ENG 305 700: Intermediate Poetry Writing
Fall 2020

"My responsibility as a poet, as an artist, is to not look away" ~Nikky Finney

Professor: Dr. Cheryl R. Hopson
Location: WEB
Office Location: CH 114
Office Hours: W 1-3pm
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COURSE DESCRIPTION (from the university catalogue): An intensive course in the writing of poetry. Some attention to the practice and prevalent theories of contemporary poets.

TEXTS: *Writing Poems,* Eighth Edition (Michelle Boisseau, Hadara Bar-Nadav, and Robert Wallace); ISBN: 978-0-205-17605-2; and *Furious Flower: Seeding the Future of African American Poetry* ISBN: 978-0-8101-4154-4

COURSE OVERVIEW: This version of ENG 305 is informed by the idea that as the late writer Tillie Olsen states, "Writers need readers," and by the late poet and intellectual June Jordan's idea that poetry "does not lie." It is as well informed by the notion that to write well one needs to read and to practice; as well as to engage in the process of revision, editing, and peer review through workshop.

In the course, students read chapters on revision and form, as well as poems by newly established contemporary African American poets. Students also workshop one another's poetry, read widely in the contemporary African American poetic tradition outlined in *Furious Flower,* as well as engage with the courses theme of "Internal and External Dialogues" (more on this soon).

There are seven asynchronous class sessions that occur via Zoom (and will be recorded). These **Tuesday** sessions will run from **9:35am-10:40am,** during which I will discuss the readings, talk with you about your poetry, poetics, and the course, as well as write with you for 20 to 25 minutes each Tuesday, and according to a prompt. The course culminates a chapbook consisting of 12-15 original poems written during the semester, and engaging the course readings and theme.

The theme of this ENG 305 is "Internal and External Dialogues." This theme encourages students to consider, engage with, read, and give voice to the ways in which we as humans talk to (as well as listen to or refuse) ourselves and to others. This includes subjects we run toward or avoid; the verbiage, tone, and voices we use to communicate and to hide and, I trust, some of the wonder and musicality of language in action.

PLAGIARISM: Representing someone's words as you own is grounds for failure in this course. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. The following is the definition of plagiarism that we abide by at WKU: "Plagiarism is defined as any use of another writer's words, concepts, or sequence of ideas without acknowledging that writer properly. This includes not only direct quotations of another writer's words, but also paraphrases or summaries of another writer's concepts or ideas without acknowledging the writer properly (i.e., citing them)." http://www.wku.edu/csa/policies/plagiarism.php Plagiarism, representing someone else's words as your own, is grounds for failure in this course. It will not be tolerated.

LATE WORK: There are occasions when students may need extra time to complete an assignment. However, unless said students seek and receive approval from me in advance of submission, late work is not accepted.

Minimum Requirements for the course include:
1. Read, mark up, and consistently provide your classmates with thoughtful, constructive feedback on their work submitted for workshop, via Blackboard
2. Write a chapbook consisting of twelve to fifteen poems written and workshopped during the

semester.
3. Complete all assignments.
4. Engage with classmates via Discussion Board posts and response posts.
5. *Read and engage with* Writing Poems *and* Furious Flower.

ASSESSMENT: There are five occasions in which you are required to write and submit original poems for workshop (see below). At four times during the course of the semester you will submit a collection of three poems each via Blackboard. Students will workshop poems with their classmates and include a minimum of nine in their final chapbooks.

GRADES

Chapbook		**40 points**
Statement of Purpose	5 points	
Table of Contents	5 points	
Draft	10 points	
Final Chapbook	20 points	
Workshop		**30 points**
Poetry Submissions		**30 points**
3PS	2 points	
3PS	4 points	
3PS	6 points	
3PS	8 points	
1PS	10 points	

I will use the following equivalents for computation of final grades: A = 90-100 B = 80-89 C = 70-79 D = 60-69 F = 0-59

WKU Mask Policy: Out of respect for the health and safety of the WKU community and in adherence with the CDC guidelines, the University requires that a cloth face covering(reusable or disposable) that covers both the nose and mouth must be worn at all times when in public areas within all buildings. Students must properly wear face coverings while in class regardless of the room size or the nature of the classroom activities. Students who fail to wear a face covering as required will be in violation of the WKU Student Code of Conduct and will be asked to comply or will face disciplinary action, including possible dismissal from the University. Accommodations to face coverings must be determined by the Student Accessibility Resource Center and documented before a student may attend class.

Communication: I encourage all students to meet with me during office hours to discuss class-related issues. Outside of office hours, the best way to contact me is by email. Emails received over the weekends are returned on Monday.

A Note about Email Etiquette: College is a good time to develop the formal email skills expected of you in the work world. In your messages, please observe the rules of formal letter writing. Include a relevant subject line, begin your message with a greeting ("Dear Professor Hopson") and end with a closing (Best, Janie Smith -- or whatever closing you prefer). Proofread, spellcheck, and use standard spelling, punctuation and capitalization.

Title IX Misconduct/Assault Statement
        Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU's Title IX Sexual Misconduct/Assault Policy (#0.2070) at https://wku.edu/eoo/documents/titleix/wkutitleixpolicyandgrievanceprocedure.pdf and Discrimination and Harassment Policy (#0.2040) at https://www.wku.edu/policies/docs/251.pdf.
        Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson, 270-745-5398 or

Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121.

Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are "Responsible Employees" of the University and **MUST** report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you
confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center at 270-745-3159.

ADA Accommodation Statement: In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, Room 1074. The SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at sarc.connect@wku.edu . Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

The following specific dates are required on syllabi for full-semester courses: 8/31/20201 (Last day to add or drop a class without a grade); 11/2/2020 (Last day to drop a class with a W); 10/25/2020 (60% point: Students who stop attending class or participating in online class before this date will be assigned an FN rather than an F.)
Other dates of interest: Labor Day (Sept. 7) is a class day. Election Day (Nov. 3): no classes, university closed. Thanksgiving break (Nov. 23-27). Classes resume, exclusively online, Nov. 30.

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS:
Weeks 1 and 2

8/25/2020 Tuesday Asynchronous Zoom Class: 9:35am-10:40am –Introduction to the Course

Read: WP "Tale, Teller, and Tone" pp. 137-157
Assignment: Write a series of poems (3) in which you open with an admission of error, however minor or major. That is, experiment with writing out of a voice (first person, preferred) that admits fault. Follow the lines wherever they take you. What mistake or error haunts the speaker of your poems?
Workshop: Use Track Changes in Word to workshop, e.g., read, engage with, and provide critical feedback on **one** of your classmates' poetry submissions (via Discussion Board on Blackboard).
Complete workshop by and Submit 3 original poems by 9/3/2020, 11:59p.m. (via Blackboard)

Weeks 3 and 4

9/8/2020 Tuesday Asynchronous Zoom Class: 9:35am-10:40am

Read: FF "Communities and Social Movements in Black Poetry" pp. 5-20; and a selection of poems that follow, e.g. 21-33
Assignment: Family myths bind families for generations. They are always told after the fact. This is important because each family can be selective about the events or incidents it chooses to remember and preserve. The main character tends to be a male; it is the women in families who assume the primary responsibility of keeping and passing down family myths to subsequent generations. Family myths relate incidents of the family's history or qualities of family members and are often told and retold without regard to accuracy. Some are positive, some are not. The effect and characteristics of these myths are created through 1) emotional content, 2) the manner in which the story is told, or 3) simply through the emotional impact the story has on the family. Family myths have incredible power over an individual's growth as well as on family relations. They are generally fantasies about the love, support, and the caring nature of one's family origin. Develop a series of poems in which imagine and or engage with family myths prevalent within your biological and or national family. Write in the second-person, and without regard to fact. In fact, this assignment provides poets the ability to engage with hyperbole and the "tall tale," e.g. made-up story, in poetry.
Workshop: Use Track Changes in Word to workshop, e.g., read, engage with, and provide critical

feedback on **one** of your classmates' poetry submissions (via Discussion Board on Blackboard). **Complete workshop, and submit 3 original poems by 11:59pm on September 9, 2020.**

Weeks 5 and 6

9/22/2020 Tuesday Asynchronous Zoom Class: 9:35am-10:40am

Read: WP "Devising and Revising" pp. 201-218
Assignment: Write a 150-word Statement of Purpose. Upload to Blackboard via DB. Read and respond to two of your classmates' SOPs.
Due by 11:59pm on 9/29/2020, 3 original poems, and Statement of Purpose for your chapbook, which should include your topic and tentative title. Required length: 150-200 words, max.

Weeks 7 and 8

10/6/2020 Tuesday Asynchronous Zoom Class: 9:35am-10:40am

Read: FF: "Race, Experiments, and the Black Avant Garde" pp. 69-82, and a selection of poems from the section that follows the essay.
Assignment: On the rhetorical device *apostrophe* – a form of making a specific intimate address to another person. More commonly known as a punctuation mark, apostrophe can also refer to an exclamatory figure of speech. The definition of apostrophe as a literary device is when a speaker breaks off from addressing one party and instead addresses a third party. This third party may be an individual, either present or absent in the scene. It can also be an inanimate object, like a dagger, or an abstract concept, such as death or the sun. Because there is a clear speaker and change of addressee, apostrophe is most commonly found in plays. It does, however, sometimes occur in poetry and prose. http://www.literarydevices.com/apostrophe/. Write a series of poems in which you begin with an apostrophe to someone specific, giving a person or people instructions on how to behave under certain circumstances. Be bossy but also self-revealing. Examples of apostrophes,

- Twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder what you are. (...
- O holy night! ...
- Then come, sweet death, and rid me of this grief. (...
- O, pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth. (...
- Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean – roll! (...
- Welcome, O life!

Due: Table of Contents for Chapbook by 10/6/2020 and Three Original Poems due by 11:59pm.

Workshop: Use Track Changes in Word to workshop, e.g., read, engage with, and provide critical feedback on **two** of your classmates' poetry submissions (via Discussion Board on Blackboard). **Complete workshop by 11:59pm on 10/13/2020**

Weeks 9 and 10

10/20/2020 Tuesday Asynchronous Zoom Class: 9:35am-10:40am

Read: WP "Verse" pp. 23-40
Assignment: **Due: Draft of Chapbook Due (minimum of eight poems) by 10/24/2020**

Weeks 11 and 12
Election Day 11/3/2020 Class Does Not Meet

Read: WP "The Sound (and Look) of Sense" pp. 77-94
Assignment: Music: the science or art of ordering tones or sounds in succession, in combination, and in temporal (sequential/chronological) relationships to produce a composition having unity and continuity.

Ritornello: (Italian diminutive of *ritorno* return): a short recurrent instrumental passage in a vocal composition, or "little return."

 "To improvise is to join the world, or to meld with it. One ventures from home on the thread of a tune." ~Gilles Delueze

What was the "thread of a tune" on which you ventured from home? What songs, melodies, or rhythms mark your transition from adolescent to teenager, from middle school to high school to college? What song marks your changeover from naïve to experienced, fearful to willing, stranger to beloved, from friend to archenemy; from outsider to family? Develop a soundtrack for transitional moments in your life. Next write a series of poems in which you incorporate some aspect of any or all songs included on your playlist. Allow yourself the freedom to create and to collaborate with a musician/song. See what comes.

Workshop: Use Track Changes in Word to workshop, e.g., read, engage with, and provide critical feedback on **two** of your classmates' poetry submissions (via Discussion Board on Blackboard). **Complete workshop and submit three original poems by 11:59pm on 11/6/2020.**

Weeks 13 and 14

11/17/2020 Tuesday Asynchronous Zoom Class: 9:35am-10:40am

Read: FF "Toward a Pan African Poetics" pp. 147-153; a selection of poems from the section that follows.
Assignment: Revise and edit chapbook
Workshop: Your choice to work and edit alone or to work with a fellow classmate.
One Original Poem due by 11:59pm **on 11/18/2020**

Week 15
Chapbook Due by 11:59pm on Thursday, December 7, 2020.