

EN 603-320: Poetry Workshop (“Gendered Triumphs”)

204 Morgan Hall, 5-7:30 p.m. T

Professor L. Lamar Wilson

207 Rowand-Johnson Hall

Office Hours: By appointment (best hours 9-10:30 a.m., 12:45-1:45 p.m., after class T)

Contact: llwilson4@ua.edu & 205-348-1765 or proflamarwilson on Gchat (during office hours)

Please allow 24 hours for a response. After 9 p.m., the 24-hour window begins the following morning, when email likely will be read.

Course Description

This course centers on your creation and revision of original poems and engagement with the practice of offering thorough, empathetic feedback to peers in their creative process. Landmark collections from the past few years, particularly the cataclysmic years that were 2016 and 2017, serve as representative responses to the unmasking of the pernicious evils of misogyny/misgynoir, white supremacist violence, classism, and gender-binary biases that inform so much of what we write today. These collections also underscore the importance of the new voices reanimating the conversation about what those marked “male” and “female” can, cannot, should, and should not stay. This course aims to help you refine your sense of your poetic voice(s) and deepen your understanding of what your current poetic projects can synergize to become.

Learning Outcomes & Grading Policies

By semester’s end, you will be empowered to:

Desired Outcome	Assessment Measure	Point Value
1. Craft original poems, using with greater aplomb strategies we learn, that engage the texts we study and their use of formal prosody and contemporary innovations of unrhymed verse. 2. Collate poems in a cohesive manuscript that includes an artistic statement narrating the evolution of your aesthetic choices and your poetic voice.	Portfolio (of at least 25 pages of original creative work and an introductory four-page letter, due week of April 24)	100 points
3. Interrogate and expand your creative imagination and that of your peers. 4. Read poems critically, identifying strategies and aesthetic techniques you can adapt to your own work. 5. Offer oral and written feedback that’s thoughtful and fair and helps peers improve art-in-progress.	In-class writing; class attendance Workshop submission & weekly responses to peers	100 points
6. Assert the meaning found in poems, both in writing and oral discussion, by finding evidence to support your readings.	Presentation on a collection (due by last day of class)	100 points
7. Foster among uninformed citizens at The University of Alabama a greater awareness of the literary events taking place on campus.	2-5-page critical essay/close reading of his/her/their analysis of a poet’s voice based upon a public reading/performance	100 points

386-400 = A+ 357-346 = B+ 306-317 = C+ 266-277 = D+ <237 = F
 370-381 = A 330-345 = B 290-305 = C 250-265 = D
 358-369 = A- 318-329 = B- 278-289 = C- 238-249 = D-

Required Readings

Collections

Akbar, Kaveh. *Calling a Wolf a Wolf*. Farmington, ME: Alice James Books, 2017.

Calvocoressi, Gabrielle. *Rocket Fantastic*. New York: Persea Books, 2017.

Hegnauer, Lilah. *Pantry*. Spartanburg, S.C.: Hub City Press, 2014.

Johnson, Jenny. *In Full Velvet*. Louisville, KY: Sarabande Books, 2017.

Matthews, Aireia D. *Simulacra*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017.

Smith, Danez. *Don't Call Us Dead*. Minneapolis: Graywolf Press, 2017.

Sinclair, Safiya. *Cannibal*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2016.

Recommended Readings/Guides

Collections

- Austin, Derrick. *Trouble the Water*. Rochester, N.Y.: BOA Editions Ltd., 2016.
- Bertram, Lillian. *Personal Science*. North Adams, Maine: Tupelo Press, 2017.
- Betts, Reginald Dwayne. *Bastard of the Reagan Era*. New York: Four Way Books, 2015.
- Bond, Bruce. *Sacrum*. Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 2017.
- Brock-Broido, Lucie. *A Hunger and The Master Letters*. New York: Knopf, 1988, 1997.
- Burt, Steph/Stephanie. *Advice from the Lights*. Minneapolis: Graywolf, 2017.
- Chang, Victoria. *Barbie Chang*. Port Townsend, Wash.: Copper Canyon Press, 2017.
- Chen, Chen. *When I Grow Up I Want to Be a List of Possibilities*. Rochester, N.Y.: BOA Editions Ltd., 2017.
- Clark, Tiana. *Equilibrium*. Durham, N.C.: Bull City Press, 2016.
- Conrad, C.A. *While Standing in Line for Death*. New York: Wave Books, 2017.
- Day, Meg. *Last Psalm at Sea Level*. New York: Barrow Street Books, 2014.
- DeColo, Kendra. *Thieves in the Afterlife*. Philadelphia: Saturnalia Books, 2014.
- . *My Interview with Ron Jeremy*. Nashville, Tenn.: Third Man Books, 2016.
- Diaz, Natalie. *When My Brother Was an Aztec*. Port Townsend, Wash.: Copper Canyon Press, 2012.
- Faizullah, Tarfia. *Registers of Illuminated Villages*. Minneapolis: Graywolf, 2018.
- . *Seam*. Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 2014.
- Howe, Marie. *Magdalene*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2017.
- Jarrett, T.J. *Zion*. Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 2014.
- Jess, Tychimba. *Olio*. New York: Wave Books, 2016.
- Jurjević, Andrea. *Small Crimes*. Tallahassee, Fla.: Anhinga Press, 2017.
- Kelly, Brigit Pegeen. *Song*. Rochester, N.Y.: BOA Editions Ltd., 1995.
- Limón, Ada. *Bright Dead Things*. Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 2015.
- Kyger, Joanne. *As Ever: Selected Poems*. New York: Penguin, 2002.
- Moraga, Cherie. *Loving in the War Years/Lo que nunca pasó por sus labios*. New York: South End Press, 2000.
- Ozer, Beyza. *Fail Better*. Los Angeles: Fog Machine Press, 2017.
- Parker, Morgan. *There Are More Beautiful Things Than Beyoncé*. New York: Tin House Press, 2017.
- Rankine, Claudia. *Don't Let Me Be Lonely: An American Lyric*. Minneapolis: Graywolf, 2004.
- Ross, Donika. *Bestiary*. Minneapolis: Graywolf, 2016.
- Samyn, Mary Ann. *My Time in Heaven*. Oberlin, Ohio: Oberlin College Press, 2013.
- Shanahan, Charif. *Into Each Room We Enter Without Knowing*. Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 2017.
- Schomburg, Zachary. *The Book of Joshua*. Boston: Black Ocean, 2014.
- Soldier, Layli Long. *WHEREAS*. Minneapolis: Graywolf Press, 2017.
- Vuong, Ocean. *Night Sky With Exit Wounds*. Port Townsend, Wash.: Copper Canyon Press, 2016.
- White, Orlando. *LETTERS*. New York: Nightboat Books, 2015.
- Wright, Charles. *Country Music*. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University, 1991.

Anthologies/Essay Collections/Form Guides

- Corn, Alfred. *The Poem's Heartbeat: A Manual of Prosody*. Copper Canyon Press, 2008.
- Kowitz, Steve. *In the Palm of Your Hand: The Poet's Portable Workshop*. Thomaston, ME: Tilbury House Publishers, 1995.
- Turco, Lewis. *The Book of Forms, 4th edition*. Lebanon, NH: UP of New England, 2012.
- Greene, Roland. Ed. *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. 4th Edition. Princeton University Press, 2014.
- Hass, Robert. *A Little Book on Form: An Explanation into the Formal Imagination of Poetry*. New York: HarperCollins, 2017.
- Nelson, Cary. Ed. *Anthology of Modern American Poetry*. Oxford University Press, 2014, & bios from its [companion website](#)
- A comprehensive dictionary & thesaurus

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Attending the Visiting Writers & MFA Readings series is mandatory unless there's a course or work conflict. You're also encouraged to attend and participate in as many Pure Products readings and other Creative Writing-sponsored events. The schedule is available [here](#) and in a PDF on Blackboard.

1/16

Weather cancellation

HW: Read the "Pioneers Packet" PDF (on Blackboard)

Assignment Prompt No. 1: Select three poems you've written since you arrived at UA about which you're most proud. Then write a 2- to 4-page response to the following questions that will precede these poems: "How do my poems and their speakers sound? What issues compel them to sing & speak? To which poem do I return at this time when I need inspiration to write on?" Find a representative poem from this poet to share.

- 1/23 Introductions, syllabus review
Discuss poems & packet
UA Tour (w/Dr. Hilary Green), 2 p.m., Gorgas House (optional survey of history)
1/26: MFA Reading: Michelle Myers + Nathan Blanchard,
Dinab Washington Cultural Center, 7 p.m.
- 1/30 Airea Matthews, *Simulacra*
Group A Workshop
1/29: *Sarah Manguso Craft Talk, MR 301, 3 p.m.*
1/30: *Sarah Manguso Reading, Dinab Washington Cultural Center, 7 p.m.*
- 2/6 Safiya Sinclair, *Cannibal: Ebony*
Dwayne Betts, *Bastards of the Reagan Era* (PDF excerpt on Blackboard)
Group B Workshop
2/9: MFA Reading: Brett Shaw + Daniel Myers
- 2/13 Kaveh Akbar, *Calling a Wolf a Wolf*: Meredith & Marissa
2/12: *Kaveh Akbar Breakfast, 9:30-11 a.m.*
2/12: *Kaveh Akbar Craft Talk, MR 301, 4:30 p.m.*
2/12: *Kaveh Akbar and Safiya Sinclair Reading, Gorgas 205, 7 p.m.*
2/13: *Safiya Sinclair Breakfast, 9:30-11 a.m.*
2/13: *Safiya Sinclair Craft Talk, MR 301, 2 p.m.*
2/14: *Dwayne Betts Reading, Smith 205, 1 p.m.*
2/14: *Dwayne Betts Craft Talk, MR 301, 3 p.m.*
- 2/20 Kaveh Akbar, *Calling a Wolf a Wolf*
Group C Workshop
2/23: MFA Reading, Nabila Lovelace + Diamond Forde
- 2/27 Lilah Hegnauer, *Pantry*: Emily & Jessica
Group A Workshop
2/27: *Jenny Gropp Master Class, MR 301, 3:30 p.m.*
2/27: *Jenny Gropp & Lili Loofborow (XFA Reading), 7 p.m., location TBD*
3/2: MFA Reading, Kyle Macy + Alex Bauer
- 3/6 Lilah Hegnauer, *Pantry*
Gabrielle Calvocoressi, *Rocket Fantastic*: RB & Natalie
Group B Workshop
- 3/13 **SPRING BREAK**
- 3/20 Gabrielle Calvocoressi, *Rocket Fantastic*
Group C Workshop
- 3/27 Jenny Johnson, *In Full Velvet*: Sarah & Olivia
Group A Workshop
3/30: *Billy Field Master Class, 3:30 p.m., MR 301*
3/30: MFA Reading, Shelley Jeller + Reem Abu-Baker
- 4/3 Jenny Johnson, *In Full Velvet*
Group B Workshop
4/3: *Matt Bell Master Class, 1:45 p.m., MR 301*
4/3: *Matt Bell Reading, Dinab Washington Cultural Center, 7 p.m.*
- 4/10 Danez Smith, *Don't Call Us Dead*: Kendra & Colin
Group C Workshop

- 4/17 Danez Smith, *Don't Call Us Dead*
Group A & B Workshop
- 4/24 **Group C Workshop/Evaluations**
Portfolios due in class or by week's end

More Details on Requirements

1. Workshop Submissions

Post two to three poems for workshop **by Wednesday at midnight** the week before your group's Tuesday in queue. Indicate near the poem's title which type of workshop you prefer. (See options below.) During the week between classes, read and write comments upon the poems that have been distributed, either neatly handwritten or clearly typewritten. You'll return these copies to their authors at the next class. Some poems won't be discussed in class, but all will receive written feedback. I am happy to discuss poems that aren't discussed in class, as well as any revisions you do, during office hours. As a rule, poems should *not* be resubmitted to the workshop in revised form. Exceptions are conceivable; ask first.

The heading for each assignment should include the following, double-spaced successively in the order listed, in the **upper left corner** of each assignment:

Your Full Name

Professor Wilson

EN/AAST 249

Date (21 February 2018)

In **upper-right corner of every subsequent page**, you should include your last name and the page number (as in Wilson 2) of your work.

Each heading should be followed by a title that summarizes the theme/thesis of your piece of writing. Please **staple** all materials before coming to class. When submitting your unit projects, please put all drafts and workshop handouts in a pocket folder, with your final draft on top.

2. Workshop Format

During your week of workshop, you may select from one of the following workshop models:

- *Traditional*: The poet sits silently taking notes as peers first discuss the poem's strengths and then delve into ways the poet's conceit might become more successful with revision.
- *Q&A*: Peers convene and list a series of questions that the poet notes before selecting one or two of the most prescient ones to discuss as a class.
- *Snapshot*: Each poet takes a turn, round robin, and makes a succinct, declarative statement as an observation about their peer's poem.
- *Global contract*: Poets dissect the poem's rhetoric, structure, and conceit from a macro/"big-picture" POV, discussing what it aims to say, how it teaches us to read it, why it turns and shifts as it does, what traditions/schools/other poets' works it harkens, etc.

3. Attendance

Because a major portion of the work in this course is done in class, weekly attendance is mandatory.

One unexcused absence is allowed; all others will negatively impact your participation and final grades. If you come to class and clearly exhibit you have not read the assigned texts, you not only will be marked absent, but you may be asked to leave class. Excessive tardiness and arrival without work will count as an absence. After three unexcused absences, you will automatically fail the class. Absences will not be excused without sufficient documentation, and a simple note that one visited the campus health center may not suffice.

4. Critical Writing

In addition to participating in workshop, you will be required to do a 2- to 5-page response of *at least one* Visiting Writers Series participants' public reading or craft commentary on another UA CW community reading or craft talk. The schedule is available [here](#) and in a PDF on Blackboard.

5. Back up your work in as many ways as you can (email, USB drive, UA+Box, external hard drive, etc.). Loss of work due to technological lapses may not excuse you from penalty.
6. Build a network among classmates so that when you are absent you can find out what you've missed. I will be available to help, but it's important that you build a rapport with your colleagues as well.

Disability Statement

If you are registered with the Office of Disability Services, please make an appointment with me ASAP to discuss any accommodations that you'll need. If you have a disability, but have not contacted the Office of Disability Services, please call (205) 348-4285 (Voice) or (205) 348-3081 (TTY) or visit 1000 Houser Hall to register for services. Students who may need course adaptations because of a disability are welcome to make an appointment during office hours. Students with disabilities must be registered with the ODS before receiving academic adjustments.

UAct: Ethical Community Statement

The University of Alabama is committed to an ethical, inclusive community defined by respect and civility. The UAct website (<http://www.ua.edu/uact>) provides a list of reporting channels that can be used to report incidences of illegal discrimination, harassment, sexual assault, sexual violence, retaliation, threat assessment or fraud.

Policy on Academic Misconduct

All students in attendance at The University of Alabama are expected to be honorable and to observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars. The University of Alabama expects from its students a higher standard of conduct than the minimum required to avoid discipline. At the beginning of each semester and on examinations and projects, the professor, department, or division may require that each student sign the following Academic Honor Pledge: "I promise or affirm that I will not at any time be involved with cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, or misrepresentation while enrolled as a student at The University of Alabama. I have read the Academic Honor Code, which explains disciplinary procedure resulting from the aforementioned. I understand that violation of this code will result in penalties as severe as indefinite suspension from the University." See the **Code of Student Conduct**.

Emergency Contact Information

UA's primary communication tool for sending out information is through its website at www.ua.edu. In the event of an emergency, students should consult this site for directions.

My Pledge to You

I will facilitate and cultivate, as your professor, a learning community and encourage respect and inclusivity of all members and your diverse worldviews. I will strive to make every effort to follow the guidelines of this syllabus as listed and to make work engaging and relevant to our objectives; however, I reserve the right to amend this document as the need arises to ensure you are gaining as much as possible from class time and its activities. In such instances, I will notify you in class and/or via email and will endeavor to provide reasonable time for you to adjust to any changes. I will listen actively and attentively and will be available during office hours as well as during individual conferences. I will do my best to support you as you work to become more confident, skilled critical thinkers and writers.