that we're reading. In addition, I'll meet with each student for a twice-monthly conference to discuss work in progress. **Note:** This course is not a Discussion. The focus is to gain a practitioner's understanding of the history and innards, as it were, of each form.

I'll record short, asynchronous lectures on craft and mechanics, provide writing exercises, and lead in-class discussion of readings to help make sense of your evolving worldviews, artistic voices, and creative ideas. We will cover a vast survey of formal poetic conventions emerging from historical and contemporary traditions in the East. As we develop facility with key terms used in scansion and prosody, we will experiment with traditional forms these forms with hopes that you might be inspired to create your own.

## Goals

This course will empower you to:

- Think critically about the formal traditions that preceded those popular in Western colonial cultures;
- Scan non-Western forms and discern the prosody and other formal elements that shape them;
- Craft, revise, and collate a series of poems that engage non-Western forms into a cohesive portfolio;
- Respond to peers' work with a deepened knowledge of the formal choices they are making;
- Explore the work of contemporary poets, particularly those of color, who have reanimated these Eastern forms for today's perilous times and complete an in-depth analysis of their collections; and
- Join contemporary poets who are inventing forms by developing one of your own.

## Synchronous Online Course

This course is conducted entirely online, which means you do not have to be on campus to complete any portion of it. However, this is a synchronous course, meaning that you will still need to be available at specific dates and times using the technological platform specified by the faculty member. Access to an adequate computer and a reliable Internet connection is required for this course and essential for your success. A baseline expectation for an adequate computer is described in the [Campus Renewal Plan](#). If you are ill or experiencing symptoms associated with COVID-19 and require entry to campus or other public spaces for computer or Internet access, let me know.

## Requirements

Discussions: Each week, we'll read and discuss craft essays and examples. Participation in both is required, though if you have a conflict, I will record the synchronous session and keep it in the cloud for one subsequent week before deleting to preserve MUW's limited storage. On the Course Calendar, you'll find chapters the aforementioned craft text juxtaposed with model texts we're reading alongside them. Every other week, we will discuss the writing of half of the class, so you'll need to upload them for discussion by the due dates. Each piece will receive about 15 minutes of discussion in class; each student will be expected to follow up on in-class comments with written ones. I've scheduled twelve (12) in-class discussions and several corresponding discussions, so each of you should be discussed five to six times. Since this course's focus is mastering form and generating new work, there are fewer discussions, but you may feel free to share with me anything your working on at any time. Each discussion session will be graded on a 10-point scale and must be completed by the deadlines designated in Canvas, usually the Sunday evening before the class in which we discuss the primary texts/poetry collections at hand and the corresponding craft chapters.

Response Essays: In addition to writing initial responses in our weekly discussions, you will write two 3-5-page essays about our readings and one epistle-essay of the same length about your own relationship to form as a precursor to your portfolio of collated work. The former two will be due the week after we have finished a couple of forma, and they may be a response to one or two (or one long-sequenced poem) from group of pieces or to any collection as a whole. Respond as a practicing poet. Instead of literary criticism, I want to know how the poets' craft and risk-taking resonate and/or diverge from your aesthetic leanings.

Conferences: You are expected to take part in biweekly individual conferences. I'll schedule Zoom meetings with each of you beginning in early September. For each conference, you will submit 1-3 poems ideally at least two days in advance for review. We will discuss the poems together for about a half-hour.

Final Portfolio: The main assignment for the course will be the completion of a portfolio of up to 20 pages of poems. For the purposes of this portfolio, short poems, ideally of at least 9-10 lines (e.g., three haikus), will equal one page. Similarly, if a poem is more than one page long, each page will count, as long as each page is filled, and there are at least 10 lines on the poem's final page. The work submitted for the final portfolio should include your best work for the course; it should contain most of the semester's work. Although the class likely won't have seen all of the poems, I should have seen them. Your portfolio will be graded on the quality of work and the strength of your revisions.

## Attendance

Attendance is extremely important in any creative writing class, especially at the graduate level. **Every absence beyond two will result in a letter grade drop in your overall grade.** In order to be counted

present, you must contribute to our discussions for the week and take part in the weekly Class Conference, which will be videoed. If you are unable to login at the time of the Class Conference, you will need to view the archived conference footage and respond in writing (or with an audio or video discussion post) to the poems up for discussion. Again, each week's recording will be deleted one week after it's made available. Every attempt will be made to find a time or times when everyone can conference together, but I realize sometimes something may come up. Given the difficulty for some of you with Monday nights, I'm willing to offer a weekend synchronous class at a time that's convenient for those who need it.

### **Method of Evaluation**

Grades will be determined by final pieces' quality as well the effort put into them. Technical mastery is not the main goal; the success of poems' conceit will be rewarded as well as its stakes, its cultivation of risk and restlessness, its daring. Late assignments will not be accepted past a reasonable time when your peers and I can comment on your work. Letter grades assigned to final products will have the following numeric values:

A+ = 485-500 B+ = 432-447 C+ = 383-378 D+ = 338-347 F = <296

A = 468-484 B = 418-431 C = 368-377 D = 328-337

A- = 448-467 B- = 417-398 C- = 348-367 D- = 297-327

Final grades will be based on the same system and will be a composite of the following:

Discussion	150 points
Conferences	50 points
Response Essays (2)	100 points
Final Portfolio	200 points

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** The University is committed to providing equitable access to learning for all students. The Student Success Center is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities (e.g. physical, sensory, chronic health, learning, attentional, mental health) and arranges for reasonable accommodations to be implemented. It is the responsibility of students requesting accommodations to make an appointment with the Student Support Specialist to review specific needs, participate in the development of an Accommodation Plan by providing appropriate documentation, and discuss with the instructor how the Accommodation Plan will be applied in the course. Accommodations are not retroactive and a new Accommodation Plan must be reviewed, signed and presented to instructors each semester. The Student Support Specialist is located in Reneau Hall, Room 101(B), and may be contacted by phone at 662.329.7138 or email at [ada@muw.edu](mailto:ada@muw.edu).

### **Academic Integrity**

All Mississippi University for Women students are expected to engage honestly and responsibly in their academic work and to refrain from any dishonest academic behavior. Violations of Academic Integrity include cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, falsification, or other actions that violate commonly accepted intellectual and ethical standards within academic and scientific communities. Violations of Academic Integrity can lead to severe penalties, from a zero grade for a test or assignment to expulsion from the University. Academic Integrity applies to work in progress as well as completed work. If you are uncertain about the proper procedure to follow when citing a source, working in a team with other students, or any other coursework situation please ask your instructor, a librarian, or a resource like the Writing Center for help. To learn more about the university's standards of Academic Integrity, including what happens if your instructor believes that you have engaged in dishonest academic behavior and your rights to appeal such a charge, please consult [section 7.4 of the Graduate Bulletin](#).

Academic Policies and Procedures can be found in full in the current [Graduate Bulletin](#)  
<http://bulletin.muw.edu>

Deadlines for registration, graduation, and financial aid are found on the current [Academic Calendar](#).

### **Important Dates for Full Term Fall 2022:**

Aug. 19	Last day to add a class or change from audit to credit or grade to pass-fail
Sept. 15	Last day to withdraw from a class without a WP or WF designation or change from credit to audit and last day to turn in a change of major form
Oct. 26	Last day to drop a class or withdraw from the university

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Weeks 1-2

**Aug. 17-28 (Monday-Sunday):**

**What's in a line? A "heroic" couplet? A tercet?**

Week One:

Introductions, syllabus, course structure, readings

*HW:* Post your favorite poem "in form"

Week Two:

Revisit syllabus & discuss readings

*Turco:* "Introduction to the Discipline," "The Levels of Poetry" (1-16)

*Hass:* "Introduction," "One" "Two," "Three"

Homework (after-class):

Prompt 1: Write a poem "after" your favorite poem. Reference a beloved line from it in the poem or as an epigraph. Imitate its form to the extent you're comfortable.

Prompt 2: Try the Accentual-Syllabic Prosody Poem.

### Week 3

**Aug. 29-Sept. 4**

**What distinguishes syllabic from accented / metered poetry?**

Asynchronous: Post a syllabic or accentual scansion of your favorite poem.

Synchronous (in class):

Discuss *Turco:* "Isoverbal Poetry," "Syllabic Prosody," "Accentual Prosody" (17-54)

*Caplan:* Ch. 2a & 2c, 6 ("Meter: Accentual Meter" and "Syllabic Meter," Canvas PDF)

*Finch:* "Introduction"; Goia, "Accentual Verse"; Holley, "Syllabics: Sweeter Melodies"; Ridland, "Iambic Meter"; Phillips, "Running With Abandon: Notes on Trochaic Meter," Finch, "Dactylic Meter: A Many-Sounding Sea" (1-24, 39-45, 59-72, Canvas PDFs)

*Hass:* "A Note on Stress," "How to Scan a Poem"

### Week 4

**Sept. 5-11**

**Ghazal, Rubáiyát: Historical**

"With the Neck of a Gazelle," Hafsa al-Rakuniya, translated by Lubna Safi

*The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyam*, Omar Khayyam/Edward FitzGerald (1120, 1859)

*Caplan:* Ch. 10 ("Other Asian Forms," Canvas PDF)

*Hass:* Revisit "Two," "A Note on Genre"

*Turco:* "Traditional and Invented Forms: Lyric Poetry" (224-228, 319-321) (Find each genre alphabetically in the book)

*Group 1:* Alana, Jessica, Megan

### Week 5

**Sept. 12-18**

Week of Review (No new poem due)

### Week 6

**Sept. 19-25**

**Ghazal, Rubáiyát: Contemporary**

*Call Me Ishmael Tonight: A Book of Ghazals*, Agha Shahid Ali (2003)

*Finch:* Ali, "To Be Teased into DisUnity"

Revisit *Caplan*, *Hass*, *Turco*

*Group 2:* Rebecca, Léhana

Week 7

Sept. 26-Oct. 2

**Haiku, Tanka, Haibun: Historical**

*Caplan*: Ch. 9 (“Japanese Poetry”; focus on Basho, examples on Canvas)

*Turco*: “Traditional and Invented Forms: Lyric Poetry” (230, 294-296, 351)

*Finch*: “Japanese-Style Linked Poems,” Higginson & Harter (228-237)

*Hass*: Revisit “Three”

*Group 1*: Alana, Jessica, Megan

Week 8

Oct. 3-9

**Haiku/ *Low Coup*, Tanka, Haibun: Contemporary Syllabic & Narrative Tercet**

*Caplan*: Ch. 9 (“Japanese Poetry”; focus on Etheridge Knight)

*Finch*: “The *Low Coup* as a Contemporary Afro-American Verse Form,” Baraka (394-95)

*Turco*: “Traditional and Invented Forms: Lyric Poetry” (230, 294-296, 351)

*Hass*: Revisit “Three”

*Indivisible*: Vandana Khanna: “Hair,” “Dot Head,” “Echo”; Minal Hajaratwala, “Angerfish”; Amarnath Ravva, “I Am Burning a Pig in My Room, Apollinaire, “the spectacle of a few trees in spring, off the 5.”

Harryette Mullen, “From Tanka Diary,” Ocean Vuong, “Immigrant Haibun,” torrin a. greathouse, “Burning Haibun”

*Group 2*: Rebecca, Léhana

**Response Essay #1 Due: Oct. 9 by midnight**

Week 9

Oct. 10-16

**Pantun/Pantoum: Historical**

*Caplan*: Ch. 7 (“Pantoum”), Baudelaire, “Harmonie du soir”;

(Optional: Hugo, *Les Orientales*)

*Rudberg*: “Three Frenchmen and the Classic Pantun, Parts 1 & 2”

*Hass*: Revisit “Four”

*Finch*: Gotera, “The Pantoum’s Postcolonial Pedigree”

*Turco*: “Traditional and Invented Forms: Lyric Poetry” (127-133, 274-275, 369-372)

*Group 1*: Alana, Jessica, Megan

Week 10

Oct. 17-23

**Pantun/Pantoum: Contemporary**

*Caplan*: Ch. 7 (“Pantoum”)

*TMOAP, Strand/ Boland*: “The Pantoum: At a Glance ... History ... Contemporary Context” (43-53, Canvas)

Oli Hazzard, “Pantoum in Which Wallace Stevens Gives Me Vertigo,” Aurielle Marie, “pantoum for Aiyana & not a single hashtag,” Carolyn Kizer, “Parent’s Pantoum”

*Indivisible*: Reetika Vazirani’s villanelle, “It’s Me, I’m Not Home”

*Group 2*: Rebecca, Léhana

Week 11

Oct. 24-30

**Prose Poetry, Free Verse: Historical**

*Caplan*: Ch. 13 & 14 (“Forms of Free Verse,” “Prose Poetry”)

*Group 1*: Alana, Jessica, Megan

- Week 12**                    **Oct. 31-Nov. 6**  
**Prose Poetry, Free Verse: Contemporary**  
*Indivisible*: Vazirani, Tanuja Mehrotra, Vijay Seshadri, Aimee Nezhukumatathil, Ralph Nazareth,  
Faisal Mohtuddin  
*Group 2*: Rebecca, Léhana
- Week 13**                    **Nov. 7-13**  
**New Hybrid Forms: Gigan**  
*Goodbye Lyric: The Gigans & Lovely Gun*, Ruth Ellen Kocher  
*Group 1*: Alana, Jessica, Megan
- Week 14**                    **Nov. 14-20**  
**New Hybrid Forms: Revisiting Kocher's Gigan,  
Plus Golden Shovel, Bop, Duplex**  
*Group 2*: Rebecca, Léhana  
**Response Essay #2 Due: Nov. 18 by midnight**
- Week 15**                    **Nov. 21-27**  
**Visit with Laura Secord**  
*An Art, A Craft, A Mystery*  
**Holiday Break: Nov. 23-27**
- Week 16**                    **Nov. 28-Dec. 4**  
**Sharing Original Forms**  
*Groups 1 & 2*: Alana, Jessica, Megan, Rebecca, Léhana  
**Portfolios Due: Dec. 2 by midnight**