

## EN 506 Graduate Poetry Workshop

**Professor:** Dr. L. Lamar Wilson

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**Spring 2022**

**Office:** By appointment

**Hours:** By appointment

(Gchat @proflamarwilson)

### Required Materials

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

Kim Addonizio & Dorianne Laux, *The Poet's Companion: A Guide to the Pleasures of Writing Poetry* (1997)

Kim Addonizio, *Ordinary Genius: A Guide for a Poetry Within* (2009)

Kaveh Akbar, *Pilgrim Bell* (2020)

Oliver Baez Bendorf, *Advantages of Being Evergreen* (2019)

Destiny Birdsong, *Negotiations* (2020)

Kendra DeColo, *I Am Not Trying to Hide My Hungers from the World* (2021)

Diana Khoi Nguyen, *Ghost Of* (2018)

Atsuro Riley, *Hoard-Heard* (2021)

Jake Skeets, *Eyes Bottle Dark With a Mouthful of Flowers* (2019)

Jake Adam York, *Abide* (2014)

### 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 has been determined and approved by the academic program. This second method of student authentication in EN 506 Graduate Poetry Workshop will involve participation in weekly video conferences and month to 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 506 is a graduate course in writing poetry with an emphasis on craft. We will study collections of poems by contemporary poets and discuss their styles. We'll also read two craft texts and several poetry collections. Since this is a writing workshop, discussion of student work will take place in weekly workshop conferences. In addition, each student will meet with me for a twice-monthly conference to discuss work in progress.

### Goals

- To improve your writing through revision of poems and the creation of a portfolio
- To grow as a critical reader by participating in writing workshops
- To explore the work of contemporary poets and complete an in-depth analysis of their collections
- To learn about the poetry marketplace through surveying poetry magazines

### Requirements

Workshops & Discussions/Presentations: Each week, we'll discuss your work, craft essays, and model collections. Participation in all activities is required. Every Friday by 6 p.m. but no later than Sunday evening at 6, you'll submit a poem to the assignment marked "Week \_\_\_ Poems." Every other week, we will workshop a group of four poets, so you'll need to upload your poems in the corresponding Discussions, marked "Week (#) Poems: Group (#)," the Friday (but no later than Sunday) before the class we workshop your poems. Each student will receive about 15 minutes of workshop in class. I've scheduled 12 workshops; each of you will be workshopped at least six times. In addition, on the Course Calendar, you'll find chapters from Addonizio and Laux juxtaposed with the primary texts we're reading alongside them. Each of you will create a virtual handout, including a couple of prompts, to accompany your presentation on the collection you've chosen.

Response Essays: In addition to writing initial responses in our weekly discussions, students will write two 4-6-page essays about the collections we're studying, likely including ones on which they're presenting. The first will be due just before spring break, the second at the end of midsemester break, and they may be a response to at least 3 poems (or one long poem) from each collection. Respond as a practicing poet. Instead

of literary criticism, I want to know how the poets' craft affirm 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 Week Three. For each conference, you will submit 1-3 poems at least 2 days in advance for review. We will discuss the poems together for about a half-hour.

Poetry Magazine/Journal Survey: Throughout the semester, we will look at and discuss poetry magazines, either by reading them through our Fant Library e-subscriptions or by evaluating the magazine's website. At the end of the semester, you will write a 2-3-page survey of at least 3 literary magazines/journals that you have read. The survey will consist of short reviews of each magazine that describe its focus and preferred style. As part of the survey, you will designate at least one magazine where you plan to submit your poems. You should identify which poems would be appropriate for the magazine and why. You are encouraged to follow up on the assignment by submitting to one or more of these magazines.

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 10 lines, will equal one page. In other words, if you write short forms like haiku, regardless of whether you decide to print them on one page, a group of poems must equal about that length to be considered a 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. 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. Every attempt will be made to find a time or times when everyone can conference together, but I realize sometimes something may come up. Alternate times also may be scheduled in some weeks so that everyone can make 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+ = 98-100 (585-600) B+ = 88-89 (525-536) C+ = 78-79 (476-465) D+ = 69-68 (416-405) F = <59 (<356)  
A = 95-97 (567-584) B = 85-87 (524-506) C = 75-77 (464-447) D = 67-65 (404-387)  
A- = 90-94 (537-566) B- = 80-84 (505-477) C- = 70-74 (446-417) D- = 60-64 (386-357)

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

Presentation & Response Essays	150 points
Discussion & Conferences	100 points
Poetry Magazine Review	50 points
Final Portfolio	200 points

**Title IX:** Mississippi University for Women recognizes the inherent dignity of all individuals and promotes respect for all people. The University is committed to creating an educational and learning environment that is free from discrimination based on sex, including sexual violence (assault, domestic violence, dating violence and gender-based stalking). To learn more about the University's policy on sexual misconduct, how to make a report, or confidential resources, go to [www.muw.edu/titleix](http://www.muw.edu/titleix). The Title IX Coordinator is located in Cochran Hall, Room 405, and may be contacted by phone at 662-329-7129 or email at [titleix@muw.edu](mailto:titleix@muw.edu).

**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 based 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](#).

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

**Important Dates for Full-Term Spring 2022:**

Jan. 17	Martin Luther King Holiday
Jan. 24	Last day to add a class or change from audit to credit or grade to pass-fail
Feb. 18	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
March 14-18	Spring Break
March 23-27	Short Residency (AWP-Philadelphia/Virtual; see Dr. Dunkelberg's email)
April 6	Last day to drop a class or withdraw from the university
April 15	Mid-semester Break (Won't affect class meeting)
May 2-6	Final Exams (Portfolio due on last day of exams, <b>May 6</b> )

## COURSE SCHEDULE

- Week 1**      **Jan. 17-23 (Monday-Sunday)**  
**Jan. 17: Martin Luther King Holiday**  
In-class introductions, discussion of syllabus, & course structure  
Presentation Planning  
Group 1: Alana, Madison, Rebekah, Dominique  
Group 2: Belinda Michelle, Tori, Tony  
Jake Adam York, *Abide* (2015)
- Week 2**      **Jan. 24-30**  
**MUSIC AND MEMORY**  
Jake Adam York, *Abide* (2015)  
*The Poet's Companion* (P.C.): "Writing and Knowing," "Witnessing"  
*Ordinary Genius* (O.G.): "first thought, worst thought," "getting started,"  
"opening doors"
- Week 3**      **Jan. 31-Feb. 6**  
Group #1 Workshop  
**FAITH AND SOBRIETY**  
Kaveh Akbar, *Pilgrim Bell* (2020): **Rebekah**  
O.G.: "your genius, your demons," "line, breath, vision,"  
"the whiskey on your breath: addictions"
- Week 4**      **Feb. 7-13**  
Group #2 Workshop  
Kaveh Akbar, *Pilgrim Bell* (2020)  
P.C.: "The Family: Inspiration and Obstacle," "Images"  
O.G.: "describe this," "read this," "me, myself, & i"
- Week 5**      **Feb. 14-20**  
**LIFE AFTER (SUDDEN) DEATH:  
GRIEF AND EKPHRASIS**  
Group #1 Workshop  
Diana Khoi Nguyen, *Ghost Of* (2018): **Dr. Wilson**  
O.G.: "the pain-body," "ha! working with humor"
- Week 6**      **Feb. 21-27**  
Group #2 Workshop  
Diana Khoi Nguyen, *Ghost Of* (2018)  
P.C.: "Death and Grief," "The Shadow"  
O.G.: "white heat, necessary coldness"
- Week 7**      **Feb. 28-March 6**  
**REMAPPING THE BODY / VIOLENCE AND DESIRE**  
Group #1 Workshop  
Oliver Baez Bendorf, *The Advantages of Being Evergreen* (2019): **Madison**  
P.C.: "The Music of the Line," "Voice and Style"  
O.G.: "identity 1: girls, boys, & bodies," "by heart: a love poem"

- Week 8**      **March 7-13**  
 Group #2 Workshop  
 Oliver Baez Bendorf, *The Advantages of Being Evergreen* (2019)/  
 Jake Skeets, *Eyes Bottle Dark With a Mouthful of Flowers* (2019): **Alana**  
 O.G.: “three meditations,” “a bag of tricks”  
**Response Essay 1 Due (March 13)**
- March 14-18: Spring Break (No Class)**
- Week 9**      **March 21-27: AWP/Short Residency (No Class)**
- Week 10**      **March 28-April 3**  
**(UN)NATURAL BEAUTY: WRITING THE EROTIC**  
 Group #1 Workshop  
 Jake Skeets, *Eyes Bottle Dark With a Mouthful of Flowers* (2019)/  
 Atsuro Riley, *Hoard-Heard* (2021): **Tony**  
 P.C.: “Poetry of Place,” “Writing the Erotic”  
 O.G.: “love & sex poems,” “metaphor 1: the shimmer”
- Week 11**      **April 4-10**  
 Group #2 Workshop  
 Atsuro Riley, *Hoard-Heard* (2021)  
 P.C.: “Simile and Metaphor,” “Stop Making Sense: Dreams and Experiments”  
 O.G.: “what you don’t know,” “metaphor 2: parts & the whole”
- Week 12**      **April 11-17**  
**VIOLENCE AND DESIRE REVISITED**  
 Group #1 Workshop  
 Destiny Birdsong, *Negotiations* (2020): **Dominique**  
**April 15: Mid-semester Break**  
**Response Essay 2 Due (April 17)**
- Week 13**      **April 18-24**  
 Group #2 Workshop  
**The Art of Revision**  
 Destiny Birdsong, *Negotiations* (2020) /  
 Kendra DeColo, *I Am Not Trying to Hide My Hungers from the World* (2021):  
**Belinda Michelle & Tori**  
 P.C.: “The Energy of Revision,” “Self-Doubt,” “Writer’s Block”  
 O.G.: “identity 2: race, class & privilege,” “a poem’s progress,”  
 “do-overs & revisions”
- Week 15**      **April 25-May 1**  
**The Art of Submission**  
 Group #1 & 2 Workshop  
 P.C.: “Writing in the Electronic Age,” “Getting Published”  
 O.G.: “publishing & the pinocchio syndrome,” “mirror at the end of the road”  
**Poetry Journal Review Due / In-class course evaluations**
- Finals Week**    **May 2-6**    **Final Portfolio Due (May 6)**