

EN 506 Graduate Poetry Workshop, M 5-7:30 p.m. CST, Zoom Spring 2023
Professor: Dr. L. Lamar Wilson **Office:** By appointment
Email: llwilson@muw.edu **Hours:** By appointment
LMS: muw.instructure.com (Gchat @proflamarwilson)

Required Materials

Computer with a video camera or webcam or digital camera w/video and the following collections:

- *The Penguin Book of Spiritual Verse*, Kaveh Akbar (Ed.) (9780241391587)
- *Against Heaven*, Kemi Alabi (9781644450826)
- *Your Emergency Contact Has Experienced an Emergency*, Chen Chen (9781950774708, 9781950774692)
- *Mother Body*, Diamond Forde (9781947817241)
- *Tap Out*, Edgar Kunz (9781328518132, 9781328518125)
- *Satan Says*, Sharon Olds (9780822953142)
- *Ballads*, Sharon Olds (9781524711610, 9780525656968)
- *Headless John the Baptist Hitchhiking*, C.T. Salazar (9781946724489)
- Plus this craft text: Kim Addonizio, *Ordinary Genius: A Guide for a Poetry Within* (2009)

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 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 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 three to 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 juxtaposed with the primary texts we're reading. 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/semimonthly individual conferences. I'll schedule Zoom meetings with each of you beginning in Week Four. 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. We'll meet at this Zoom link.

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 is filled, and there are at least 10 lines on the poem's final page, it will count as a complete poem. 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 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	200 points
Discussion & Conferences	100 points
Poetry Magazine Review	100 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. The Title IX Coordinator is located in Cochran Hall, Room 405, and may be contacted by phone at 662-241-6083 or email at 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 located in Reneau Hall, Room 101(B), and may be contacted by phone at 662.329.7138 or email at 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](#).

Important Dates for Full-Term Spring 2022:

Jan. 16	Martin Luther King Holiday
Jan. 18	Last day to add a class or change from audit to credit or grade to pass-fail
Feb. 13	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 7-11	Short Residency (AWP-Seattle; see Dr. Dunkelberg's email)
March 13-17	Spring Break
April 5	Last day to drop a class or withdraw from the university
April 6-7	Mid-semester Break (Won't affect class meeting)
May 1-5	Final Exams (Portfolio due on last day of exams, May 5)

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

COURSE SCHEDULE

- Weeks 1-2 **Jan. 11-22 (Wednesday-Sunday)**
Jan. 16: Martin Luther King Holiday
Asynchronous introductions
From *The Penguin Book of Spiritual Verse*, read “Introduction,”
Enheduanna, *Gilgamesh*, *Book of the Dead*, Song of Songs, Psalm 23, *The Odyssey*,
Lao Tzu, Lucretius, Virgil, Li Po, Al-Husayn Ibn Ahmad Ibn Khalawayh,
Mahadeviyakka, St. Francis of Assisi, Rumi, Saadi Shirazi, Dante Aligheri,
Sundiata, Yaqui people, Nezakualcoyotl, Kabir, Mirabel, Yoruba people, Teresa
of Avila, St. John of the Cross, Mayan people, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Donne,
G. Herbert, Milton, Basho, Juana Inés de la Cruz, Buson, Wheatley, Blake,
Issa, Keats, Browning, Douglass, Dickinson, Hopkins, Cavafy, Yeats, Rilke,
Akiko, Mistral, Tsvetaeva, Lorca, Senghor, Faiz, Milosz, Césaire, Celan,
Szyborska, Z. Herbert, Brathwaite, Okigbo, Valentine, Clifton, Khoury-
Ghata, Darwish, Philip.
- Assignment:** Choose two spiritual literary ancestors, one whose invocation
you know well, the other whose piece you’ve encountered this week. Virtually
introducing yourself, choose your favorite line(s), images, elements of prosody,
etc., and articulate, in as specific detail and roughly 200 words or more, why
these poems resonate so much with the poet in you. If you have a project you
want to tackle in this workshop, disclose its conceit(s) here as well by posting a
poem inspired by, or “after” as it were, your chosen poems. In addition, state
in the assignment submission on which of our six “master poets” you wish to
lead discussion. (*See Workshops & Discussions/Presentations on page 2.*)
- Week 3 **Jan. 23-29**
WHAT IS “SPIRITUAL” VERSE, “SACRED,” “PROFANE”?
In-class discussion of syllabus, course structure, *Penguin* readings,
& presentation planning
Ordinary Genius (O.G.): “first thought, worst thought,” “getting started,”
“opening doors”
Group 1: Rebecca, Madelain, Lisa, Megan
Group 2: Jane, Erin, Madison
- Week 4 **Jan. 30-Feb. 5**
THE ROOTS OF MEMORY, THE ORIGINAL WOUNDS
Sharon Olds, *Satan Says* (1980)
Group #1 Workshop
- Week 5 **Feb. 6-12**
Olds & Peers Excerpts from her *The Father* (1992) & *Odes* (2016)/
Diamond Forde, *Mother Body* (2021)
Rich, Oliver, Ostriker, & Orr (PDF)
O.G.: “describe this,” “read this,” “me, myself, & i”
Group #2 Workshop
Madelain Presents

- Week 6** **Feb. 13-19**
Diamond Forde, *Mother Body* (2021), Clifton, Dove, P. Smith, Bingham-Risher (PDF): Dr. Wilson, plus **Forde Visits Class**
O.G.: “the pain-body,” “ha! working with humor”

Group #1 Workshop
- Week 7** **Feb. 20-26**
LIFE AFTER DEATH: GRIEF AND FAITH(LESSNESS)
***Tap Out*, Edgar Kunz**
Mads Presents
O.G.: “white heat, necessary coldness”

Group #2 Workshop
- Week 8** **Feb. 27-March 5**
Tap Out (**Kunz Visits**), plus PDF of new work from *Fixer* (Aug. 2023)
O.G.: “three meditations,” “a bag of tricks”

Group #1 Workshop
- Week 9** **March 6-13**
WORSHIP AND THE BODY / VIOLENCE AND DESIRE
***Against Heaven*, Kemi Alabi**
Rebecca Presents
O.G.: “identity 1: girls, boys, & bodies,” “by heart: a love poem”

Group #2 Workshop

March 7-11: AWP/Short Residency (Seattle)
- Week 10** **March 13-17: Spring Break (No Class)**
Response Essay 1 Due (March 19)
- Week 11** **March 20-26**
(UN)HOLY, (UN)NATURAL: WRITING THE EROTIC
Against Heaven, **Alabi Visits**
O.G.: “love & sex poems,” “metaphor 1: the shimmer”
Group #1 Workshop
- Week 12** **March 27-April 2**
***Your Emergency Contact Has Experienced an Emergency*, Chen**
Chen
Erin Presents
O.G.: “what you don’t know,” “metaphor 2: parts & the whole”
Group #2 Workshop

- Week 13 **April 3-9**
Your Emergency Contact Has Experienced an Emergency, Chen Chen
O.G.: “identity 2: race, class & privilege”

Group #1 Workshop
April 6-7: Mid-semester Break
- Week 14 **April 10-16**
WORSHIP AND THE BODY / VIOLENCE AND DESIRE
REVISITED: THE ART OF (RE)VISION
***Headless John the Baptist Hitchhiking*, C.T. Salazar**
Jane Presents
O.G.: “a poem’s progress,” “do-overs & revisions”

Group #2 Workshop
- Week 15 **April 17-23**
FROM (RE)VISION TO SUBMISSION
Headless John the Baptist Hitchhiking, C.T. **Salazar Visits Class**
O.G.: “publishing & the pinocchio syndrome,” “mirror at the end of the road”
- Week 16 **April 24-30**
THE ART OF SUBMISSION
***Balladz*, Sharon Olds**
Megan Presents
Group #1 & 2 Workshop

Poetry Journal Review Due / In-class course evaluations
- Finals Week **May 1-5** **Final Portfolio Due (May 5)**