



**FACULTY OF ARTS  
Department Of English**

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**ENGL 436.01: CREATIVE WRITING, POETRY: SHORT FORMS**

**Fall 2021**

**Class Schedule (MoWe/2:00 - 3:15pm/online via Zoom and D2L)**

<b>Instructor</b>	Dr. Larissa Lai
<b>Email:</b>	larissa.lai@ucalgary.ca
<b>Web Page:</b>	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
<b>Office Hours:</b>	I will be available to answer your questions or speak to your concerns after class each day, via Zoom. If you'd like to talk to me at another time, please request an appointment and I'd be happy to meet with you via Zoom.

**Course description:**

This is a class in writing short form poetry. The first half of the course will address some of the basic elements of writing poetry including: image, music, alliteration, assonance, consonance, rhyme, rhythm, line, metaphor, voice, defamiliarization, speaker, persona, tone, meter. You will then begin to practice short forms, both contemporary and traditional including: sonnet, lipogram, blues, found poem, ghazal, glosa, haiku, incantation, pantoum, prose poem, and spoken word. You might invent a form of your own. This course demands a lot of reading and writing. You will post poems, reading notes and questions on D2L every week. Expect to work hard, and more importantly, expect to write regularly. Each week several of you will submit a small selection of poems for critique by your professor and peers the following week. There will be two short readings every week, to which you will be required to respond. We will also read and discuss the work of contemporary poets. You will attend at least one public poetry reading and report back on it. Admission to this course is by portfolio.

**Online Structure:**

This course will take place online via Desire2Learn (D2L) and Zoom. Because of the workshop and discussion nature of the course, it's necessary to attend the synchronous Zoom sessions. This is a participatory class. Sessions will not be recorded because recorded sessions will be of little use after the fact. A missed class or two because of unforeseen circumstances is okay. Just let me know in advance. If you think you might miss a lot of classes, however, this course is probably not for you.

## Course learning outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Engage with the basic elements of poetry writing including: image, music, alliteration, assonance, consonance, rhyme, rhythm, line, metaphor, voice, defamiliarization, speaker, persona, tone, meter.
2. Write eleven different contemporary and traditional forms including: sonnet, lipogram, blues, found poem, ghazal, glosa, haiku, incantation, pantoum, prose poem, and spoken word.
3. Engage in a regular writing practice
4. Produce a portfolio for entry into senior poetry-writing courses
5. Engage in productive creative writing workshop critiques in order to help their peers improve their writing
6. Make use of critiques received and witnessed to improve their own work.

## Texts and readings:

Braid, Kate, and Sandy Shreve. *In Fine Form: A Contemporary Look at Canadian Form Poetry*. 2nd edition. Half Moon Bay: Caitlin Press, 2016.

Tysdal, Daniel Scott. *The Writing Moment: A Practical Guide to Creating Poems*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2014.

## Learning technology requirements:

Students will need to have access to a laptop computer or smartphone in class time. There is a D2L site for to which you will post your poetry and critiques (see [d2L.ucalgary.ca](https://d2l.ucalgary.ca)).

## Assessments and Evaluation:

In principle, all work must be double-spaced and in a legible font (12 point). In practice, however, you may vary these things for aesthetic reasons, in other words, to shape the way the poem looks on the page.

There is no Registrar-scheduled Final Examination for this course. All assignments as described below must be completed in order to pass the course.

### **1. Weekly poems                      15%**

#### **15 poems X 1 point each**

You will write two poems per week, either through the exercises offered by Tysdal, or one of the forms as described and illustrated by Braid and Shreve. These are clearly prescribed on a

week-to-week basis in the Course Schedule. This is a demanding practice that will require you to write every week if not every day. The reward, beyond what you will learn through practice, is that if you do it— on time— you will receive full marks. This is a "get it done" exercise. In other words, for this exercise, I am not seeking quality, I am seeking timely completion. Late submissions will get a zero.

Note, however, that the course offers 19 opportunities to submit a poem. This means that you get four "throwaways", in other words, four occasions during which you can bow out, skip, forget, be sick, or have a major family event or emergency with no explanation required and no consequences. The flipside of this is that I will accept no excuses for not posting at least fifteen poems to D2L.

You can, of course, write as many poems during the term as you like. However, you'll have the opportunity to post a maximum of 19. You'll get points for 15.

## **2. "Hot Seat" Poems                  6%**

Three times over the course of the term you will put a poem up for workshop, in other words for feedback from your professor and peers. For each of these "hot seat" poems you will receive two points on top of the one you'd receive for an ordinary, non-workshopped poem. You must always post your work in a timely fashion, but it is extra important to do so for the "hot seat" poems because your peers will need time to do their critiques.

These poems will be posted in a special D2L folder, which will be accessible for critique by your peers. On your hotseat day, you will receive a full round of verbal feedback from your professor and peers on the poem you submitted for critique. You can use this critique to make the poem stronger. (On days when you're not on the hotseat, listen to the kinds of critiques that are being made for the person who is. Can you extrapolate from that critique to make your own work stronger?)

The protocol when you are in the hotseat is to listen quietly and take notes. Take note especially of the critiques that will be useful to help you make the poem stronger. If you don't agree with any particular critique, your job is not to respond. In fact, you must not respond; defensiveness is annoying and beside the point. Instead, consider what it might be that you've put on the page that has prompted the disagreeable critique. What could you change in your own writing to foreclose such a critique? (Note that it's impossible to completely foreclose odd or undesirable critiques. Sometimes we just have to live with them. One of the major contradictions of being a writer is remaining a sensitive person, yet developing a thick skin.)

## **3. Critiques                                  15%**

Each class you will produce three to ten sentences of written feedback for each of the writers being critiqued that week. It's important that both the student under critique and the professor receive this. I will set up a function on D2L to make it work. The day your own work is being

critiqued, you obviously do not need to critique your own work, but you are still required to provide a critique for that week's other writer(s). Critiques are compulsory, and you will be graded on the depth and intelligence of your engagement with the work of your peers. Critiques should generally begin by saying something both specific and positive about the work under scrutiny, followed by more substantive/difficult critique. Please close your critique with a second specific and positive observation. Specific and positive comments could pertain to what is working well or could address a specific detail that strikes you as sharp, beautiful, interesting etc. Substantive critique should always be framed constructively, in other words, it should be framed to help the writer improve. Ad hominem attacks are strictly forbidden. Overly general statements, positive or negative, are also discouraged. ("I like it" is not any more useful than "I didn't like it".) Under no circumstances are you to dismiss another student's work because you don't like its form or subject matter. Critique must be conducted in terms of what the work in question is attempting to accomplish.

Each student is required to critique his/her colleagues' work with care and in some detail. These critiques are due the night before the class discussion; it should be your own initial and thoughtful response to the work. Keep in mind how useful these critiques are to you as a writer. It follows that to receive helpful critiques you must give helpful critiques. Each critique should not take you hours, but should be an encapsulation of your careful, intense reading skill, which you will hone to a sharp edge over the course of the term. You will include a selection of your best critiques in both your mid-term and final portfolios. While the 15% being evaluated here is for just getting it done, at the portfolio stage, you will be evaluated on your ability to read and criticize constructively and intelligently, so it's worth doing your best each time. You'll be amazed as well how much you learn about your own practice by critiquing the work of others.

#### **4. Key points and questions 15%**

For the reading each week, please post one key point and one question for discussion. When we get to the Braid and Shreve text, you can either post a point from the introductory material or briefly explicate a line that interests you from one of the poems they offer. Full marks for completion.

#### **5. Poetry Reading Report 4%**

Attend a public poetry reading and write a one-page report on what you observed. Online readings are fine. This seems to be the way much of the literary world is sharing its work these days. Full marks for the completion of the exercise.

**Extra credit:** Attend and submit a one-page report on a second public poetry reading to receive 4% extra. Note then, that it is technically possible to get 104% as a percentage grade for this course, although of course, the system will not process a grade higher than 100%.

#### **6. Mid-Term Portfolio 15%**

This portfolio should contain your ten best poems written for the class so far, revised and reworked from your initial submissions. No material written prior to our class will be accepted--

it must be material from the exercises you did for this course. At top of the page for each poem, please reference which exercise the poem emerges from.

The Mid-Term Portfolio should also include your five best (ie. most helpful) critiques so far.

This course component will be graded for quality. The Mid-Term Portfolio may be submitted late; however, a late Mid-Term Portfolio will be penalized with the loss of a third of a grade (eg., an A- to B+) for each calendar day (not class meeting) that the Mid-Term Portfolio is overdue. No assignments will be accepted one week past the assignment deadline without the prior consent of the instructor.

### **7. Final Portfolio                      30%**

This portfolio should contain your ten best poems since the last portfolio. You will have revised your poems based on feedback you've received and/or learning you've gleaned through our readings, discussions and workshops. No repeats of material submitted in the Mid-Term Portfolio. You may, however, submit poems written at any point during the term, whether previously posted on D2L or not. All of the poems should come from exercises you did for this class-- no material written before the course or outside it, please. Please reference the exercise from which the poem emerges before each poem.

The Final Portfolio must also contain your five best critiques since the Mid-Term Portfolio.

This course component will be graded for quality. The Final Portfolio may be submitted late; however, late Final Portfolios will be penalized with the loss of a third of a grade (eg., an A- to B+) for each calendar day that the Final Portfolio is overdue. No assignments will be accepted five days past the assignment deadline without the prior consent of the instructor.

### **Attendance and participation expectations:**

This is a workshop-based creative writing class. Attendance is compulsory because it is necessary to make the class work. While there is no participation grade as such, you must attend class in order to receive the grades for the poems, critiques, remarks and questions that you will post for each class as described above. You are expected to be present and fully-engaged for all classes.

If you must miss a class or two for reasons unforeseen, please let me know in advance. One or two missed classes is no big deal. More than that, and will be penalized as described above.

### **Conduct:**

Students, employees, and academic staff are expected to demonstrate behaviour in class that promotes and maintains a positive and productive learning environment. As members of the University community, students, employees, and academic staff are expected to demonstrate conduct that is consistent with the University of Calgary Calendar, the Code of Conduct and

Non-Academic Misconduct policy and procedures, which can be found at:  
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

### **Policy on use of electronic devices:**

Since this is an online class, you are expected to be at your computer, phone or other device in order to take part in the class. Please refrain from checking email, social media, or texts or engaging in other distractions-- digital or material-- during class time.

### **Grading System:**

Students will be given a percentage grade for each class assignment. The final grade will be converted to a letter grade at the end of term. Fractions of percentage points will generally be rounded up. Students will receive a letter grade on their transcripts. The percentage conversation scale is as follows:

90 + %	A+	4.0	67 – 69 %	C+	2.3
85 – 89 %	A	4.0	64 – 66 %	C	2.0
80 – 84 %	A–	3.7	60 – 63 %	C–	1.7
77 – 79 %	B+	3.3	55 – 59 %	D+	1.3
74 – 76 %	B	3.0	50 – 54 %	D	1.0
70 – 73 %	B–	2.7	0 – 49 %	F	0

### **Academic Integrity:**

This course, like all courses at the University of Calgary, holds students to high standards of honest and responsible scholarship. Please consult the [Academic Integrity website](#) for a detailed description of university policies, which will be enforced in this course. Cases of suspected academic misconduct will be referred to the Associate Dean of Arts for a ruling.

Plagiarism is a type of academic misconduct. Plagiarism occurs when a student presents the ideas, expression of ideas, or work of another person as their own. Another equally serious form of plagiarism occurs when a student submits something they have written themselves for credit in two or more courses without first securing written permission from all those course instructors. Consequences for plagiarism include failure on the assignment, failure in the course, and possible suspension or expulsion from the university. Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense.

**Deferral of term work and final examinations:**

Should you require an extension for completion of term papers or assignments beyond the deadline of five days after the end of lectures, an [Application of Deferment of Term Work](#) must be completed. It is the student's responsibility to initiate this process with the instructor. The University also has regulations governing the [deferral of final examinations](#).

**Grade appeals:**

To pursue a Reassessment of Graded Term Work or a Reappraisal of an Academic Assessment, Consult the [University Calendar](#) and request advice from the English Department at [engl@ucalgary.ca](mailto:engl@ucalgary.ca). Please note that mere dissatisfaction with a grade is not sufficient grounds for an appeal.

**[English Department Website:](#)**

For more information about courses, programs, policies, events and contacts in the Department of English.

**Scribe and Muse Club for English Students:**

The [Scribe and Muse Reading and Writing Club](#) fosters and champions reading and writing through community service, leadership, and engagement. Our email address is [smecuofc@gmail.com](mailto:smecuofc@gmail.com).

**Writing support:**

[The Student Success Centre](#) offers both online and workshop writing support for U of C students.

**[Academic regulations and schedules](#)****Student Academic Accommodations:**

The Student Accessibility Services website is available [here](#). University accommodation policies can be found at the following links:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6-1.html>

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6.html>

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6-2.html>

**Program Advising and Student Information Resources** is done through the Faculty of Arts Students' Centre. Office location: SS102; phone: 403-220-3580; email: [ascarts@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ascarts@ucalgary.ca)  
Website: <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate>

**Instructor's Intellectual Property**

Course materials created by instructors, including presentations, posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments, and exams, remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may not be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites

without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

**Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy**

Student information will be collected in accordance with usual classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty and teaching assistants. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary.

**Sexual violence policy:**

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/sexual-violence-policy.pdf>

**Other important information:**

- [Wellness and Mental Health Resources](#)
- [Student Success](#)
- [Student Ombuds Office](#)
- [Student Union \(SU\) Information](#)
- [Graduate Students' Association \(GSA\) Information](#)
- [Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points](#)
- [Safewalk](#)

**Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI):**

Please participate in [USRI Surveys](#) toward the end of the course. The feedback they provide helps us evaluate teaching, enhance student learning, and guide students as they select courses.