

Dr. Kathryn Jacobs
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Class Hours: MWF 9:00-9:50
Office Hours: MWF 12:00-12:50

Syllabus English 315.001 Creative Writing Spring, 2019

January 14 Introduction to Creative Writing, Poetry

January 16 **BALLADS, Old and New.** read Edward, Edward (link here)

<https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/edward-edward-a-scottish-ballad/>

Marlowe's Passionate Shepherd and Raleigh's The Nymph's Reply; Dudley Randall's Ballad of Birmingham.

January 18 **1 WRITE YOUR OWN BALLAD (no f2f class).**

January 21 **MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY (no f2f class).**
POST YOUR BALLAD ONLINE by Midnight. (Go to MyLeo Brightspace, English 315. Then find Manage Files and upload. I find this under Course Administration, Site Resources, Manage Files. But I've never seen what students see, so look around).

January 23 **Read All Ballads posted online before class.** If possible Bring computer/tablet/phone to class with you, to access the poems in class. Alternatively, you may print the poems.

Participation: Critique in Groups

January 25 **Exercise.**

January 28 **2 Post a new ballad online by midnight,** using ballad meter; this one must be formal. **Alternative:** you may post a rewrite of the last one IF 1) at least 50% of it is completely new (a radical revision), and you have reshaped the *form* of the poem(**no f2f class**).

January 30 **Read All Ballads posted online before class.** If possible Bring computer/tablet/phone to class with you, to access the poems in class. Alternatively, you may print the poems.

Participation: Critique in Groups.

February 1 **Exercise.**

February 4 **Sonnets Old and New:** Shakespeare's Sonnet #20; Wordsworth's The World Is Too Much With Us; Shelley's Ozymandias. Frost's I have been One Acquainted With the Night; Robert Hayden; Those Winter Sundays.

February 6 **3 WRITE YOUR OWN SONNET and post by Midnight. (no f2f class).**
Note: Your sonnet must be 14 lines, metrical, and if possible, employ at least occasional rhymes; practice SOUND PATTERNS in other words. It may however be a "loose" sonnet. Inhabit the spirit of the form if at all possible.

February 8 **Read sonnets posted online before class.** If possible Bring computer/tablet/phone to class with you, to access the poems in class. Alternatively, you may print the poems.

Participation: Critique in Groups

February 11 **Exercise.**

February 13 **4 WRITE A BLANK VERSE POEM,** and post it by midnight. A blank verse poem is written in **iambic pentameter, no rhyme** (think Paradise Lost; a majority of Shakespeare is also written in blank verse). Length is flexible but aim for 12 - 35 lines. As you write, consider your caesuras (a caesura is punctuation within -- not at the end! -- of a line). Write a second version of your poem with *identical words and punctuation*, arranged in prose form, and post the prose form behind the poetic one, as page two. **(no f2f class).**

February 15 **Read blank verse posted online before class.** If possible Bring computer/tablet/phone to class with you, to access the poems in class. Alternatively, you may print the poems.

Participation: Critique in Groups, focusing especially on The Line and how shape changes the experience.

February 18 **Exercise: The White Square Letter Poem**
(Focusing on The Line, and aural sound patterns.)

February 20 **Bring to class** one poem **Aural Experience poem** that you did *not* write, and that you think is effective, read aloud. Be prepared to read it aloud, if asked.

Exercise: Bring in addition a brief, typed (half a page is fine) analysis of what makes this poem so effective, read aloud, being sure include examples. Your poem may include balanced repetitions, alliteration, rhyme, caesura, striking meter; you choose.

February 22 **5 Write a Free Verse Poem,** and post it by midnight. A free verse poem is a poem that is not defined by a genre: no rhyme, no inherent line length, etc. Sounds easy right? **Not At All!** Now that there are no rules, you have to justify every line; why did you stop with that word and not this other one; what sound patterns (or visual patterns, though that's harder) did you employ, and what is the relationship between your content and form? **Do NOT** simply write one line sentence per line. **(no f2f class).**

February 25 Read free verse posted online before class. If possible Bring computer/tablet/phone to class with you, to access the poems in class. Alternatively, you may print the poems.

Participation: Critique in Groups

February 27 Exercise.

ONLINE SECTION OF CLASS, WEEKS 8-10.

March 1 Put online a poem you like (not your own) in a genre you are willing to attempt later. I am willing to define genre widely here. For instance, you may bring an elegy, a pastoral, terza rima, an ode, a narrative, a ballad, poem in rhymed couplets, an epithalamium, a Petrarchan Sonnet, ...etc etc. Don't try epics; they're too long. and no limericks or very short forms either; for the purposes of this class I want at least 12 lines per poem. You may even pick poems that create their own forms; Donne for instance sometimes writes poetic paragraphs that seem random -- but each "paragraph" repeats that exact pattern of line lengths -- making harmony out of seeming chaos.

Participation: Write 2-3 paragraphs "teaching" this poem, taking its genre into consideration.

March 4 -10 6 Wednesday by midnight: Write a poem in the genre you chose, and post it for the class.

Exercise: By Saturday, midnight: pick one poem you've written this successful that you consider *least* successful, and say why. What were you trying to do, what worked, and what obstacles did you encounter? Once you've analyzed what worked and didn't work for that particular poem, start another paragraph and explain what motivates you to write poetry in general, and how it differs from writing fiction or essays or non-fiction (your choice, but choose a form you've had experience with). Aim for a one page essay here and **email it to me; this is not meant for the class as a whole.**

March 11-17 Wednesday by midnight: read, respond to, and post a response to half of your classmates' poems. Tell them what was most and least successful in your judgment, and why. If you were confused, say so and explain where. If you thought it incomplete, say that, and explain why. Etc. All good faith efforts will be credited.

Participation: By Saturday midnight: read and respond to the poems of the other half of the class.

March 18-22 SPRING BREAK

March 25-29 Revision: Two weeks ago you picked a poem in need of improvement, and said why.

Exercise: By Wednesday midnight, pick a STRATEGY for revision and explain it. You may for instance explain what you realize now that you didn't realize then; what confused you, or the problem you had figuring out where your poem was going -- and what you've learned. Or you may decide that you want a more ironic approach, and that you think you could achieve a more ironic effect if you wrote it in rhyming couplets.

The approach is up to you, but i need roughly 150 words (or more) explaining what you've learned between then and now. **Email this to me by Wednesday, before posting your poem.**

Exercise: By Saturday midnight, please send an actual revision to the entire class, attaching your strategy as page 2. You may revise or abbreviate your strategy for public consumption; the point is to help your classmates understand what you were trying to do.

April 1 **Villanelles:** Bishop's The Art; Dylan Thomas; Sylvia Plath's Mad Girl's Love Song

April 3 **7 WRITE A Villanelle**, and post it by midnight. Note that a Villanelle is built on judicious repetition; think of it as an alternating chorus. **(no f2f class).**

April 5 **Read villanelles posted online before class**. If possible Bring computer/tablet/phone to class with you, to access the poems in class. Alternatively, you may print the poems.

Participation: Critique in Groups

April 8 **Participation: Bring in 5 choruses** you like from obscure songs, poems, or play. If you are inspired, feel free to make up your own. Do NOT bring in choruses from Big Hits Everyone Will Recognize; if they know what's supposed to come next, that's all they'll think of. Bring in obscure choruses...

April 10 **8 Pick one** of the choruses brought in last class by someone else, and write a poem around it. You may any form you wish, as long as your chorus changes meaning with each usage. Use your imagination, and lets see how much variety we can get from the same chorus.

April 12 **Exercise.**

April 15 Now that you've revised the lesser known choruses, pick some famous lines from Shakespeare or a big hit popular song -- something everyone in your class is likely to recognize -- and MESS with it: make something totally different and original out of it. Post by Midnight please. **(no f2f class).**

April 17 **Read poems posted online before class**. If possible Bring computer/tablet/phone to class with you, to access the poems in class. Alternatively, you may print the poems.

Participation: Critique in Groups

April 19 **Oral Improvisation:** Auden's The Unknown Citizen; Whitman, I saw in Louisiana a Live-Oak Growing. Langston Hughes "I, too, Sing America.

April 22 **9 Write Your Own** Oral Improvisation and post it by midnight. You can choose your own style, but be prepared to explain it... **(no f2f class).**

April 24 **Read poems posted online before class**. If possible bring computer/tablet/phone to class with you, to access the poems in class. Alternatively, you may print the poems.

Participation: Critique in Groups

April 26 **Exercise**

April 29 **10 Pick one poem posted by someone else this semester, and radically rewrite it to make it your own. (no f2f class).**

May 1 **Participation: Read poems posted online before class.** If possible bring computer/tablet/phone to class with you, to access the poems in class. Alternatively, you may print the poems.

Critique in Groups

May 3rd **Catch Up**

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Course Description

Spring 2019

Course Description

Welcome to English 315. As most of you know, Creative Writing is a genre course whose focus varies from semester to semester. The last creative writing course focused on short stories, so this one will focus on poetry.

Most undergraduates writing poetry (sometimes for the first time) focus their attention chiefly on content: what do you want to say. How an audience *reads* poetry however is almost always defined by their expectations, and those in turn are typically defined by their experiences. Today for instance most of the poetry people experience from day to day is sung poetry: lyrics set to music. In this sense, modern poetry has reverted back to its roots: in the middle ages -- the days of minstrels, bards and troubadours -- most poetry was likewise performed. Nowadays we tend to think of poems as something read from anthologies for English classes. In fact however you probably listen to far more poetry than you read.

Poetry then is predominantly an aural experience in our culture. What sort of expectations does that set up among modern audiences? Try reading a few dozen song lyrics on the internet. If you do this, one of the first things you will discover is that the same song may be transcribed in several different ways; after all most song lyrics on the net are set down not by the authors but randomly skilled individuals. In this too however, modern poetry has reverted to its roots in The Oral Tradition. In this tradition, different performers would feel free to add, subtract, or otherwise subtly vary the songs they memorized, depending on the audience's reactions (Shakespeare for instance complains in Hamlet about clowns who refuse to limit themselves to the lines set down for them). In the oral tradition, poems may be fixed or fluid. In which case, a read-poem is simply the record of one performance.

So, poetry is a heard-experience. What features tend to recur in your favorite lyrics? Choruses are one common feature; a particular set of lines may recur at set intervals. This is a form of judicious repetition, something we will experiment with later this semester. You will also notice that **meter** predominates in sung poetry (meter is a pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables). Not all lines will fit the pattern established however. Try comparing the aural version to the written one, focusing particularly on metrical variations. Notice how the singer squeezes several syllables into one note when the line is long, or stretches out the syllables of short ones? This is a way to "regularize" the heard experience.

Finally, you will almost certainly notice a whole lot of rhyme in song lyrics. Some songs rhyme throughout while others rhyme only in the chorus or in set sections; rhyme is not an invariable feature of sung poetry. It is very common however, and this is something that English teachers forget when

they focus on "The American Tradition" of free-verse. In fact, the traditions of read and heard poetry have diverged widely in the last century. In fact, as the so-called Modernists (i.e. Eliot, Pound, Auden) jettisoned external form, sung poetry however continued to use rhyme and meter, and to compose ballads.

This class therefore will try to introduce students to both the written tradition of poetry, and the aural traditions preserved intact since the middle ages. To start with, you will read and write ballads. If I can arrange it, you will also hear some. Definitely, we will focus on genre-expectations: what have ballads done in the past, what do audiences expect, and how does the 4-beat measure of Western sung music tend to reinforce tetrameter (4 stresses per line) in written lyrics?

In order to experience the written-tradition of poetry that began with the Gutenberg Press however, I will also ask you to write pentameter (5 stresses per line). Since the Renaissance, pentameter has been the dominant line in English. Most of Shakespeare's plays for instance make heavy use of blank verse (pentameter without rhyme). Milton likewise wrote his epics in blank verse. Meanwhile, rhymed poems like sonnets were also written almost entirely in pentameter. So dominant was blank verse that Eliot originally wrote *The Wasteland* in that form -- and then jettisoned it. I have read so-called "sonnets" that likewise jettison pentameter. Even then however, it is impossible to understand the experiments they composed until you understand the **expectation** of pentameter that they violated.

Course Objectives

The purpose of this course then is to help students write poetry with an understanding of the genre they have adopted. This course will introduce students to both the written tradition of poetry in the English language, and the oral tradition continued in sung poetry.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will learn to recognize and practice poetic genres like the ballad, the sonnet, The villanelle, blank verse and free verse.
2. Students will learn to critique poems by examining the ways in which they adhere to or judiciously violate the expectations of a given poetic genre.

Grading Criteria

10 Poems, 6 points each (60%)

12 Participations, 10 of which are required. 2 points each (20%)

11 Exercises, 10 of which are required, 2 points each (20%)

Extra Credit: extra participation or exercise credits may earn an additional 2 points each.

Grading Criteria, Elaborated

This class is divided between creative work, and critical analysis: 60% of the grade is based on your creative work, and 40% on your critiques and analysis.

Poetry Grades: all students who give a "good faith effort" will receive a minimum of 4 of points. Poems that reflect *in their composition* an understanding of genre criteria will earn no less than 5 points.
Poems that show mastery of genre will earn 6 points.

Participation and Exercise grades: Students who actively participate throughout the class will earn 2 points. Likewise, students who complete exercises -- whether out of class or in them -- will likewise earn 2 points.

Students who are present for only part of the class or otherwise fail to completely participate will earn just 1 point.

Likewise, students whose exercises are cursory or incomplete will earn just 1 point.

Policy Statements

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the Student Guidebook.

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/documents/studentGuidebook.pdf>

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the Attendance webpage and Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01.

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

ADA Statement

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: Rebecca.Tuerk@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

Grievance Procedure

Students who have concerns regarding their courses should first address those concerns with the assigned instructor in order to reach a resolution. Students who are unsatisfied with the outcome of that conversation or have not been able to meet individually with their instructor, whether in-person, by email, by telephone, or by another communication medium, should then schedule an appointment with the Department Head or Assistant Department Head by completing a Student Grievance Form (available in the main office, HL 141). In the event that the instructor is the Department Head, the student should schedule a meeting with the Dean of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Humanities after following the steps outlined above; if the instructor is the Assistant Department Head, students should schedule a meeting with the Department Head. Where applicable, students should also consult University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.05 (“Student Appeal of Instructor Evaluation”).

Collection of Data for Measuring Institutional Effectiveness:

In order to measure the level of compliance with the university’s Institutional Effectiveness guidelines, throughout the semester, I will collect some of the ungraded texts you produce. The texts will be part of a portfolio created on your behalf and will be measured to ensure that our program “promotes practices that result in higher student academic achievement; an enhanced student experience; aligned and transparent decisions; and readily available information for improvement, accountability, and accreditation” (see “Department of Institutional Effectiveness.”)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutus/institutionalEffectiveness/default.aspx>). This is solely an assessment of program effectiveness and in no way affects students' course grades or GPAs.

Notice for Future Teachers

Teacher Certification Requirements

If you plan to teach in the public schools, the following information is important. As of Fall 1999, only the Department of Literature and Languages can generate the bar code approval forms for students taking certification exams in English, ESL, and Spanish. Students **MUST** meet with the appropriate Advisors to begin the process of gaining bar code approval. This process includes an evaluation (whether or not students are at risk for failing the certification exam) and workshops or tutorials. Department Advisors are:

ENGLISH Dr. Susan Stewart, HL 314, 903-886-5272
Susan.Stewart@tamuc.edu

ESL Dr. Hunter Hayes, HL 229, 886-5254
Hunter.Hayes@tamuc.edu

SPANISH Ms. Inma Lyons, HL 317, 886-5273
Inma_Lyons@tamuc.edu

Secondary TExES 8-12:

This course has assignments that cover three competencies from Domain I: Integrated Language Arts, Diverse Learners, And The Study Of English (#1-3); four competencies from Domain II: Literature, Reading Processes And Skills For Reading Literary And Nonliterary Texts (#4-7); and two competencies from Domain III: Written Communication (#8-9).

Students who have taken this course will:

understand and apply knowledge of relationships among the language arts and between the language arts and other aspects of their lives and learning; Understand the continuum of language arts skills and expectations for students in grades 8-12, as specified in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS); Understand relationships among reading, writing, speaking, listening, and complex thinking; understand how the expressive uses of language (speaking, representing, writing) and the receptive uses of language (listening, reading, viewing) influence one another.

1. understand the structure and development of the English language; know rules of grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, and capitalization in standard English and are able to identify and edit nonstandard usage in his or her own discourse and the discourse of others; know how purpose, audience, and register affect discourse.
2. understand reading processes and how to apply those processes; understand and promote reading as an active process of constructing meaning; understand reader response; know how text characteristics and purposes for reading determine the selection of reading strategies and teaches

students to apply skills and strategies; understand comprehension strategies to use before reading (for example, predicting, recalling prior knowledge), during reading (for example, note taking, mapping, paired reading), and after reading (for example, retelling, summarizing, responding); understand the role of social interaction in reading; know how reading experiences can enhance the understanding of and respect for diversity and increase knowledge of cultures.

3. understand reading skills and strategies for various types of nonliterary texts; demonstrate an understanding of the characteristics and uses of various types of research tools and information sources; understand steps and procedures for engaging in inquiry and research.
4. understand literary elements, genres, and movements and can demonstrate knowledge of a substantial body of literature; demonstrate knowledge of genres and their characteristics through analysis of literary texts; demonstrate knowledge of literary elements and devices, including ways in which they contribute to meaning and style, through analysis of literary texts; demonstrate knowledge of a substantial area of literature.
5. understand strategies for reading literary texts; demonstrate knowledge of various types of responses to literary texts (for example, experiential, aesthetic, pragmatic); know how to draw from wide reading in American literature; use technology to promote engagement in and comprehension of literature; know strategies for creating communities of readers and for promoting conversations about literature and ideas; understand strategies to use for analyzing and evaluating a variety of literary texts, both classic and contemporary; apply strategies to view literature as a source for exploring and interpreting human experience; apply effective strategies in exploring and discovering the personal and societal relevance of literature; understand relationships among literary works from various times and cultures; analyze how literary elements and devices contribute to meaning and synthesize and evaluate interpretations of literary texts.
6. understand writing as a recursive, developmental, integrative, and ongoing process; understand recursive stages in the writing process (for example, prewriting, drafting, conferencing, revising, editing, publishing, and how to provide effective feedback in all phases of the writing process; understand writing as a process that allows people to construct meaning, examine thinking, reflect, develop perspective, acquire new learning, and influence the world around them; apply writing conventions, including sentence and paragraph construction, spelling, punctuation, usage, and grammatical expression; apply criteria for evaluating their own written work and the writing of others; understand and promote the use of technology in all phases of the writing process and in various types of writing, including writing for research and publication.
7. understand effective writing and how to write effectively in a variety of forms and for various audiences, purposes, and contexts; understand the distinguishing features of various forms of writing (for example, reflective essay, autobiographical narrative, editorial, report, memorandum, summary/abstract, resume, play, short story, poem); apply skills and strategies for writing effectively in a variety of forms and for a variety of audiences, purposes, and contexts; understand and teaches how a writer's purpose and audience define appropriate language, writing style, and text organization; analyze the use of literary devices (for example, imagery, tone, dialogue, characterization, irony, figurative language) in writing; understand writing as a tool for inquiry, research, and learning; understand how to evaluate critically the sources they use for their writing; understands about plagiarism, academic honesty, and integrity as applied to written work and the presentation of information from different sources, including electronic sources; understand the importance of using acceptable formats for communicating research results and documenting

sources (for example, manuals of style such as *Modern Language Association Handbook* [MLA style]).

