

# Intro to Poetry: An Exploration of Poetry as Politics, Pop Culture, & Periscope

or

A Revolt Against W.H. Auden's  
"Poetry makes nothing happen"



**course number:**

LIT 2030 – 0001

**instructor:**

Dr. Alexa Doran

she / her / hers

**course meeting time:**

MWF 12-12:50

**classroom:**

WMS 225

**office:**

WMS 428

**email address:**

[aed16e@fsu.edu](mailto:aed16e@fsu.edu)

**course description:**

In "Intro to Poetry: An Exploration of Poetry as Politics, Pop Culture, and Periscope" we will engage with a diverse set of poets (including Claudia Rankine, Terrance Hayes, and Anna B. Sutton),

forms, critics, and subgenres of poetry in order to work toward a meaningful understanding of the role of poets and poetry in our current culture. Students should expect to read, review, analyze, and compose poetry in this course.

**required texts:**

Textbook Assignment Complete		
Textbook		
Status	Required	
ISBN	9781555976903	Citizen: An American Lyric, Author: Rankine, Publisher: Graywolf, Edition: 1ST, Year Published: 2014, Copyright Year: 2014
Status	Required	How to Be Drawn, Author: Hayes, Publisher: Penguin Publishing Group, Edition: 1ST, Year Published: 2015, Copyright Year: 2015
ISBN	9780143126881	
Status	Required	Kinky, Author: Denise Duhamel, Publisher: Orchises Press, Edition: 1st, Year Published: 1997, Copyright Year: 1997
ISBN	9780914061618	
Status	Required	Savage Flower, Author: Anna B. Sutton, Publisher: Black Lawrence Press, Edition: 1st, Year Published: 2021, Copyright Year: 2021
ISBN	9781625570239	
Status	Required	Mules of Love, Author: Ellen Bass, Publisher: BOA Editions, Edition: 1st, Year Published: 2002, Copyright Year: 2002
ISBN	9781929918225	
Status	Required	There Are More Beautiful Things Than Beyonce, Author: Morgan Parker, Publisher: Tin House Books, Edition: 1st, Year Published: 2017, Copyright Year: 2017
ISBN	9781941040539	

## Class Calendar

### W. 1. 5

Attendance Poem

What to Expect

Generative Writing Exercise:

What is something you want to react to but haven't had time to react to yet? Given enough time, how would you react?

HW:

Read Mary Ruefle PDF

### F. 1. 7

Attendance Poem

Generative Writing: Ruefle

In Class: Small Group Activity/ Class Discussion: Poems as Potion? What ingredients go in an effective poem?

HW:

Read "Four Temperaments"

**M. 1. 10**

Attendance Poem

Four Temperaments Discussion

Four Temperaments Generative Writing (Several poems which temperaments)

HW:

Read "Political Packet"

Reflection 1

**W 1. 12**

Attendance Poem

In Class Discussion Political Packet

Poetry Prompt 1

HW:

Work on Poetry Prompt 1

**F. 1. 14**

no class – work on Poetry Prompt 1

**M. 1. 17**

no class – Martin Luther King Jr. Day

**W. 1. 19**

Attendance Poem

Introduction to Denise Duhamel

Mini Workshop Poem 1

HW:

Read Denise Duhamel's *Kinky* 1<sup>st</sup> 1/2

**F. 1. 21**

Attendance Poem

Class Discussion *Kinky*

HW:

Read Denise Duhamel's *Kinky* 2<sup>nd</sup> t 1/2  
Reflection 2

**M. 1. 24**

Attendance Poem

Introduction to Claudia Rankine

In-class small group activity: *Kinky*

HW:

Read Claudia Rankine's *Citizen* 1<sup>st</sup> 1/2

**W. 1. 26**

Attendance Poem

Class Discussion: *Citizen*

HW:

Read Claudia Rankine's *Citizen* 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/2  
Reflection 3  
Poetry Prompt 2

**F. 1. 28**

no class – work on Poetry Prompt 2

**M. 1. 31**

Attendance Poem  
Mini Workshop Poem 2

HW:

Read Pop Culture Packet

**W. 2. 2**

Attendance Poem  
In Class Discussion Pop Culture Packet  
Generative Writing Pop Culture  
Introduction Terrance Hayes

HW:

Read Terrance Hayes' *How to Be Drawn* 1<sup>st</sup> 1/2

**F. 2. 4.**

Attendance Poem  
Class Discussion *How to Be Drawn*

HW

Read Terrance Hayes' *How to Be Drawn* 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/2  
Reflection 4

**M. 2. 7**

Attendance Poem  
Small Group Activity *How to Be Drawn*  
Go over Poetry Analysis Guidelines

HW:

Poetry Analysis Proposal

**W. 2. 9**

Attendance Poem  
Introduction to Morgan Parker  
Class on Zoom today \*\*\*

**F. 2.11**

**d**

no class – work on Poetry Analysis / Read Morgan Parker's *There Are Things More Beautiful Than Beyoncé* 1<sup>st</sup> 1/2 / Reflection 5

**MWF 2.14-18 CONFERENCES Poetry Analysis**

**M 2. 21**

Attendance Poem  
Class Discussion *There Are Things More Beautiful Than Beyoncé*

HW:

Work on Poetry Analysis  
Read Morgan Parker's *There Are Things More Beautiful Than Beyoncé I* 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/2

**W 2. 23**

Attendance Poem  
Poetry Analysis Due at Midnight  
In Class Group Activity: Parker

HW:

Poetry Prompt 3

**F. 2. 25**

no class – work on Poetry Prompt 3

**M. 2. 28**

Attendance Poem  
Mini Workshop Poem 3

HW:

Read Periscope Packet

**W. 3. 2**

Attendance Poem

Periscope: Generative Writing

Introduction to Anna B. Sutton

HW:

Read Anna B. Sutton's *Savage Flower* 1<sup>st</sup> 1/2

Reflection 6

Poetry Prompt 4

**F. 3. 4**

no class – work on Poetry Prompt 4

**M. 3. 7**

Attendance Poem

In Class Discussion: Anna B. Sutton

Mini Workshop Poem 4

HW:

**W. 3. 9**

Attendance Poem

Small Group Activity: Sutton

Book Review Guidelines

HW:

Work on Book Review

**F. 3. 11**

Attendance Poem  
Book Review Peer Review

**MWF 3.14-18 NO CLASS SPRING BREAK**

**MWF NO CLASS 3.21–25 CONFERENCES Book Review**

**M. 3. 28**

Attendance Poem  
Introduction to Ellen Bass  
Class on Zoom\*\*

HW:

Work on Book Review  
Read Ellen Bass's *Mules of Love* 1<sup>st</sup> 1/2

**W. 3. 30**

Attendance Poem  
In Class Discussion *Mules of Love*  
HW:

Poetry Prompt 5

**F. 4. 1**

no class – work on Poetry Prompt 5  
Book Review due at Midnight

**M. 4. 4**

Attendance Poem  
Mini Workshop Poetry 5

HW:

Read Ellen Bass's *Mules of Love* 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/2

**W. 4. 6**



Attendance Poem  
Small Group Activity: *Mules of Love*  
Poetry Prompt 6

**F 4.8**

no class - work on Poetry Prompt 6

**M 4.11-15 no class Conferences Poetry Portfolio**

**M. 4.18**

Attendance Poem  
Mini Workshop: Poetry Portfolio

HW:

Poetry Portfolio

W. 4. 20

CELEBRATORY READING

HW:

Poetry Portfolio

**F. 4. 22**

CELEBRATORY READING

HW:

Poetry Portfolio

**\*\*\*POETRY PORTFOLIO, REVISIONS, AND LATE WORK DUE  
MONDAY APRIL 25\*\*\***

## MAJOR ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES

### **POETRY ANALYSIS**

10+ pages

Select a poem (not from the course reading) which functions either as a criticism of pop culture or as a political statement and analyze it from the following viewpoints:

*20% Role as Pop Culture Criticism/Political Statement*

The essay should include a thesis which indicates the poet, poem title, and your theory about how the poem is creating pop culture criticism or a political statement.

Example thesis:

In Anne Sexton's "Snow White and the Seven Dwarves", Sexton uses a mix of imagery and sound to re-write the traditional narrative of Snow White to shine light to America's flaws, such as an overemphasis on beauty and the normalization of greed.

*20% Imagery*

Using specific examples from the source text, discuss how the poet is using imagery to make their point about pop culture/politics.

*20% Sound*

Using specific examples from the source text, discuss how the poet is using sound to make their point about pop culture/politics.

*20% Narrative*

Using specific examples from the source text, discuss how the poet is using narrative to make their point about pop culture/politics.

*20% Form*

Using specific examples from the source text, discuss how the poet is using form to make their point about pop culture/politics.

## **POETRY COLLECTION REVIEW**

7+ pages

Choose one of the collections from class to review.

*20% Capture the poet's voice*

Someone is reading this review because they are deciding whether or not to invest in the book. One of the best services you can do for a poet is introducing someone to their unique voice. You can do this by including quoted material which reflects the author's unique sound/imagery/syntax etc.

*20% Identify patterns*

Give readers a lens into the poetry collection they would not have otherwise. They can read the blurb for a summary, so you need to push beyond that. Does the author always include an epigraph? Write only in ghazals? Make consistent references to 1980's ballads? What patterns stick out and might reel a reader in?

*20% Contextualize*

Choose a context and connect the collection in question to other texts within the context? For example, where does this collection fit within the poet's larger repertoire? How does it connect to other collections with similar subject matter? or to collections which focus on the same region? Or how does it compare with collections by the same press? Or which have won the same award?

*20% Personalize*

Discuss your personal connection to the collection. What does it mean to you as an individual? What did the collection change for you?

*20% Strengths/Weaknesses*

Discuss the collection's strengths, and if you can identify any, the weaknesses. Are there poems which stand out as exceptional? as weak? Does the poem focus on all

four temperaments or only some of them? If you were the editor of the collection, what might you have done differently? Be sure to use quoted material and specific examples to support your claims.

## **POETRY PORTFOLIO**

13+ Pages

Collect the six poems you composed into a portfolio with a title, an introduction, and six process statements.

### *20% Introduction*

What you put in the intro is really up to you, but you might consider including who you are as a poet, what your process is, patterns the readers might look forward to, or who/what influenced this portfolio.

### *40% Six Poems*

At least two drafts of each poem of the six poems composed in class (you can add poems you wrote on your own if you like)

### *40% Six Poem Discussions*

For each poem include a 100–200-word process statement. Possible questions which might be addressed include: How did you compose this poem? Who or what influences helped shape the poem? What changes did you make and why? What did you enjoy about writing it? not enjoy? What do you hope the reader will take away from the poem?



