

# CRW 4320: Advanced Poetry Workshop

1:20-4:20 p.m. EST Tuesdays, 120 Williams & [Zoom](#)

Professor: L. Lamar Wilson, Ph.D.

Office Hours: [By appointment](#)

Contact: [llwilson@fsu.edu](mailto:llwilson@fsu.edu), proflamarwilson, on Gchat (during office hours)

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

## Course Description & Learning Outcomes

In this course, we will move beyond parsing the important, intricate details of prosody you’ve ideally encountered in CRW 3311 (and possibly other sections of CRW 4320) and write into and against modes and schools of thought that dominate contemporary poetics, particularly our intense moment of hypervisibility and hyperviolence. We will focus not only on refining the single “perfect poem” but also curating a series of poems whose speakers’ voices we can modulate to interrogate personal and cultural history and memory with greater veracity. We will attend to the ways that the performance of race, gender, and nationality contemporize and transform the ancient elegy and other modes of writing. To achieve this ambitious feat, rather than reading several books, we will spend the better part of the semester studying these modes and schools vis-à-vis representative writers over successive fortnights before reading two new collections as exemplary models of our aim of producing a small poetry collection.

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

1. Come to the page with greater confidence to harness the tools you have to make the poems you deem urgent and emotionally honest.
2. Craft poems that navigate the rules of formal prosody and exploit free verse’s imaginative terrain with greater aplomb.
3. Constellate a series of poems whose speakers converse with one another in ways that compel multiple readings.
4. Discuss the historical and contemporary conversations in the fields of the poetics of witness and documentary poetics.
5. Describe the philosophies and theories that drive the ancient elegy and pastoral traditions and detail the ways that contemporary writers use racial and gender performance to complicate those modes.
6. Hone the skills of active listening and close reading that yield impactful feedback for fellow artisans.
7. Collate a portfolio of up to 25 pages of original creative work that engages these modes and aims.

## Required Readings

Modules on [Canvas](#)

Franklin, Krista. *Too Much Midnight*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2020.

Sebree, Chet’la. *Mistress*. Kalamazoo, Mich.: New Issues, 2019.

Zamora, Javier. *Unaccompanied*. Port Townsend, Wash.: Copper Canyon, 2017.

## Course Requirements (Overview)

- Portfolio of original work (up to 25 pages)
- Attendance & in-class participation

## Grading Policies

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

- Portfolio of original work.....200 points
- Attendance/In-class Participation .....200 points

Desired Outcome	Assessment Apparatus	Point Value
Ability to compose and collate original work that engages the fields of the poetics of witness and documentary poetics, the pastoral, and the elegy	A portfolio of up to 25 pages of original creative work	200 points
Ability to describe philosophies and theories that drive the ancient elegy and pastoral traditions Ability to detail the ways that contemporary writers use racial and gender performance to complicate those modes Ability to listen attentively and provide detail close readings reflective of impactful feedback to peers and colleagues Ability to constellate a series of poems whose speakers converse with one another in ways that compel multiple readings	In-class and take-home exercises; class discussion	200 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-	

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

You are encouraged to attend and participate in as many MFA Program readings and other Creative Writing-sponsored events as you can. Stay tuned for a schedule of activities, particularly the Jerome Stern Reading Series on Tuesday evenings starting Sept. 14, [here](#).

8/24	Introductions: Why poetry? Why now? To what poems/poets do you return, and why? Poetics of Witness/Documentary Poetics: Trethewey & Mueller HW: "Read Essentials for Discussing Poetry"
8/31	Poetics of Witness/Documentary Poetics: Trethewey, Mueller, York, Jordan
9/7	Elegy/Anti-Elegy: Mueller, York, Jordan, & Dove <i>Workshop/Group A</i> : Jasmine, Jordan, Kylie, Odalys
9/14	Elegy/Anti-Elegy: Dove & Valentine <i>Workshop/Group B</i> : Adrian, Nicole, Natalia
9/21	Elegy, Race, and the Pastoral: Valentine & Collins <i>Workshop/Group C</i> : Stacey, Shania, Chyenne, Katelyn
9/28	Elegy, Race, and the Pastoral: Collins <i>Workshop/Group D</i> : Miriam, Madeline, Ariana
10/5	Elegy, Race, and the Pastoral (Un)Genders Speakers: Skeets, Guzmán <i>Workshop/Group A</i>
10/12	(Un)Gendering Speakers: greathouse, Taylor Johnson, & Cyrille Jarelle Johnson <i>Workshop/Group B</i>
10/19	Whose 'Home'? Embodying Foreign-ness <i>Workshop/Group C</i> Zamora
10/26	Whose 'Home'? Embodying Foreign-ness Zamora <i>Workshop/Group D</i>
11/2	<i>Workshop/Group A</i> Franklin
11/9	<i>Workshop/Group B</i> Franklin
11/16	<i>Workshop/Group C</i> : Sebree
11/23	<i>Workshop/Group D</i> Sebree
11/30	Portfolio Discussion
	Virtual Class Reading?
12/9	<b>EXAMS WEEK: Portfolios Due no later than Dec. 9 @ 12:30 p.m.</b>

## More Details on Requirements

1. **Starting Friday, Aug. 27, you will be expected to post at least one new poem each week**, ideally in a Word Document or PDF, **no later than 6:30 p.m.** Should you use a technology outside those formats, consider accessibility issues and devise a plan to accommodate your peers. During the week between classes, you will be tasked with reading your peers' work and writing comments on the poems that have been distributed to your group and posting them in the allotted Discussion Board space on Canvas. You should return these copies to one another by posting responses to all group members we're workshopping **no later than noon of the Tuesday** the group will be workshopped. Only one poem will be discussed in class. You may feel free, however, to submit additional work for written feedback from me. I'm happy to discuss poems that aren't engaged in class, as well as any revisions you do, during your conference every other work. While a previously submitted poem should *not* be revised and resubmitted to the workshop, exceptions are conceivable; ask first.
2. Because a major portion of the work in this discussion-based course is done in class, weekly attendance is necessary, and those who attend face-to-face (f2f) should following the university's "[Fall Expectations on Campus](#)." That includes "wearing a mask at all times when inside an FSU facility, even if you are vaccinated" against COVID-19 (the Pfizer vaccine is now [FDA-approved](#) for those 16 and older); getting vaccinated "even if you have had COVID-19 in the past"; and "stay[ing] home when sick, self-quarantin[ing] and get[ting] tested at least 24 hours after your symptoms begin" or known exposure to COVID-19. With these more highly transmissible variants, it's paramount that we take precautions not to unwittingly expose our peers to illness. **You are expected to isolate for 10 days after a positive test result, even if you**

**have no symptoms. If you do present symptoms, your 10-day isolation window begins after those symptoms cease. In the rare cases when people become severely ill and require hospitalization or have immunosuppression, it may be necessary to isolate for 20 days or longer.** These decisions should be made in close consultation with the Florida Department of Health. If you think you have a false positive, you must isolate until you receive official clearance. Seek a PCR test immediately for confirmation of result. A PCR test is the most accurate test available. If you need medical attention, please call UHS or your personal physician. To make an appointment at UHS, call 850-644-4567.

With these guidelines and the uncertainty of this pandemic in mind, we will be “flexible,” and you can at any point sign in remotely viz Zoom. In fact, I will be recording each class, and the recording will be stored in the cloud space & available for at least two weeks. **These recordings are for class use only; you & your colleagues are protected by state law.** Students also are permitted to make recordings of **class lectures** for a class in which the student is enrolled **for personal educational use**. While a class lecture is defined as an educational presentation delivered by the instructor as part of a university course intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, **this course is discussion-based**. I facilitate these discussions with some insights on assigned works rather than lecture. Recording class activities other than class lectures, including but not limited to lab or recitation sessions; student presentations (whether individually or part of a group); class discussions (except when incidental to the lecture); clinical practica and presentations involving patient histories and other protected health information; academic exercises involving student participation; test or examination administrations; field trips; and private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty member **is prohibited**. Recordings may not be used as a substitute for class participation and class attendance and recordings may not be published or shared without the written consent of the faculty member. Failure to adhere to these requirements may constitute a violation of FSU’s Student Code of Conduct and possibly have legal consequences. Students who record class lectures are asked to do so in ways that do not make others feel reluctant to ask questions, explore new ideas, or otherwise participate in class. Students must monitor their recording so that they do not include participation by other students without permission. Students with disabilities will continue to have appropriate accommodations for recordings as established by the Office of Accessibility Services. (See “Disability Statement” below and various guidance in the “Emergency Module” on Canvas about university’s COVID-19 and class recording policies.)

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, undocumented 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. Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, **religious holy days**, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid written excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

3. Your work should be submitted by class time on due dates to me and/or your fellow group member(s). Late assignments will incur penalty unless we discuss your extenuating circumstances in advance. Back up your work multiple ways (email, USB drive, DropBox, external hard drive, etc.). Loss of work due to technological lapses may not prevent penalty.
  - a) The heading of every poem should include the following, double-spaced successively in the order listed, in the **upper left corner** of each assignment:  
  
Your Full Name  
  
Professor Wilson  
  
CRW 4320  
  
Date (22 October 2021)  
  
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 summarizes the theme/thesis of your poem.
4. 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.
5. It is my desire and expectation that all will pass this class with high marks. The only reason you won’t is that you fail to be a good citizen in our weekly dialogues in class and in small groups.

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. If you are "breaking the rules" purposely for artistic purposes, be intentional and consistent as you craft your own syntax and grammar.
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.

### **Academic Honor Policy and Code of Conduct**

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines 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." Freedom of expression is highly respected at FSU; however, one's freedoms do not give one permission to use abusive, disruptive, or otherwise indefensible language or behavior that makes our community unsafe and violates the university's honor policy and Student Code of Conduct.

### **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.

### **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**

Your academic success is a top priority for Florida State University. University resources to help you succeed include tutoring centers, computer labs, counseling and health services, and services for designated groups, such as veterans and students with disabilities. The following information is not exhaustive, so please check with your advisor or the Dean of Students office to learn more.

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 disabilities 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.

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request. 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](mailto:oas@fsu.edu); <https://dsst.fsu.edu/oas>.

### **Confidential Campus Resources**

Various centers and programs are available to assist students with navigating stressors that might impact academic success. These include the following:

- **Victim Advocate Program:** University Center A, Room 4100, (850) 644-7161, available 24/7/365, office hours: M-F 8-5; <https://dsst.fsu.edu/vap>.
- **Counseling & Psychological Services:** Askew Student Life Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 942 Learning Way, (850) 644-8255; <https://counseling.fsu.edu/>
- **University Health Services:** Health and Wellness Center, (850) 644-6230, <https://uhs.fsu.edu/>

### **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. We 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 gleaning 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 creative writers.