

LINN-BENTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE
6500 Pacific Blvd. SW, Albany, Oregon 97321-3755

WRITING 242, CREATIVE WRITING, POETRY

CRN 21444

Fall 2014

Section: B01 · T 2:30pm-3:50pm · BC-105

CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor: Patrick J. Misiti
Google Voice Phone: 541.264.5713

Offices: BC-102c (Benton Center); SSH-210 (Albany Campus)
E-mail: patrick.misiti@linnbenton.edu

BENTON CENTER OFFICE HOURS

Benton Center	Tuesday	12:00pm-1:00pm
	Thursday	12:00pm-1:00pm; 5:00pm-6:00pm
	Or by appointment	

REQUIRED TEXT

No Text. Supplemental materials will be provided to you as hardcopy or posted on my instructor webpage

MATERIALS/SUPPLIES NEEDED

A stapler
Paper and writing utensils
A folder for all drafts, handouts, and assignments
Access to a thesaurus and dictionary
Access to a word processor and printer
Access to the internet
A computer with the ability to open .pdf files (What are .pdf files? Ask me)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Creative writing workshops, including this one, are designed to help developing writers learn to better polish their work. We will learn terms, concepts, forms and purposes for poetry and all things poetic. We will read published work and works of poetic theory, but the majority of our class will be spent in group workshops, reading and discussing original creative works.

This course studies basic elements of poetry, types of poetry, uses for poetry and the process of creating poetry. It emphasizes fostering individual style. Note: May be repeated for up to six credits.

PREREQUISITE

College level writing and reading skills (WR 121) are strongly recommended for success in this course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Recognize how creating literature helps in understanding the human condition.
- Interpret one's own and other's writing through critical evaluation.
- Demonstrate how writing poetry enhances personal awareness and creativity.
- Write and speak confidently about their own and others' ideas.

KEY COURSE CONTENT

Poetic Concepts:

- Recognize how poetry helps student understand the human experience and find expression for the student's discoveries.
- Explore American and international forms and approaches.
- Discover the diversity of contemporary poets.
- Find ways to get poems off the page and on the stage.
- Discuss controversial topics.
- Study the elements of writing good poetry.

Poetic Issues:

- The structures and processes used to create poem's meaning.
- Traditional and experimental poetry
- The role of form, sound, figurative language and imagery in poetry.
- The poet's voice and intent.

- Revision and presentation of poetry
- The relationship of the poet to the reader, society, accessibility and ideological issues.

Poetic Skills:

- Connect poetry reading and writing to their own lives and share insights.
- Gain deeper insights into the art and craft of poetry.
- Try diverse approaches and forms so a poem can organically find the best expression.
- Foster individual style, voice and how to edit and critique.
- Encourage experimentation.
- Create a poetry portfolio and ways to perform poetry.
- Express the vision and voice of the poet in an approach that satisfies the poet and resonates with the reader or listener.
- Learn the basic poetic elements and read contemporary poets.
- Appreciate form, process, techniques and approaches needed to enjoy and write poetry.
- Individualized instruction helps each student to progress at a personal best rate.

WHAT IS A WORKSHOP CLASS?

The goal of workshops is always the same. The major goal is to improve the writer's ability to do three things: critique peer and published works, polish your own work, and project poetry to an audience. We will learn to articulate our ideas and assist peer with our constructive criticism. We will all grow as writers as we learn to balance our writing instincts with the suggestions in our peers' thoughtful constructive criticism. We will grow as orators and ambassador of creative writing as we learn to present poems and poetic concepts in formal and informal environments.

Our class will consist of the following elements

- Survey of forms, concepts, theories, publishers and published works of poetry—
In order to better critique, polish, and project poetry we will need to study the genre, its mechanics, and its many purposes and forms.
- Critiques and responding to constructive criticism—
Writers who can read peer work closely, articulate constructive praise and criticism of that work, use concrete example and support to help it polish, and keep the peer engaged and motivated are writers who will find endless success. Why is that? Because good habits in critiques of other writers work also develops good habits in self-critiques of our own work. It helps us learn to be more objective and push our own work further.

Similarly, writers who adopt workshops into their process and learn to react and respond positively to constructive critiques from peers are writers who find endless momentum. It's easier for a writer to push a work-in-progress forward with a few good critiques than it is for a writer to do so alone.

- Developing original poems and a poet's eye—
Writing is an important part of writing poetry. Yes. But finding inspiration, using form, tropes, schemes, and mechanics to help capture that inspiration, and learning to work through writing anxiety, writer's block, and computer brain (we'll talk about computer brain) is equally as important and challenging. This class will help polish and improve your writing, but it will also help you learn habits and methods that will help you view the world as a raw text, ripe for a poet. This is an intimate struggle—we are challenged by writing and inspiration to write in different ways—but is a shared struggle, too. We are all challenged. Workshops are great because we find strength in numbers as we address these challenges.

WHAT DOES A WORKSHOP CLASS LOOK LIKE?

Fill a room full of people who are interested in creating works of creative writing. Have a system in place, something that facilitates an exchange of original creative works between those people. Once those works are exchanged, everyone begins critiquing their peer works. While I'm critiquing so-and-so and such-and-such's work, so-and-so and such-and-such are critiquing mine. Poof! Magic. That's the basic principle of a workshop. Then everyone gets together and talks about the creative works they've read, and we do it in a way that helps benefit the creative work—we illustrate strengths in the work and make careful suggestions to improve the work.

Because of the size of our class, we will not workshop everyone's poems every week. We will build a workshop schedule and try to work efficiently through each week of workshops though.

Give it a few weeks. You'll see what I mean. We'll work on our schedule in-class, during Week One.

HOW WILL I BE GRADED IN THIS CLASS?

Grading Elements:

Attendance and Participation	30%	300pts
Weekly Poems & Workshop Poems	25%	250pts
Weekly Critiques	30%	300pts
Final Portfolio	15%	150pts

Assessment of Elements:

Attendance—this is a key component in any workshop. Therefore, failing to attend class will lead to serious deductions. For example, your second unexcused absence will cost you 30pts. Your third will cost you an additional 70pts (30+70=100 total), and if you miss more than three class, you will lose the entire 300pts allotted for Participation.

Participation—Similarly, this is a key component to any workshop. Therefore, failing to participate will lead to similar serious deductions. By the way, if you don't submit your weekly poems, workshop poems, or critiques on time, this will also hurt your participation. So will not taking part in our discussions.

Weekly Poems & Workshop Poems—Original works are graded on timely completion, evidence of growth, and evidence of care in crafting.

Weekly Critiques—Critiques are also graded on timely completion, evidence of growth, and evidence of care in crafting.

Final Portfolio—The final portfolio will evaluate your growth, self-analysis, and application of revision.

COURSEWORK, ASSIGNMENTS, AND FINAL PORTFOLIO

Weekly Poems—By the end of the term, you should have submitted at least ten weekly poems. To achieve this number, please submit to me 1-2 poems each week, from week two to week nine. If you're short on inspiration or looking for a challenge, please view my weekly challenge prompts.

Weekly Challenge Prompts—At least three weekly poems this term will need to respond to one of our weekly challenge prompts. You don't necessarily have to do these prompts, nor do you have to do week two's prompt during week two, and only week two (you could do week two's challenge during week five and you'd be fine). These are just little prompts that might stir something in you.

The prompts are as follows

FOR WEEK TWO

Weekly Challenge: take something that is usually considered wonderful (or horrible) and make it appear horrible (or wonderful). As an example, I once saw a horse shoe crab eating a dead seagull (horrible), but there was something beautiful about how delicately the crab was picking the bird apart.

FOR WEEK THREE

Weekly Challenge: using a formal scheme, write either a sonnet, villanelle, or sestina

FOR WEEK FOUR

Weekly Challenge: Write a failed love poem. This could be a poem about failed love or a poem that fails to convey love.

FOR WEEK FIVE

Weekly Challenge: using bright, vivid, concrete imagery and poetic language, submit a single poem that is three pages long.

FOR WEEK SIX

Weekly Challenge: Get weird. Write several short, vivid, one or two line concrete images and mash them together to see what you get.

FOR WEEK SEVEN

Weekly Challenge: Use at least three of the tropes and/or schemes from our handout as you craft a poem

FOR WEEK EIGHT

Weekly Challenge: Pick one of the following objects and create a 10+ line extended metaphor (or conceit) that explores something meaningful in the human experience or in your own life.

-canteen	-deer tine	-banana	-calendar	-windowsill
-camerav	-cat toy	-accent rug	-pasta	-ladybug

FOR WEEK NINE--

Weekly Challenge: Create a blueprint for your own poetic form (how many lines, how many feet per lines, what rhyme scheme or repetition for the lines? and write one or two poems in that form.

Weekly Critiques—You will be expected to submit a critique of your peers' Workshop Poems. These are due on the day that we workshop the poem, and will include on-story, and end-note critiques. The end-note critique will be at least half a page, single-spaced, 12 point font with standard margins. See our online handouts about critiques for more information.

Tips for Weekly End-note Critiques—

You will be expected to read your peers' poems. The first time you read, set the pencil aside and focus on the language, the story, and your initial impressions. After that first reading, write down a few of your reactions. What emotions did the poem evoke? What surprised you? Were there confusing parts—parts that could have used some more detail? Read the poem a second time and note spelling and grammar errors, jot down questions, and make sure to praise words, phrases, and sections you particularly like.

Once you have read the manuscript twice type a formal response to your peer. First, focus on the strong points of the poem. Describe to your peer what you particularly thought was clever/entertaining/moving and why. Next, briefly describe to the author what you thought the poem was about. (It is very helpful for an author to see how readers' impressions of this differ.) The last part of your letter should consist of constructive criticism. Point out moments in the poems that confused you, language that seemed imprecise, inconsistencies in tone, etc. You may make suggestions as to how the author might approach these issues, but remember that the author ultimately has ownership of the poems and what happens in them. It is of utmost importance that your response letters are specific, constructive, and respectful.

Here are some more ideas for elements you might focus on in your response letters:

- The poem's beginning: tell the writer what the opening did for you—what it promised, and to what degree he or she followed through on that promise.
- Form: do you have a strong sense of the structure and form?
- Point of view: can you define it? (1st person: I, 2nd person: you, 3rd person: he, etc) Is it consistently employed throughout the poems, or does it wobble and shift? What is the effect of that wobbling? What gets lost? (This question is a big one—give it some thought.) Is this the best point of view for the poem? Why or why not?
- Detail, imagery, and setting: are the details sharp, sensory, and strictly necessary to the poems form and intent? What is extraneous? Or not adequately developed? Why would a stronger sense of detail and place benefit these particular poems? Be very specific.
- Language and style: often it is the writer's language that makes a poem seem rushed or predictable, trumped up (melodramatic), or self-indulgent. Where is the writer's voice at its most believable? Give a specific example or two. Now ask yourself where the writer has fallen into overwriting, generality, abstraction, clichéd-in a word: falseness. We all do it every day, but in this class, it is our work to recognize and zap it. We are looking for clear, vivid language and the voice of a living, breathing person. Good writing—fiction or non-fiction has a spoken quality. Be on the lookout for stiffness and false formality, or the equally false super-cool slang.
- Be on the lookout for grammatical errors, typos, and misspellings: you need not try to correct them all, but do point out any patterns or problems you noticed, and mark one or two in the manuscript. Our goal is to bring these down to a bare minimum, and to train ourselves to be careful in all matters of craft from large to small. You will be irritated by typos and carelessness in others' manuscripts. Therefore, proofread your own before you submit.
- The story line, or dramatic action: is there too much information/intent jammed in, so that the poem seems summarized rather than alive on the page? Where could the writer slow down? What (and who) could the writer throw out of the poem altogether—and why? Is there a rising action? A climax? Does the ending both surprise and seem the "only way" it could have ended? Does the progression of the poem make sense to you? Why or why not?

Workshop Poems—You will submit at least two poems to the class this term. These poems will be read and critiqued by your peers. Please don't submit poems you think are already complete. No one likes a show off. Instead, submit poems that are strong but you think need some help. That's the goal of critique—helping the creative process.

Final Portfolio—Your final portfolio will be survey of your work in this class. Please include the following:

- 3 Critiques that you wrote to your peers—show your best, most helpful critiques
- 3 Critiques that your peers wrote for you—which peer-critiques helped you revise your own work the most?
- 3 of your strongest Weekly Poems—show your best, unrevised work of the term
- 3 poems that have moments, but still need growth—which poems do you trust have content even though the execution of the poem isn't quite there?
- A copy of the original draft of each of your Workshop Poems
- A well-polished revision of each of your Workshop Poems
- A well-polished revision of at least one Weekly Poem that *was not* workshopped
- A 400+word self analysis of your work this term, especially focused on your growing process and the way you approached the writing and revision process during this workshop

VERIFIABLE ILLNESSES OR EMERGENCIES

If you have a verifiable emergency or you are exceptionally ill, please do what you need to do, take care of what you need to take care of, and whenever you get a chance, let me know what is going on. We'll work on getting you caught up or pursue other options if they apply to your situation.

On the other hand, if you have sniffles, tickets to the big game, some previously scheduled appointment, or no urge to show up to class, it is not something that should keep you from getting work to me on time. Use your two "free" absences wisely, and make sure you submit your work in a timely manner.

MANDATED REPORTING

It should be noted that as of January 1, 2013, all college personnel are required by the state of Oregon to report any information that they receive regarding any sort of suspected abuse of minors, individuals under the age of 18. Please keep this in mind as you choose and develop your essays and/or assignments.

DISABILITY SERVICES

Students who may need accommodations due to documented disabilities, who have medical information which the instructor should know, or who need special arrangements in an emergency, should speak me during the first week of class. If you have not accessed services and think you may need them, please contact Disability Services, 917-4789. If you have documented your disability, remember that you must complete a Request for Accommodations form every term in order to receive accommodations.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

Please familiarize yourself with the many campus resources offered to LBCC students. The Albany Campus Library (917.4628) is one such resource. Writing Helps (a cooperative writing service including ESOL, Writing Center, Writing and Study Skills Labs and more) and LBCC's Writing Center or Online Writing Lab (OWL) assistants, tutors, and peer tutors are also great resources. Benton Center, too, has a tremendous amount of resources that will help you in math, writing, and many other courses. Please ask for more information.

WR 242 Fall 2014 Schedule

WEEK ONE

SEPTEMBER 30—TUESDAY

Syllabus, expectations, assignments

OCTOBER 2—THURSDAY

Read: Poetic Forms and Meter (online handout)

Read: Tropes and Schemes (online handout)

From our 16 page, online reading packet--

..Rebecca Lindenberg's "In the Museum of Lost Objects"

..Rebecca Lindenberg's "Girl with the Typewriter Eyes"

..Rebecca Lindenberg's "The Girl with the Ink-Stained Teeth"

WEEK TWO

Weekly Challenge: take something that is usually considered wonderful (or horrible) and make it appear horrible (or wonderful). As an example, I once saw a horse shoe crab eating a dead seagull (horrible), but there was something beautiful about how delicately the crab was picking the bird apart.

OCTOBER 7—TUESDAY

Read: "Some Tips for Workshop Critiques" (online handout)

Read: "Example Critiques" (online handout)

Workshop:

1. _____

2. _____

OCTOBER 9—THURSDAY

Workshop:

3. _____

4. _____

WEEK THREE

Weekly Challenge: using a formal scheme, write either a sonnet, villanelle, or sestina

OCTOBER 14—TUESDAY

Workshop:

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

OCTOBER 16—THURSDAY

Workshop:

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

WEEK FOUR

Weekly Challenge: Write a failed love poem. This could be a poem about failed love or a poem that fails to convey love.

OCTOBER 21—TUESDAY

From our 16 page, online reading packet--

..Craig Arnold's "The Invisible Birds of Central America"

..Craig Aronld's "Meditation on a Grapefruit"

..Anne Carson's "Town of the sound of a Twig Breaking"

Workshop:

11. _____

12. _____

OCTOBER 23—THURSDAY

Workshop:

13. _____

14. _____

15. _____

WEEK FIVE

Weekly Challenge: using bright, vivid, concrete imagery and poetic language, submit a single poem that is three pages long.

OCTOBER 28—TUESDAY

Workshop:

16. _____

17. _____

18. _____

OCTOBER 30—THURSDAY

From our 16 page, online reading packet--

..Jim Daniel's "The Fall"

..David Berman's "The Spine of the Snowman"

..David Berman's "Snow"

WEEK SIX

Weekly Challenge: Get weird. Write several short, vivid, one or two line concrete images and mash them together to see what you get.

NOVEMBER 4—TUESDAY

From our 16 page, online reading packet--

..Yusef Komunyakaa's "Thanks"

Workshop:

1. _____

2. _____

NOVEMBER 6—THURSDAY

Workshop:

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

WEEK SEVEN

Weekly Challenge: Use at least three of the tropes and/or schemes from our handout as you craft a poem

NOVEMBER 11—TUESDAY

****No class today: Veteran's Day****

NOVEMBER 13—THURSDAY

Workshop:

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

WEEK EIGHT

Weekly Challenge: Pick one of the following objects and create a 10+ line extended metaphor (or conceit) that explores something meaningful in the human experience or in your own life.

- canteen -deer tine -banana -calendar -windowsill
- camera -cat toy -accent rug -pasta -ladybug

NOVEMBER 18—TUESDAY

From our 16 page, online reading packet--
..Leslie Scalapino's "Instead of an Animal"
..Frank Bidart's "Ellen West"

Workshop:

9. _____ 10. _____

NOVEMBER 20—THURSDAY

Workshop:

11. _____ 12. _____

13. _____

WEEK NINE

FOR WEEK NINE--TUESDAY AUGUST 19

Weekly Challenge: Create a blueprint for your own poetic form (how many lines, how many feet per lines, what rhyme scheme or repetition for the lines? and write one or two poems in that form.

NOVEMBER 25—TUESDAY

From our 16 page, online reading packet--
..B.H Fairchild's "Beauty"
..Rodney Jones' "Remembering Fire"
..Louise Gluck's Lamium

Workshop:

14. _____ 15. _____

NOVEMBER 27—THURSDAY

****No class today: Thanksgiving Day.****

WEEK TEN

DECEMBER 2—TUESDAY

Workshop:

16. _____ 17. _____

18. _____

DECEMBER 4—THURSDAY

T.B.A

WEEK ELEVEN (FINALS WEEK)

DECEMBER 9—Tuesday

Due: Final Portfolio