

CRW 4311
Poetic Forms
Fall 2012 Tuesday/Thursday 11:00-12:20 BU 112
(3 credits)

Professor Becka McKay
Office: CU 320/DW 303L (Davie)
Office Hours: Tuesday 5:00 – 7:00 (Davie) Monday & Wednesday 12:00 – 2:00 (Boca) and by appointment
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Student Behavior Regulations

I. The president or approved designee shall have the authority to order any student to cease and desist any activity which in the president's or designee's judgment disrupts the orderly operation of the institution.

II. Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a serious breach of the academic honor code and is a form of theft. It means presenting the work of someone else as if it were your own – that is, without properly acknowledging the source. Consequences: Failing grade with special notation on transcript; upon second offense, expulsion. Please consult me if you are not sure about using and properly citing sources. For more information visit: http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/4.001_Code_of_Academic_Integrity.pdf.

From the Office for Students with Disabilities

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); students who require special accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) located in Boca – SU 133 (561.297.3880), in Davie – LA 240 (954.236.1222), in Jupiter – SR 117 (561.799.8585), or at Treasure Coast – JU 312 (772.873.3441), and follow all OSD procedures.

Required texts (available at the campus bookstore)

- *Rhyming Poems* (Baer)
- *The Making of a Poem* (Strand & Boland)
- *An Exaltation of Forms* (Finch & Varnes)

Course description

Poetry, like any art form, is meant to transform – to change the way we think about and experience the world. We must transform language so that it can transform us. When we write poetry, we use rhythm, musicality, imagery, and other poetic devices to create that essential, transformative language. Writing poetry in form – both traditional and untraditional – often requires us to use our imaginations and push ourselves creatively in ways we might not have otherwise done. In this course we will explore how to use form to create well-crafted poems. I hope that throughout the semester you will keep coming back to the question of transformation when you evaluate both your own work and the work of your classmates.

Requirements

Your final grade will be based on your participation in the class and on a portfolio of the poems you write over the course of the semester. Because revision is a key part of the writing process, I expect you to revise your work before handing in the final portfolio. (In other words, your portfolio grade is not automatically the sum of your assignment grades.)

I will hand out separate sheets with workshopping and grading guidelines. Please remember that the key to any successful workshop is being respectful and constructive with your critiques as well as being open to receiving constructive criticism.

Grades

Grading breaks down like this:

Class participation (*includes attendance and presentations*) 40%
Final portfolio 60%

Attendance:

- Attendance for the course is required. You are allowed a maximum of three excused absences. **More than three absences, for any reason, will result in a penalty in your final grade.**
- To receive credit for attendance, you must be **in class, with that day's assignment completed, and the assigned text with you (whether it is a book or printed out PDF)**. If you do not have a hard copy of that day's assigned reading with you, you will be assigned half an absence.
- Any session in which the student attends less than the full 80 minutes will count as half an absence. Texting or surfing the internet in class is not acceptable; **if you are using a cell phone during class, you will be asked to leave class and you will be assigned half an absence for that session.**
- Your final grade will be penalized one letter for each absence beyond the first three (that is, if your average is a B in the course but you have 4 absences, you will receive a B- as your final grade; if your average is a B but you have 5 absences, you will receive a C+). Students with more than six absences will receive an F for the course.

Format

Each week we will spend our Thursday sessions discussing the reading and learning the basics of a particular form. You will take turns presenting one of the poems from the week's reading to the class. We will then spend the following Tuesday discussing your attempts at that form. Every week by Monday at 9:00 p.m., you will post the poem you have written for that week's class on our Blackboard site, and I will create a packet and distribute it on Tuesday. **If you do not post your poem on time, you will receive a zero for that week and we will not workshop your poem – I will not accept late assignments, period.**

Presentations

When it is your turn to present a poem to the class, please follow these guidelines. Your presentations/discussions should be approximately 10-15 minutes.

- Read the poem aloud to the class.
- Explain how the poem follows the rules for its form – the rhyme scheme, meter, subject matter, etc. If there are places where the poem strays from the traditional rules for that form, please talk about those as well.
- Offer your thoughts on how the form functions in the poem. For example, are there particularly striking or unusual rhymes? If the poem has repetition, what effect does it have? Don't forget to bring other aspects of poetry into the conversation: imagery, metaphor/simile, musicality, etc.
- End your presentation by asking a question that will help start a discussion of the poem. This question can be related to any aspect of the poem. Feel free to return to any part of your presentation for your question.
- I encourage you to research the poem or the poet if you'd like to do so, but please acknowledge any sources that you consult, and keep in mind that this presentation should mostly be your own ideas about the poem.

Schedule (*This schedule is subject to change. Please come prepared to discuss the reading listed for that day.*)

August 21: Introductions. What is poetic form?

August 23: Meter and scansion; the elements of poetry (handout).

August 28: More on meter: Finch & Varnes pp.39-51, and some thoughts on rhyme.

August 30: Introduction to the sonnet: Strand & Boland pp. xiii – xxix, 55-72; Finch & Varnes pp. 297-301.

Presenters: _____

September 4: Your sonnets.

September 6: Introduction to the villanelle: Strand & Boland pp. 5-20; Finch & Varnes pp.314-324.

Presenters: _____

September 11: Your villanelles.

September 13: Introduction to the pantoum: Strand & Boland pp. 43-54; Finch & Varnes pp. 254-261.

Presenters: _____

September 18: Your pantoums.

September 20: Introduction to the sestina: Strand & Boland pp. 21-41; Finch & Varnes pp. 290-296.

Presenters: _____

September 25: Your sestinas.

September 27: Introduction to the ghazal: Finch & Varnes pp. 210-216 and handout.

Presenters: _____

October 2: Your ghazals. Introduction to terza rima. Finch & Varnes pp. 116-121 and handout.

Presenters: _____

October 4: NO CLASS (I'll be at a conference)

October 9: Your terza rimas.

October 11: Introduction to odes: Strand & Boland pp. 240-254 and handout.

Presenters: _____

October 16: Your odes.

October 18: Introduction to elegies and epithalamiums: Strand & Boland pp. 167-168, 172 (Jonson), 180-183 (Gray), 187-190 (Ransom and Auden) and handout.

Presenters (3): _____

October 23: Your elegies and epithalamiums.

October 25: Introduction to experimentation, part 1: the found poem (handout).

October 30: Your found poetry.

November 1: Introduction to experimentation, part 2: aleatory poetry. Finch & Barnes pp. 385-390 and handout.

November 6: Your aleatory poems.

November 8: Introduction to experimentation, part 3: Your turn (handout).

November 13: Your poems (your form of choice)

November 15: Your poems (your form of choice)

November 20: Discussing revisions (handout)

November 22: NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)

November 27:Discussing revisions

November 29: Portfolios due!

Our class exam period is Tuesday, December 4 at 10:30 a.m.