ENG 365: POETRY WRITING  
Professor Katharine Whitcomb  
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**Required Texts:**

Richard Hugo  
*The Triggering Town*

Steve Kowit  
*In the Palm of Your Hand: The Poet's Portable Workshop*

Poulin & Waters, eds.  
*Contemporary American Poetry, 8th Edition*.

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

**Course Description:**  
Hello poets! Welcome to your online poetry writing workshop. The important focus of this class is the Workshop Discussion, 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 present a detailed discussion of the work of a poet from our anthology to the class, 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:**

Three reading quizzes.

PowerPoint presentation 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 week.

Written and verbal comments on your workshop peers’ poetry.

All weekly assignments, exercises and deadlines.
Major Projects and Grading:

3 reading quizzes (average score) 15% of grade
PowerPoint presentation on assigned anthology poem 20% of grade
Workshop Poems Posts 20% of grade
Workshop Comments Posts 15% of grade
Participation—weekly check-in with Professor 5% of grade
Final poetry portfolio (10 revised poems and narratives) 25% of grade

There will be NO acceptance of late exercises or assignments. These will be counted as missing. Make sure to email me if you are sick BEFORE you miss an assignment, so that you will not be given a zero. If at any time you would like to discuss your progress in the course with me, please email me and we can conference.

**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.

**NOTES:**

I do not grade poems or exercises turned in during the quarter; however, I will be posting comments on all your work. You will receive points for turning following the prompts and turning in your drafts on time. Your poems will only be graded in your final portfolio after you have posted them in workshop discussion and worked on revising them. Revision is the most important learning process in this class.

**The assigned poems during the quarter will include:**

- two metaphor poems
- two line break poems
- a syllabic poem
- a poem in form (ghazal, villanelle or sestina)
- a political poem
a prose poem
two poems developed from your Writing Exercises

This syllabus, other materials and announcements will be available on this class website.

All instances of academic dishonesty or plagiarism in this class will not be tolerated. If you plagiarize work, you will fail the class and be reported.

Students with disabilities who wish to set up academic adjustments in this class should send me their “Accommodation Request” as soon as possible. We will then discuss how the approved adjustments will be implemented in this class. Students without this, but in need of requesting services should contact Disability Services @ cds@cwu.edu or 509-963-1202 to set up services.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS:
This syllabus is subject to change; changes will be announced on Canvas.

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 (referred to as CAP)— and assigned handouts.

Intro. Week
4/2-4/6/14 Getting Started—Familiarize Yourself with ENG 365: Poetry Writing Online
Canvas Site, Course Design, Textbooks, Syllabus and Weekly Instructions. Sign up for slot for your PowerPoint presentation. Guidelines for PowerPoint presentation. Workshop Discussion Preview. Get a head start on your reading.

Week One
4/7-4/13/14 Detail & Description
Writing Exercises for your notebook: Practice exercises on pg. 76 in Kowit.
Read: Chap 8 in Kowit and The Triggering Town (Chapters 1-6).
Post: Introduction Poem (Wed.).
Due: Check-in with Professor (Wed.).
Due: Poem 12 Assignment on pg. 77 in Kowit (Sun.).

Week Two
Image & Metaphor
4/14-4/20
Read: Chap 9 in Kowit and all poems by Li Young-Lee, Stanley Kunitz and Sharon Olds in CAP.
Post: Comments for Practice Workshop (Wed.).
Due: Check-in with Professor (Wed.).
Post: Student PowerPoint presentations on Sharon Olds and Li Young-Lee (Wed.) and student comments (Sun.).
Post: Poem 14 or 15 Assignment on Pgs. 84-86 in Kowit (Sun.).

Week Three
4/21-4/27
*Line Breaks and Rhythm*
Read: Chap 21 in Kowit, all poems by Gary Snyder, Sylvia Plath & Robert Creeley in CAP.
Post: Discussion Comments on Peer Workshop Poems 14 or 15 (Wed.).
Due: Check-in with Professor (Wed.).
Post: Student PowerPoint presentations on Sylvia Plath and Robert Creeley (Wed.) and student comments (Sun.).
Post: Poem 16 or 17 assignment on Pgs. 86-87 in Kowit (Sun.).

Week Four
4/28-5/4
*The Importance of Revision*
Read: Chaps 5 & 6 in Kowit, all poems by Rita Dove, Naomi Shihab Nye & Robert Hass in CAP.
Post: Discussion Comments on Peer Workshop Poems 16 or 17 (Wed.).
Due: Check-in with Professor (Wed.).
Post: Student PowerPoint presentations on Naomi Shihab Nye and Robert Hass (Wed.) and student comments (Sun.).
Due: Quiz #1 and Post: Poem 39 Assignment on pg. 178 in Kowit (Sun.).

Week Five
5/5-5/11
*Sound & Music*
Writing Exercises: “An Exercise in Describing Scenes. . .” exercise on pg. 61-
63 in Kowit.

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

Post: Discussion Comments on Peer Workshop Poem 39 (Wed.).

Due: Check-in with Professor (Wed.).

Post: Student PowerPoint presentations on C.D. Wright and W.S. Merwin (Wed.) and student comments (Sun.).

Post: Poem 41 Assignment on pg. 179 in Kowit (Sun.).

Week Six
5/12-5/18
Form~tools for your toolbelt
Writing Exercises: “An Exercise in Rhyme” exercise on pg. 163 in Kowit.

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

Post: Discussion Comments on Peer Workshop Form Poem (Wed.).

Due: Check-in with Professor (Wed.).

Post: Student PowerPoint presentations on Elizabeth Bishop and Marilyn Nelson (Wed.) and student comments (Sun.).

Due: Quiz #2 and Post: Workshop Form Poem: choice of ghazal, villanelle or sestina (see handout)—(Sun.).

Week Seven
5/19-5/25
Persona & Voice / The Body Politic
Writing Exercises: Persona exercise.

Read: Chap 22 in Kowit, all poems by Ai, Yusef Komunyakaa and Lucille Clifton in CAP.

Post: Discussion Comments on Peer Workshop Form Poem (Wed.).

Due: Check-in with Professor (Wed.).

Post: Student PowerPoint presentations on Ai and Lucille Clifton (Wed.) and student comments (Sun.).

Post: Workshop “Political” Poem—choice of Poem 43, 44, 45, 46 or 47 Assignment on pgs. 191-193 in Kowit (Sun.).
Week Eight  
5/26-6/1  
*The Prose Poem*

Portfolio Guidelines.

Read: Chapter 3 in Kowit, all poems by Robert Bly in *CAP and PROSE POEM HANDOUT*.

Post: Discussion Comments on Peer Workshop “Political” Poem (Wed.).

Due: Check-in with Professor (Wed.).

Post: Student PowerPoint presentations on Robert Bly (Wed.) and student comments (Sun.).

Post: Workshop Prose Poem—Poem 4 Assignment on pg. 26 in Kowit (Sun.).

Week Nine  
6/2-6/8  
*Your Triggering Town—where is it?*

Writing Exercises: A Sense of Place exercise.

Read: All poems by Richard Hugo in *CAP, The Triggering Town* (Chapters 7-9).

Post: Discussion Comments on Peer Workshop Prose Poem (Wed.).

Due: Check-in with Professor (Wed.).

Post: Student PowerPoint presentations on Richard Hugo (Wed.) and student comments (Sun.).

Due: Quiz #3

Exam Week--Portfolios due Tues., 6/10/2014.