

Advanced Poetry Workshop

Hartwick College
ENGL 412 (4 Credits)
Spring 2019

Dr. Bradley J. Fest
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TuTh 10:10 am – 12:10 pm, Clark Hall 352
Office Hours: WF 11:00 am – 12:00 pm
and by appointment

Required Texts

Baudelaire, Charles. *Les Fleurs du Mal*. 1857. Translated by Richard Howard, David R. Godine, 1983.
Clarke, Robin. *Lines the Quarry*. Omnidawn, 2013.
Hayes, Terrance. *American Sonnets for My Past and Future Assassin*. Penguin, 2018.
Hejinian, Lyn. *My Life and My Life in the Nineties*. 1980. Wesleyan UP, 2013.
O'Hara, Frank. *Meditations in an Emergency*. Grove, 1957.
Plath, Sylvia. *Ariel: The Restored Edition*. 1965. Harper Perennial, 2005.
Williams, William Carlos. *Spring and All*. 1923. New Directions, 2011.

Additional texts to be covered can be found on the calendar below. These will be available on D2L under “Content Browser: Readings.” See endnotes for bibliographic citations.

Recommended Materials

I recommend acquiring a folder dedicated exclusively to this course. Students may also want to set aside roughly ten dollars for printing costs if they go beyond their allotted quota.¹

Prerequisites

The successful completion of ENGL 213 Introduction to Creative Writing and ENGL 312 Intermediate Poetry Workshop are prerequisites.

Catalog Description

Practice in writing poetry. Students will be expected to produce a manuscript of finished poems. Workshop and conference. Offered alternate years. (EL)

Course Description and Purpose

In this advanced workshop, students will continue to hone and practice the art of poetry. Building upon the work done in Introduction to Creative Writing and Intermediate Poetry Workshop, and those courses' focus on *craft* and *form*, students in Advanced Poetry Workshop will continue honing their verse in a rigorous, intensive writing workshop. This course will encourage students to think of themselves seriously *as writers*. So in addition to workshopping individual pieces, this course will approach writing as a practice of *publication*. Over the course

¹ Students who have any difficulties with printing should feel free to speak with me to work something out.

of the semester, students will submit their work to literary magazines and will complete a chapbook of poems for their final project.

As the course's focus will be on the composition of not just individual poems, but a sustained *collection* of poetry, readings will focus on important book-length works (collections, long poems, and sequences) from the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries. Course readings include Charles Baudelaire, Robin Clarke, Terrance Hayes, Lyn Hejinian, Frank O'Hara, Sylvia Plath, William Carlos Williams, and others. The course will also include a number of readings in *poetics*—that is, critical and theoretical writing about poetry—in order to give students a better understanding of the important conversations about poetry that have taken place during the past 150 years. This is the most advanced poetry course offered at Hartwick College, so I will approach its participants—in terms of both my expectations and the feedback I provide—as students who may become professional writers.

How This Course Works

This course will function much like Intermediate Poetry Workshop. During most class periods, the first half of class will be devoted to discussing that day's reading, with the second half devoted to a workshop. Students will again be assigned primary readers. The main differences: students will briefly workshop project proposals and submissions for publication, and, during the second half of the course, writers being workshopped will be able to preface the conversation with their own with comments and concerns about their writing.

Learning Outcomes

In addition to skills of literary and poetic analysis, students in this course will: 1) learn to identify more advanced creative writing techniques; 2) learn to read as writers and poet-critics, and use this knowledge to more successfully write and discuss lengthier works of poetry; and 3) learn to produce a poetry manuscript that demonstrates an understanding of literary and formal conventions while also articulating a personal artistic vision.

Other Course Requirements and Assignments

Texts—Students will read, be prepared to discuss, and bring to class the assigned texts and their peers' work for each class meeting. Additional readings for the course can be found on D2L and should be printed out. Failure to bring the assigned text(s) to class will count as an absence. All students must obtain the edition of the texts specified above. Unless individual arrangements are made with the instructor, electronic versions of the texts will not be permitted.

Chapbook—Students will submit a publication-ready *chapbook* of poems by the end of the semester. Students will compose and workshop a project proposal for this chapbook, spend the semester composing a manuscript, and workshop rough final drafts of their chapbook in small groups during the final week of class. Chapbooks should display an awareness of the various issues that were discussed in class and thoughtful revisions based on comments provided during workshop and in written feedback. They should also show awareness and thought about what it means to assemble a manuscript of poetry, including attention to its layout and design. More details about this project will follow.

Weekly Poetry Assignments—Students will write poems throughout the semester, turning in one to two poems per week. Rather than responding to individual assignment prompts, students will

write poems based on their initial project proposal. Individual poems will not be graded, though they will be returned to students with my comments after each workshop. For logistical reasons, poems will not be accepted late. Failure to turn in a poem will cost a student 7% off their overall chapbook grade. The due dates for the poems are below. All poems *must* be handed in as hard copies in class to me and to each of your peers; they must also be uploaded to D2L. On D2L, there will be a link under “Discussion” to upload your poems.

Submission to Journals—Later in the semester, students will draft and workshop a cover letter and poetry submission, and then submit their work to at least three literary journals. Failure to turn in a draft of their submission will cost a student 10% off their overall chapbook grade, as will failing to provide evidence that students submitted their work to at least three journals. The due dates for drafts of submissions and providing evidence of having submitted work are below. The assignment for submitting work will be provided later in the semester.

D2L Uploads—To make it easier to find someone’s writing on D2L, save all files in the following format: Last Name, First Name--Poem ##. For example: Fest, Bradley--Poem 01.

Blog—Students will be writing a collective blog with two aspects. 1) Students will post required reading responses every week. Responses will be a minimum of 250 words, will receive full, half, or no credit, and will not be accepted late. I will post these grades to D2L and drop the lowest two grades. (20% of overall grade.) 2) Students should participate on the blog beyond the weekly required responses. Students can respond to their peers’ reading responses, post additional thoughts, or provide links to content related to the course. This aspect of the blog will be assessed holistically. (5% of overall grade.) Students should be signed up and ready to participate by Wednesday, February 6. See the Blog Assignment for more specific details. The blog can be found at: <https://engl412spring2019.wordpress.com>.

Participation—Because this is an advanced workshop and it will be a relatively small class, engaged and rigorous participation is essential. I am approaching this class as a *seminar*: a collective inquiry that will privilege the thinking, reading, and writing of its participants. Students are expected to be well prepared for class and to actively participate. Students should also make sure to read and comment on their peers’ work. If students consistently fail to provide comments on their peers’ work, their participation grade will be negatively affected. Since this class will rely heavily on student participation, your attendance is a necessity. More than three absences will negatively affect your overall grade and can be grounds for failure, in which case you may want to consider withdrawing from the course and taking it again under better circumstances. Anyone observed using their mobile phone or another digital device during class, whether I call attention to it or not, will be marked absent for the day. The use of laptops or tablets in this course is not permitted unless arrangements are made with the instructor.

Grading

Participation: 20%

Primary Reader Responses: 5%

Weekly Reading Responses (12 total): 20%

Blog: 5%

Chapbook: 50%

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism is a serious and intellectually inexcusable offense, and it will simply not be tolerated. It will result in an immediate zero for the assignment and I will file a formal charge with the Office of Academic Affairs; plagiarism could also result in more serious action, including a student failing the class completely and being suspended from the College. *Plagiarism includes: lack of proper citations when quoting from someone else's work, representing someone else's work as your own, and knowingly allowing one's work to be submitted by someone else.* This should ultimately be a fun and stimulating class, and there is absolutely no reason for you not to take advantage of being able to do your own work and discuss it in an academic environment. Violations of Hartwick's Academic Honesty policy are not limited to plagiarism—for example, cheating and submitting a paper to more than one class would constitute violations—so students should familiarize themselves with Hartwick College's policy on academic honesty at: <https://www.hartwick.edu/academics/student-services/academic-affairs/academic-policies/>.

Academic Adjustments and/or Modifications

Students must present me with an updated Academic Plan Letter for the Spring 2019 semester in order to be eligible for academic adjustments. Hartwick College is committed to upholding and maintaining all aspects of the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If a student with a disability wishes to request academic adjustments, they should contact Lara Sanford, Director of AccessAbility Services, at sanfordl@hartwick.edu or AccessAbilityServices@hartwic.edu. AccessAbility Services is located on the fifth floor of Yager Library in the Center for Student Success. Any information regarding a student's disability will remain confidential. Requests for academic adjustments should be made as early as possible.

The Writing Center

Located in Clark Hall 230, the Writing Center offers events, courses, and one-on-one tutorials for students. Tutors can help you with your writing for classes or any writing project, and can teach you strategies for organizing, editing, and revising your writing. You can meet with a tutor once or regularly over the course of the semester; the Writing Center will also respond to queries via email. In some cases, I may send you to the Writing Center for help on a particular problem; otherwise, you can seek assistance on your own. Their services are free. You can browse the services at <https://www.hartwick.edu/academics/student-services/writing-center/>, or make an appointment by emailing wcenter@hartwick.edu or calling (607) 431-4910.

E-mail Communication Policy

Each student is issued a College e-mail address (username@hartwick.edu) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the College for official communication with students. I will also communicate with students via their hartwick.edu address. Students are expected to regularly read e-mail sent to this account. Failure to read and react to communications from either the College or from me in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to communications sent to their Hartwick e-mail address.

Special Assistance

Hartwick offers free counseling for students who are experiencing personal or emotional difficulties. The Counseling Center is located in the Perrella Health Center and offers psychological services and sexual assault services. Appointments can be made Monday to Friday, 9 am – 5 pm, by calling 607-431-4420 or emailing counselingcenter@hartwick.edu.

Mandatory Reporting

Faculty at Hartwick College are considered *responsible employees* and are legally required to report to Hartwick's Title IX Coordinator, Traci Perrin (607-431-4293; perrint@hartwick.edu), incidents of sexual harassment or violence that they witness or are advised have occurred. Exceptions to this requirement include when incidents of sexual violence are communicated by a student during a classroom discussion, in a writing assignment for a class, or as part of a university-approved research project. For more information, visit: <https://www.hartwick.edu/about-us/employment/human-resources/title-ix/>.

Statement on Classroom Recording

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion, or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

Calendar²

- 2.5 Syllabus
Introductions
T. S. Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”¹
- 2.7 **Reading Response 1 Due to Blog**
Friedrich Nietzsche, “On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense”²
Charles Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du Mal* (pp. xix–xxiii, 3–58)
- 2.12 T. S. Eliot, “Tradition and the Individual Talent”³
Charles Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du Mal* (pp. 58–117)
- 2.14 **Reading Response 2 Due to Blog**
Walter Benjamin, “Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century” and “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire”⁴
Charles Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du Mal* (pp. 121–76)
- 2.19 **Project Proposal Due**
William Carlos Williams, *Spring and All* (pp. vi–30)
- 2.21 **Reading Response 3 Due to Blog**
Wallace Stevens, “The Noble Rider and the Sound of Words”⁵
William Carlos Williams, *Spring and All* (pp. 31–62)
Workshop Project Proposals
- 2.26 **Poems 1 and 2 Due**
Harry Levin, “What Was Modernism?”⁶
William Carlos Williams, *Spring and All* (pp. 63–93)
- 2.28 **Reading Response 4 Due to Blog**
Sylvia Plath, *Ariel* (pp. xi–32)
Workshop
- 3.5 **Poems 3 and 4 Due**
Sylvia Plath, *Ariel* (pp. 33–61)
Workshop
- 3.7 **Reading Response 5 Due to Blog**
Martin Heidegger, “What Are Poets For?”⁷
Workshop
- 3.12 **Poem 5 Due**
Sylvia Plath, *Ariel* (pp. 62–90)
Workshop
- 3.14 **Reading Response 6 Due to Blog**
Frank O’Hara, *Meditations in an Emergency* (pp. 1–27)

² Please note that additional readings or handouts may be assigned when appropriate and that the schedule is subject to change. For ease with citation, bibliographic endnotes to the readings available on D2L (anything with an endnote rather than page numbers) have been provided below in MLA style.

Workshop

- 3.19 **Poem 6 Due**
Frank O'Hara, *Meditations in an Emergency* (pp. 28–52)
Marjorie Perloff, “The Aesthetic of Attention”⁸
Workshop
- 3.21 **Reading Response 7 Due to Blog**
Robin Clarke, *Lines the Quarry* (pp. 9–39)
Workshop
- 3.26 No Class, Spring Break
3.28 No Class, Spring Break
- 4.2 **Poem 7 Due**
Robin Clarke, *Lines the Quarry* (pp. 41–56)
Workshop
- 4.4 **Reading Response 8 Due to Blog**
Robin Clarke, *Lines the Quarry* (pp. 59–93)
Workshop
- 4.9 **Poem 8 Due**
Submission Draft Due
Ron Silliman, “The New Sentence”⁹
Workshop
- 4.11 **Reading Response 9 Due to Blog**
Lyn Hejinian, “Barbarism”¹⁰
Lyn Hejinian, *My Life* (pp. 3–33)
Workshop Submission Drafts
- 4.16 **Poem 9 and 10 Due**
Lyn Hejinian, *My Life* (pp. 34–67)
Alicia Ostriker, “Beyond Confession”¹¹
Workshop
- 4.18 **Reading Response 10 Due to Blog**
Charles Bernstein, “Artifice of Absorption”¹²
Workshop
- 4.23 **Poem 11 Due**
Evidence of Three Submissions (Minimum) Due
Lyn Hejinian, *My Life* (pp. 68–100)
Workshop
- 4.25 **Reading Response 11 Due to Blog**
Erica Hunt, “Notes for an Oppositional Poetics”¹³
Workshop
- 4.30 **Poem 12 Due**

Terrance Hayes, *American Sonnets for My Past and Future Assassin* (pp. 5–30)
Workshop

5.2 **Reading Response 12 Due to Blog**

Listen to Rachel Zucker’s interview with Terrance Hayes,

<https://www.commonpodcast.com/home/2017/1/20/episode-18-terrance-hayes>¹⁴

Terrance Hayes, *American Sonnets for My Past and Future Assassin* (pp. 31–60)
Workshop

5.7 **Draft of Chapbook Due**

Terrance Hayes, *American Sonnets for My Past and Future Assassin* (pp. 61–82)

5.9 Small Group Workshop of Chapbook Draft

5.14 **9:30 – 11:00 am | Chapbooks Due and Class Wrap-Up: Group Reading**

Endnotes

¹ Eliot, T. S. “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.” 1915. *Collected Poems 1909–1962*. Harcourt, 1963, pp. 3–7.

² Nietzsche, Friedrich. “On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense.” 1873. *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, translated and edited by Ronald Speirs, edited by Raymond Geuss, Cambridge UP, 1999, pp. 139–53.

³ Eliot, T. S. “Tradition and the Individual Talent.” 1919. *The Sacred Wood and Major Early Essays*. Dover, 1998, pp. 27–33.

⁴ Benjamin, Walter. “Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century” and “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire.” 1935, 1939. *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire*, translated by Howard Eiland, edited by Michael W. Jennings, Belknap P of Harvard UP, 2006, pp. 30–45, 170–210.

⁵ Stevens, Wallace. “The Noble Rider and the Sound of Words.” 1942. *The Necessary Angel: Essays on Reality and the Imagination*. Vintage, 1951, pp. 3–36.

⁶ Levin, Harry. “What Was Modernism?” *Massachusetts Review*, vol. 1, no. 4, Summer 1960, pp. 609–30.

⁷ Heidegger, Martin. “What Are Poets For?” 1936. *Poetry, Language, Thought*, translated by Albert Hofstadter, Perennial Classics, 2001.

⁸ Perloff, Marjorie. “The Aesthetic of Attention.” 1977. *Frank O’Hara: Poet among Painters*, 2nd ed., U of Chicago P, 1998, pp. 1–30.

⁹ Silliman, Ron. “The New Sentence.” 1977. *The New Sentence*, Roof, 2003, pp. 63–93.

¹⁰ Hejinian, Lyn. “Barbarism.” 1995. *The Language of Inquiry*, U of California P, pp. 318–36.

¹¹ Ostriker, Alicia. “Beyond Confession: The Poetics of Postmodern Witness.” *American Poetry Review*, vol. 30, no. 2, March/April 2001, pp. 35–39.

¹² Bernstein, Charles. “Artifice of Absorption.” 1987. *A Poetics*, Harvard UP, 1992, pp. 9–89.

¹³ Hunt, Erica. “Notes for an Oppositional Poetics.” *The Politics of Poetic Form: Poetry and Public Policy*, edited by Charles Bernstein, Roof, 1990, pp. 197–212.

¹⁴ Zucker, Rachel. “Episode 18: Terrance Hayes.” *Commonplace: Conversations with Poets and Other People*, 20 Jan. 2017, <https://www.commonpodcast.com/home/2017/1/20/episode-18-terrance-hayes>.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Jake Wolff for some of the language used in the “Learning Outcomes” section of this syllabus.