

CRW 5331: Graduate Poetry Workshop (“The Long Line”)

11:35-2:30 p.m. EST Thursdays (Synchronously in 116 Williams and on Zoom [here](#))

Dr. L. Lamar Wilson

Office Hours: By appointment (schedule [here](#))

Contact: llwilson@fsu.edu

*Please allow 24 hours for response. For email sent after 9 p.m., the 24-hour window begins the following morning, when it will be read. *

Course Description & Learning Outcomes

In the first issue of *The Prose Poem: An International Journal*, editor Peter Johnson opined, “Just as black humor straddles the fine line between comedy and tragedy, so the prose poem plants one foot in prose, the other in poetry, both heels resting precariously on banana peels.” After surveying the work of pioneers and innovators at the fin de siècle through the late 20th century (Rimbaud, James Weldon and Fenton Johnson, Stein, Neruda, Brooks, Bishop, Simic, Giovanni, et al.), we’ll explore innovative contemporary collections that exploit the long line without falling flat. Poetic prose by Harryette Mullen, Erica Hunt, Oliver de la Paz, Atsuro Riley, Layli Long Soldier, Taylor Johnson, and others inform a supplementary packet commingle with lyric essays on the line by James Longenbach, Alyson Miller, Ellen Bryant Voigt, Cassandra Atherton, Paul Hetherington, and others will animate our discussions of our own poems.

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

1. Modulate speakers’ voices to accommodate blurring of the lyric and epic narrative traditions, which inform the fine line between prose and lineated poetry.
2. Compose a genealogy of your literary kin and converse with confidence a sense of your relationship to the prose poem and other incarnations of the long line.
3. Enter philosophical and theoretical conversations about the prose poem and its manifestations in modern, postmodern, and contemporary American literary artists’ responses to the conventions of their times.
4. Hone the skills of active listening and close reading that yield impactful feedback for fellow artisans.
5. Collate a portfolio of up to 25 pages of original work that engages this investment in a poetic series linked by the fine line between lyric poetry and discursive prose.

Optional Goals (for more ambitious students)

6. Submit a book review to a literary or scholarly journal of a contemporary poetry collection.
7. Create a syllabus draft—with a textbook list and philosophical framework—for teaching an undergraduate or graduate course through the prism you bring to and take from this course.

Required Readings

Anthologies & Critical Essays (on reserve in Strozier or ebooks)

Great American Prose Poems, Ed. David Lehman (2003)

The Penguin Book of the Prose Poem, Ed. Jeremy Noel-Tod (2018)

Prose Poetry: An Introduction, Paul Hetherington and Cassandra Atherton (2020)

Collections (on reserve in Strozier or ebooks)

The Book of Nightmares, Galway Kinnell (1971, hard copy in Strozier)

Garbage, A.R. Ammons (1984, available in *The Complete Poems of A.R. Ammons*, in Strozier)

The End of the Alphabet (1998), Claudia Rankine

Junk, Tommy Pico (2018)

Be Holding, Ross Gay (2020)

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

What Noise Against the Cane, Desiree C. Bailey (2021)

Recommended Readings & Writing Resources (*=on reserve in Strozier)

The Rose Metal Press Field Guide to Prose Poetry: Contemporary Poets in Discussion and Practice, Ed. Gary McDowell (2010)

**A Little Book on Form: An Exploration of the Formal Imagination of Poetry*, Robert Hass (2018)

**The Art of the Poetic Line*, James Longenbach (2007)

**The Art of Syntax*, Ellen Bryant Voigt (2009)

They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing, 5th Ed. Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein (2021)

A Writer’s Reference with Writing About Literature, 9th or 10th Ed. Diane Hacker (2017, 2021)

*Available in Strozier

Weekly Schedule

- 1/6 Introductions; Syllabus
What's in a line? Conversations on Form & Our Relationship to the Line
- 1/13 *What's in a line? A couplet? A tercet? Quatrain? Cinquain? Sestet?*
 - Excerpts from Hass in "Supplemental Packet, Part 1" + J. Brown's "Once," Donne's "Hymn to God, My God, in My Sickness," Basho's "[The cry of the cicada]," Pope's "Elegy ..." and "Essay on Criticism," Wheatley's "On Being Brought From Africa to America," Knight's "Haiku," Ridge/Yellow Bird's "Song," Moore's "Black Earth," Johnson's "The Banjo Player," Stevens's "Like Decoration in a N----- Cemetery"
 - *Penguin*: Bertrand, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Wilde, Lazarus, F. Johnson, W.C. Williams, Lu Xun, Mistral, Vallejo, Ponge
 - *Great American*: Emerson, Poe, Stein, H.D., Eliot, Toomer, Crane, Auden, Bishop, Milosz

History of the Prose Poem: Conversations on Form in Modernity
 - *Great American*, "Introduction"
 - *Penguin*, "Introduction: The Expansion of the Prose Poem"
 - *Prose Poetry: An Introduction*: "Introducing the Prose Poem: Prose Poetry's 'Problem' of Definition"

1/20 **Group A Workshop: Jacqui, Emma, Max, Matt**
The Book of Nightmares: I-VI +
Penguin & Great American: Baudelaire, Dickinson, Poe, Rimbaud, Crane
Supplementary Packet: Neruda, Kaufman ("Hart Crane," "What Does the Secret Mind Whisper?," "The Ancient Rain")

Group B Workshop: Gabby, Dave, Zuleyha, Chris

1/27 *The Book of Nightmares VII-X; Penguin & Great American*: Toomer, Auden, Vallejo, Ponge, Spicer, O'Hara, Borges
Preview of *Garbage*
Supplemental Packet, Part 1: Pope, Ammons

2/3 **Group C Workshop: Tanner, Caleb, Vince**
Garbage: Caleb
Penguin & Great American: Lowell, Bishop, Bly, Simic, Heaney, Forché, Rich

2/10 Group A Workshop
Junk: Chris

2/17 Group B Workshop
Junk
Supplemental Packet, Part 1: Ammons, A. Smith, Soldier; *Penguin & Great American*: Wright, Momaday, Mayer, Hejinian, Bernstein, Gerstler

2/24 Group C Workshop
I Am Not Trying to Hide to My Hungers from the World: Max & Jacqui

3/3 Group A Workshop
I Am Not Trying to Hide to My Hungers from the World
Penguin & Great American: Rich, Hass, Myles, Padgett, L. Davis, Notley, Carlen, Waldman, Scalapino, Knox, Andrews; *Supplemental Packet, Part 1*: P. Smith, Lorde, Duhamel, Seaton, Sebree

3/10 Group B Workshop
The End of the Alphabet: Tanner, Dave, & Emma

3/17 **SPRING BREAK**

- 3/24 Group C Workshop
The End of the Alphabet/Just Us
Supplemental Packet, Part 1: J. Graham, Greenberg, Shepherd
Penguin & Great American: Rankine, Pang, Shire, Queyras, Moss, Williams, H. Mullen
- 3/31 Claudia Rankine Visit
4/7 **Contemplating Revision**
Group A Workshop
Be Holding: Matt & Vince
Supplemental Packet, Part 2: T. Johnson, de la Paz
Penguin & Great American: Koike, Harvey
- 4/14 Group B Workshop
Be Holding/
What Noise Against the Cane: Zuhelya & Gabby

Supplemental Packet, Part 1 & 2: Pavlić, Rosal, Riley
Great American: L. Jenkins, Padgett, Emanuel, Chernoff, Jarnot
- 4/21 Group C Workshop

What Noise Against the Cane
Great American: Komunyakaa, Dove
Supplemental Packet, Part 2: Walcott, Philip, D'Aguiar, C. Campbell
- 4/25 **Course Evaluation**
PORTFOLIO DUE

Course Requirements (Overview)

- Portfolio of original creative work (at least 10 pieces, or up to 25 pages)
- Attendance & in-class participation
- Presentation on a book on the recommended list (or another you see as intersecting with the course’s concerns)

Optional

- Review of a poetry collection’s elegies
- Draft of a syllabus (course description, textbook list, and teaching philosophy)

Grading Policies

I will calculate your final grades according to the following scales:

- Portfolio of original work.....200 points
- Attendance/In-class Participation100 points
- Book Presentation100 points
(or 50 points +

Optional

- Syllabus Draft.....50 points)

Desired Outcome	Assessment Apparatus	Point Value
<p>Ability to conceive original work that modulates speakers’ voices to accommodate the evolving relationship to the thin line between lyric poetry and discursive prose</p> <p>Ability to compose a genealogy of your literary kin and converse with confidence in a sense of your relationship to the long line</p> <p>Ability to collate a portfolio of at least 10 pieces (up to 25 pages) of original work that engages this investment in a poetic series linked by your sense of the lyricism in prose</p>	<p>A portfolio of at least 10 pieces (or up to 25 pages) of original creative work, preceded by a prefatory précis that historicizes literary ancestors and peers.</p>	<p>200 points</p>
<p>Ability to enter philosophical and theoretical conversations about long line aka “the prose poem”</p> <p>Ability to listen actively and provide detailed close readings reflective of impactful feedback to peers and colleagues</p>	<p>Consistent in-class participation/ class attendance</p> <p>A presentation of at least one half-hour on a primary text with a virtual handout that follows the provided rubric</p> <p><i>Optional</i> Submission of a formal review of that book that follows the provided rubric</p>	<p>100 points</p> <p>+</p> <p>100 points (or 50 points</p> <p>+</p> <p>50 points)</p>
<p>Ability to compose a genealogy for the modern, postmodern, and contemporary long line aka “prose prose”</p>	<p><i>Optional</i> A syllabus draft (course description, textbook list, and teaching philosophy)</p>	<p>50 points</p>

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-

More Details on Requirements

1. **You will need to post at least one new poem a week**, ideally in a Word Document (.doc or .docx), PDF, or navigable URL, **by 6:30 p.m. on the Friday** before your group’s workshop. Should you use a technology outside those formats, consider accessibility issues and devise a plan to accommodate your peers. During the weekend between classes, you will be tasked with reading your peers’ work and writing comments on the poems that have been distributed and posting them in the allotted Discussion Board space on Canvas. You should return these copies to one another by posting your responses **no later than 3:30 p.m.** of the subsequent Wednesday. Only one poem will be discussed in class. *Any poet may feel free, however, to submit additional*

work for written feedback from me in any given week in that week's assignment space. In general, a previously submitted poem should *not* be resubmitted to workshop. Exceptions are conceivable; ask first.

2. Because a major portion of the work in this course is done in class, weekly attendance is mandatory. **Two** unexcused absences are allowed; all others may 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 (greater than 10 minutes) and arrival without work will count as an absence. Your second and subsequent absences will cost you 20 points of your participation grade. Arrival without a Canvas posting done will count as half an absence. After three unexcused absences, you will automatically fail the class. In this Covid-19 moment and virtual learning environment, I empathize with the vagaries of Zoom and other technologies. I will respect your privacy and avoid intrusive questions, but please take care to alert me as soon as you realize extenuating circumstances will impact your attendance.
3. All formal writing you submit must be **double-spaced in 12-point Times New Roman on pages with standard 1-inch margins**. Make sure you select "No Spacing" in your toolbar before double-spacing your work and that you change your Word defaults (in older versions) from 1.25-inch margins. Otherwise, you will inadvertently add extra space between paragraphs throughout your work. Emails, in-class writing, homework responses and Canvas discussion, however, don't have to be double-spaced.
4. Follow MLA Style or the rules of the publication where you submit your review. Bookmark <http://guides.lib.unc.edu/citing-information/mla-sample> or purchase a reference such as *The Penguin Handbook* by Leslie Faigley or *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing* by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein.
5. Your work should be submitted by class time on due dates to me and/or your fellow group member(s). 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.
 - a) The heading of every feeder and assignment should include the following, double-spaced successively in the order listed, in the **upper left corner** of each assignment:
Your Full Name

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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.
 - b) Each heading should be followed by a title that reflects the theme of your piece of writing.
 - c) Please **staple** all materials before coming to class.
 - d) When submitting your final portfolios, please put all initial drafts and intermediate revisions in order, with your final drafts of each piece, on top.
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.
7. It is my desire and expectation that all will pass this class. For all students who make a D or below on a complete assignment submitted on time, see me about rewriting it to improve your grade.

Writing Center

I encourage you to visit the campus Writing Center (wr.english.fsu.edu) to get assistance as you revise your work. To make an appointment for a specific time and date use this [link](#); send general inquiries to email english-rwc@fsu.edu.

More on Grading

Here are some basic standards that should offer insight on what to expect when your essays and exams are graded:

A: The document is excellent as is, with little or no additional revision necessary. It meets the writer's and the readers' needs clearly and efficiently. It not only meets the purpose of the assignment, but it does so in a particularly ingenious or elegant way. It is substantially better than the ordinary assignment and has been organized to meet the needs of its audience and demonstrates an above-average fluency with the languages its uses.

B: The document meets assignment goals with some revision. It contains all significant/required content, but certain elements of organization, focus or writing style need work. Editorial revisions pertain to words and sentences or to one or two small sections. Overall, it meets the goals of the assignment and effectively articulates them in most respects, and it demonstrates a better than adequate level of fluency with the languages its uses.

C: The document requires significant revision before it meets assignment goals; though it contains most of the necessary information somewhere, its content, design, and organization prevent readers from accomplishing the intended goals. Large passages might need to be rewritten or reorganized, or the assignment might contain extensive stylistic problems. It demonstrates an acceptable level of fluency with the languages its uses. There are, however, too many problems for a professional assignment.

D: The document requires extensive revision before it meets assignment goals. Though it attempts to meet the requirements of the assignment, it is deficient in content, focus and organization, or it may contain extensive grammatical or mechanical errors. Although it shows some evidence of an attempt to apply the principles discussed for the assignment, the attempt was not generally successful. There are so many problems that the reader has a difficult time gathering its meaning/purpose.

F: The document completely fails to meet the purpose and requirements of the assignment; readers cannot accomplish the intended goals. The assignment shows no evidence of application of the principles discussed in the course. There are so many problems with the piece that the focus of the assignment is completely unclear. An assignment that does not meet the length requirement or that is submitted late may also receive a failing grade.

Your in-class participation will be assessed each class based upon the following criteria:

1. Be on time and prepared for class consistently. Complete the required reading, print any required handouts, and bring your laptop and research I've required. You may use a laptop or tablet only for drafting and reviewing texts we are reading; there should be no social media browsing or posting during class.
2. Engage actively during every class period, and always use classroom time productively. Everyone has an off day from time to time, but you should be consistently focused on the texts at hand during class.
3. Produce complete, thoughtful responses to every assignment and turn all work in on time. Post every assignment to Canvas by the assigned deadline.
4. Proofread final drafts to eliminate distracting surface errors and typos. Final drafts won't be perfect, but you should learn any grammar rules that consistently give you trouble.
5. Outside creating a found poem or an erasure, avoid plagiarizing others' poems by (a) taking careful notes to help you distinguish between your own ideas and language and those you have borrowed from sources, (b) citing your source material in epigraphs or through typology that feels apt with your poems' conceit and context, (c) never attempting to disguise another's work as your own or otherwise engaging in any other act of academic dishonesty. New ideas only come about because we are all constantly borrowing ideas and sharing our work with others; be generous about attributing and citing those whose work has influenced your own.

Land Acknowledgment

I acknowledge that Florida State University is located on land that is the ancestral and traditional territory of the Apalachee Nation, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, the Miccosukee Tribe of Florida, and the Seminole Tribe of Florida. I pay respect to their elders, past and present, and extend that respect to their descendants, to the generations yet unborn, and to all indigenous people. I recognize that this land remains scarred by the histories and ongoing legacies of settler colonial violence, dispossession, and removal. In spite of all of this, and with tremendous resilience, these indigenous nations have remained deeply connected to this territory, to their families, to their communities, and to their cultural ways of life. I recognize the ongoing relationships of care that these nations maintain with this land and extend my gratitude as I live and work as a humble and respectful guest upon their territory. I encourage you to learn about and amplify the contemporary work of the indigenous nations whose land you are on and to endeavor to support indigenous sovereignty in all the ways that you can. I also acknowledge that these indigenous peoples' struggles often has intertwined, particularly in Florida, with that of those of African descent were deemed chattel in ways both fraught and luminary. I pay respect to these Africans' elders, past and present, as well and extend that respect to their descendants, to generations yet unborn.

Food and Housing Insecurity Statement

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in this or any course, is urged to contact the Food for Thought Pantry for support. In addition, please notify me, if you are comfortable doing so, so that I may provide any other resource that I may possess. If you are having trouble accessing books, software, or technology relevant to the course, please let me know that as well. FSU and I want to see you be successful and have all you need to be able to be the best student you can be in this and all of your courses.

Disability Statement

I live with Erb's palsy and at least two valences of neurodivergence that impact my daily life. I hope that my disclosure allays any fears that I will not be empathic to any student with physical differences and/or neurodivergence who needs academic accommodation. To make sure I know exactly what you need to succeed in this course:

1. Register with and provide documentation to the Office of Accessibility Services;
2. Request that the Office of Accessibility Services send me a letter detailing the accommodation you need; and
3. Schedule a meeting with me to discuss the letter of accommodation to review approved accommodations.

For the latest version of this statement and more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact The Office of Accessibility Services, 874 Traditions Way, 108 Student Services Building, Florida State University Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167; (850) 644-9566 (voice); (850) 644-8504 (TDD) oas@fsu.edu; <https://dsst.fsu.edu/oas/>.

Academic Honor Policy

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "... be honest and truthful and ... [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University."

Emergency Contact Information

FSU's primary communication tool for sending out information is through its website at <https://alerts.fsu.edu/>. In the event of an emergency, students should consult this site for directions.

Our Pledge to One Another

We will facilitate and cultivate, as learning guides and peer-mentors working together, a learning community and encourage respect and inclusivity of all members and our 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 gleaned as much as possible from asynchronous and synchronous 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.