ENG 365: POETRY WORKSHOP WINTER 2012

Professor Katharine Whitcomb
Class Time: Wed 4:00-7:20 p.m.
Location: 415 Lang
email: whitcomk@cwu.edu
Office: 408 B Lang
Office Hours: T 2-4 W 2-3 & by appt
Phone: 963-1530

Required Texts:

Steve Kowit
In the Palm of Your Hand: The Poet’s Portable Workshop.

Poulin & Waters, eds.

Sherman Alexie
Face

Poems written by you and your classmates serve as an integral text for this class.

Course Description:

Hello poets! Welcome to poetry writing workshop. The important focus of this class is the writing workshop, where we discuss your poems and those of your peers. We will be honing, practicing and learning the most helpful ways to approach creative work. In addition to your own poetry, we will be looking closely at poems by a group of contemporary poets---brilliant, varied voices in the poetry world. We’ll be examining craft, form, voice, style and considering the choices they made while writing these poems. Ultimately you can use their examples as jumping off points for possibilities in your own work. We will be reading along in In the Palm of Your Hand by Steve Kowit all quarter for nuts-and-bolts help on terms, forms, and techniques, and we’ll be using this book for some exercises and poem assignments. You’ll each get a chance to lead the class as part of a team in a detailed discussion of the work of a poet from our anthology, and to articulate your helpful comments during workshop.

Don’t worry if this is your first poetry writing class or if you’ve never shown anyone your poems! Remember---work on your writing gives you confidence and we are all in this together. I look forward to working with each of you.

Requirements:

Attendance at every class, one required conference, and required attendance at a poetry reading.

Three take-home reading quizzes.

Oral presentation and team discussion leadership on the work of a selected poet from our text (for which you will sign up).

Active participation in writing workshop---usually with poems due every other week. You will be assigned to a writing group.
Written and verbal comments on your workshop peers’ poetry.

All weekly assignments, exercises and deadlines.

Photocopies of all workshop assignments for class. Plan to bring a copy for each person in the class and a copy for me in addition to your original. Also please submit all of your completed assignments, including poems, on Blackboard.

Please remember to bring your textbook, *In the Palm of Your Hand*, and your anthology to every class. Remember to bring all relevant workshop material and handouts.

**Major Projects and Grading:**

3 reading quizzes (average score)  
20% of grade

Team-led oral presentation  
(both students receive the same grade)  
10% of grade

Final poetry portfolio  
(6 poems and revisions)  
25% of grade

Homework (exercises, poems and assignments turned in on time and done correctly)  
25% of grade

Participation (written comments on your peers’ work, verbal comments in class and in workshop, and attendance)  
10% of grade

poetry reading attendance and reading review 10% of grade

There will be NO acceptance of late exercises or assignments. These will be counted as missing. If you have to miss a class, turn in your workshop material and assignments beforehand to me, or have someone in the class bring them in for you. Make sure to call or email me if you are sick BEFORE you miss class, so that you will not be marked absent. If at any time you would like to discuss your progress in the course with me, please come to my office hours or arrange an appointment.

**Attendance is required. You are allowed one absence without penalty, but each additional absence will lower your grade. Failure to attend three class periods or more may result in failure of the course.** Absence at a required conference or at the reading will be counted the same as a missed class. Please come to class, come on time, and come prepared. I will be keeping track of late arrivals—they will hurt your grade and disrupt the class. If you are late, assume you’ve been marked absent until you talk to me.
Late assignments. Please check the syllabus for deadlines. Please keep up with the reading and workshop assignments. Late exercises, workshop poems, and portfolios will not be accepted.

**Manuscript format and workshop copies:** All writing assignments, including exercises and homework, must be typed. Include your name on all your assignments and PROOFREAD your work. Use 12-point font and 1-inch margins. Staple your work if there are multiple pages.

When copies are required for workshop, students should make enough copies for everyone in the class, including themselves, and two copies for me. If we have 15 people in the class, then you should make 16 copies and keep your original. Copies are due at the beginning of the class before they are to be discussed in workshop; for example, if you are in Group 1 and Group 1’s poems will be discussed Wednesday, 10/13, you must bring in your copies the preceding Wednesday, 10/6.

**NOTES:**

I do not grade poems or exercises turned in during the quarter; however, I will be writing comments on all your work. Your poems will only be graded in your final portfolio after you have presented them in workshop and worked on revising them. Revision is the most important learning process in this class.

The team-led discussion sessions on the work of a poet you sign up for should take approx. 20 min. and include questions you pose to the class meant to generate feedback.

The assigned poems during the quarter will include:

- a metaphor poem
- a line break poem
- a poem in form (ghazal, villanelle or sestina)
- a prose poem
- two poems developed from in-class exercises

*This syllabus, other materials and announcements will be available on this class’ Blackboard site. Make sure to sign in.*

All instances of academic dishonesty or plagiarism in this class will not be tolerated. If you plagiarize a paper, you will fail the class and be reported.
"Students with disabilities who wish to set up academic adjustments in this class should give me a copy of their “Confirmation of Eligibility for Academic Adjustments” from the disability Support Services Office as soon as possible so we can meet to discuss how the approved adjustments will be implemented in this class. Students with disabilities without this form should contact the Disability Support Services Office, Bouillon 205 or dssrecept@cwu.edu or 963-2171 immediately."
**CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS:**

This syllabus is subject to change; changes will be announced in class and/or via email.

All class meetings are on Wed., 4:00-7:20 p.m. Our craft book on poetry writing, *In the Palm of Your Hand* by Steve Kowit, is referred to below as Kowit. All reading assignments referred to by the name of the poet are located in your anthology, *Contemporary American Poetry*—we will also be reading the collection, *Face*, by Sherman Alexie, and assigned handouts.

Attendance at Robert Wrigley’s reading on 2/23 is required—submit a one-page “review” on Blackboard before the next class meeting, and let me know you are there at the reading.

1/4/12  
*Detail & Description/*  
Intro. to class. Review syllabus. Exercises.  
Writing workshop group schedule.  
Guidelines and sign up for student team presentations.

1/11/12  
*Image & Metaphor*  
Read for discussion: Chap 8 & 9 in Kowit and all poems by Li Young-Lee, Stanley Kunitz and Sharon Olds.  
In-class exercises.  
Practice workshop.  
Student presentation on Sharon Olds.  
Due: Introduction Poems, art poems and Group 1 poems for workshop: choice of Poem 12 assignment on pg. 77 in Kowit OR Poem 15, 16 or 17 assignment on Pgs. 85-87 in Kowit—and Group 2 exercises. (3 poems total)

1/18/12  
*Line Breaks and Rhythm*  
Read for discussion: Chap 21 in Kowit, all poems by Gary Snyder, Sylvia Plath & Robert Creeley.  
Student presentation on Sylvia Plath.  
Workshop discussion of Group 1 poems (all students write comments)  
Due: Group 2 poems for workshop: choice of Poem 12 assignment on pg. 77 in Kowit OR Poem 15, 16 or 17 assignment on Pgs. 85-87 in Kowit—and Group 1 exercises. (1 poem)

1/25/12  
*The Importance of Revision*  
Read for discussion: Chaps 5 & 6 in Kowit, all poems by Rita Dove, Naomi Shihab Nye & Robert Hass.  
Revision discussion.  
Exercises.
Student presentation on Naomi Shihab Nye.

Workshop discussion of Group 2 poems. (all students write comments)

Due: Take-home Quiz #1 and Group 1 poems for workshop: choice of Poem 39 or 41 assignment on pgs. 178-179 in Kowit—and Group 2 exercises. (1 quiz and 1 poem)

2/1/12

*Sound & Music*

Read for discussion: Chap 7 in Kowit and all poems by W.S. Merwin, C.D. Wright & Charles Wright.

In-class exercises.

Student presentation on C.D. Wright.

Workshop discussion of Group 1 poems. (all students write comments)

Due: Group 2 poems for workshop: choice of Poem 39 or 41 assignment on pgs. 178-179 in Kowit—and Group 1 exercises. (1 poem)

2/8/12

*Form~tools for your toolbelt*

Read for discussion: Chap 19 in Kowit and all poems by Elizabeth Bishop, Richard Wilbur & Marilyn Nelson plus FORMS HANDOUT.

Student presentation on Elizabeth Bishop.

Workshop discussion of Group 2 poems. (all students write comments)

Due: Take-home quiz #2 and Group 1 poems for workshop: choice of ghazal, villanelle or sestina (see handout)—and Group 2 exercises. (1 quiz and 1 poem)

2/15/12

*Persona & Voice*

Read for discussion: All poems by Ai, Lucille Clifton AND *Face* by Sherman Alexie (whole book!)

Student presentation on Ai.

Workshop discussion of Group 1 poems.

Due: Group 2 poems for workshop: choice of ghazal, villanelle or sestina (see handout)—(1 poem).

2/22/12

Read for discussion: review *Face* by Sherman Alexie, Robert Wrigley handout and PROSE POEM HANDOUT.
Robert Wrigley Poem Discussion.
Student presentation on Sherman Alexie.

Workshop discussion of Group 2 poems.

Due: Prose poems AND Group 1 & Group 2 poems for workshop: choice of Poem 43, 44, 45, 46, 47 or 48 assignment on pgs 191-193 in Kowit (2 poems).

2/23 REQUIRED ROBERT WRIGHT POETRY READING
7:30 p.m. MUSIC BUILDING

2/29/12 NO CLASS—Prof. Whitcomb at AWP conference.

3/7/12 Portfolio Guidelines.

Super Workshop-- discussions of Prose poems and Group 1 Group 2 assignment poems.

Take-home Quiz #3

Portfolios due during exam week—date to follow.