

**Poetry Workshop**  
**ENGLISH 288, 388, 488**

10:00-11:15am TTh

PL320

Spring Semester, 2015

Instructor: Gayle Brandeis

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W.H. Auden said “A poet is, before anything else, a person who is passionately in love with language.” This workshop will give us an opportunity to explore our passion for language in a thorough and rigorous way. We will deepen this love by reading poems from the text, discussing craft and form, reading and commenting on each other's poetry, and creating fresh poems. This class will help you refine and expand your poetic voice and give you a broader sense of possibility for your work.

**Text:** *Best American Poetry, 2014*, edited by Terrance Hayes

**General guidelines:**

--Come to class on time and prepared, and be sure to turn off all cell phones, iPods, etc. Laptops are okay for notes and in-class writing, but you may not go online.

--Type all assignments in 12pt Times New Roman (or a comparable standard font) in black ink, page numbers clearly marked.

—Email your poem to me at least 48 hours before your scheduled workshop and I'll post it on Moodle, or bring copies of the story the class session before your workshop time (we will set the schedule the first day of class). I will pass out a separate sheet of workshop guidelines to clarify the process. It is important to me to create a safe, supportive workshop environment, one in which everyone is honest but kind. My greatest hope is that all of you will leave workshop excited to make your work even better.

—**All students will turn in a sonnet on 3/3 and a sestina on 4/23**

—**288 students will write one explication, 388 students will write two explications, and 488 students will write three explications of poems from the text.** An explication is essentially an interpretation or analysis of the poem, exploring the craft of the work (how the poet used line breaks, rhyme, metaphor, tone, etc.) You're essentially dissecting the poem, exploring its inner workings.

--Be willing to explore, to push your own boundaries, to dig deep and take creative risks. And don't forget to have fun!

## **Grading:**

—Two absences are acceptable (though not desirable); anything beyond that will affect your grade.

Your grading will be based, in equal measure, upon these things:

—Your original poetry (you will submit one poem for workshop and one significant revision of this poem in your portfolio, along with a short essay exploring your revision choices, your sonnet and sestina assignments, and three of your favorite poems from in class writing exercises.) **488 students will write and revise two poems.**

—Your explication(s).

--Your participation in class (including discussions, workshop critiques and in-class writing exercises)

## **Class Schedule**

**T 1/20** Introduction to our time together--intentions, expectations, etc.

**Th 1/22** Discuss “Foreword” by David Lehman (p. ix) plus Introduction by Terrance Hayes (p. xxiii) and related craft issues, write

**T 1/27** Discuss “Pan del Muerto” by Kurt Brown (p. 16) and related craft issues; workshop; write

**Th 1/29** Poet Cathy Linh Che will be visiting our class; please read her poem “Projector” in advance: <http://www.hyphenmagazine.com/blog/archive/2014/04/april-lit-projector-cathy-linh-che> Cathy will be reading in the library this evening at 6:30pm; please come if you can!

**T 2/3** Discuss “OK Cupid” by Major Jackson (p. 69; commentary, p. 170) and related craft issues; workshop; write

**Th 2/5** Discuss “Rape Joke” by Patricia Lockwood (p. 85; commentary, p. 175) and related craft issues; workshop; write

**F 2/6-S 2/7\*\*\***Saeed Jones will be giving a reading on 2/6 and a workshop on 2/7—don’t miss the chance to learn from this important poet!\*\*\*

**T 2/10** Discuss “vivisection (you’re going to break my heart)” by Marty McConnell (p. 103; commentary, p. 177) and related craft issues; workshop; write

**Th 2/12** Discuss “One El Paso, Two El Paso” by Ray Gonzales (p. 55; commentary, p. 166) and related craft issues; workshop; write **1st explication due for 288, 388 and 488 students.**

**T 2/17** Discuss “Write Whiter” by Tony Hoagland (p. 67; commentary, p. 169) and related craft issues; workshop; write

**Th 2/19** Discuss “News from Harlem” by Kwame Davis (p. 31; commentary, p. 159) and related craft issues; workshop; write

**T 2/24** Discuss “Sonnet, with Pride” by Sherman Alexie (p. 1; commentary, p. 151) and related craft issues; workshop; write

**Th 2/26** Discuss “Julliard Cento Sonnet” by Philip Dacey (p. 28; commentary, p. 158) and related craft issues; workshop; write

**T 3/3** Discuss “To the Fig Tree on 9th and Christian” by Ross Gay (p. 49; commentary, p. 164) and related craft issues; workshop; write **SONNET DUE**

**Th 3/5** Discuss “The Spring Cricket Repudiates His Parable of Negritude” by Rita Dove (p. 42) and related craft issues; workshop; write

**F 3/6-S 3/7\*\*\*** Short story author Mark Maynard will be giving a reading on Friday and a workshop on Saturday—don’t miss it!\*\*\*

**T 3/10** Discuss “An Etiquette for Eyes” by Cate Marvin (p. 96; commentary, p. 176) and related craft issues; workshop; write

**Th 3/12** Discuss “These Hands, if Not Gods” by Natalie Diaz (p. 36; commentary, p. 160) and related craft issues; workshop; write **2nd explication due for 388 and 488 students.**

**T 3/17 Spring Break**

**Th 3/19 Spring Break**

**T 3/24** Discuss “Selection from Tanka Diary” by Harryette Mullen (p. 107; commentary, p. 178) and related craft issues; workshop; write

**Th 3/26** Discuss “Decoded” by Jon Sands (p. 123; commentary, p. 184) and related craft issues; workshop; write

**T 3/31** Discuss “Mindful” by Rachel Zucker (p. 149; commentary, p. 193) and related craft issues; workshop; write

**Th 4/2** Discuss “I Grade Online Humanities Tests” by Sandra Simonds (p. 131; commentary, p. 186) and related craft issues; workshop; write

**T 4/7** Discuss “Paint Me a Penis” by Eileen Myles (p. 108; commentary, p. 179) and related craft issues; workshop; write

**Th 4/9 Out of Town**

**T 4/14** Discuss “Stanley Kunitz Ode” by Sharon Olds (p. 111; commentary, p. 180) and related craft issues; workshop; write **3rd explication due for 488 students.**

**Th 4/16** Discuss “Saga” by Mary Ruefle (p. 121; commentary, p. 184) and related craft issues; workshop; write

**F 4/17-S 4/18 \*\*\*** Poets Gailmarie Pahmeier & David Lee will be giving a reading Friday and a workshop Saturday—this should be a blast; come if you can.\*\*\*

**T 4/21** Discuss “SCRIPT POEM” by Rosemary Griggs (p. 59; commentary, p. 168) and related craft issues; workshop; write

**Th 4/23** Discuss “Release from Stella Maris” by D. Nurkse (p. 110; commentary, p. 180) and related craft issues; workshop; write **SESTINA DUE**

**T 4/28** Discuss “During the Autopsy” by Corey Van Landingham (p. 135; commentary, p. 187) and related craft issues; workshop; write

**Th 4/30 Out of Town**

**T 5/5** Discuss “Calendar Days” by Jake Adam York (p. 146) and related craft issues; workshop; write

**Final Saturday, May 9 at 10am (turn in portfolios, have informal reading)**

## **SCHOOL POLICIES**

**Sierra Nevada College Mission Statement:** Sierra Nevada College graduates will be educated to be scholars of and contributors to a sustainable world. Sierra Nevada College combines the liberal arts and professional preparedness through an interdisciplinary curriculum that emphasizes entrepreneurial thinking and environmental, social, economic and educational sustainability.

**Core Themes:** Liberal Arts, Professional Preparedness, Entrepreneurial Thinking, Sustainability

**Learning Differences:** In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, students with a documented disability are eligible for support services and accommodations. If a student wishes to request an accommodation, please contact the Director of Academic Support Services, Henry Conover, at (775) 831-1314 x7534, [hconover@sierranevada.edu](mailto:hconover@sierranevada.edu).

**The Honor Code:** The faculty of SNC believes students must be held to high standards of integrity in all aspects of college life in order to promote the educational mission of the College and to encourage respect for the rights of others. Each student brings to the SNC community unique skills, talents, values and experiences which, when expressed within the community, contribute to the quality of the educational environment and the growth and development of the individual. Students share with members of the faculty, administration and staff the responsibility for creating and maintaining an environment conducive to learning and personal development, where actions are guided by mutual respect, integrity, responsibility and trust. The faculty and students alike must make diligent efforts to ensure high standards are upheld by their colleagues and peers as well as themselves. Therefore faculty and students accept responsibility for maintaining these standards at Sierra Nevada College and are obligated to comply with its regulations and procedures, which they are expected to read and understand.

**Consequences of Violating the Student Honor Code:** SNC students and faculty share the responsibility for maintaining an environment of academic honesty. Thus, all are responsible for knowing and abiding by the SNC Faculty/Student Honor Code published in the current SNC Catalog. Faculty are responsible for presenting the Honor Code and the consequences of violating it to students at the start of their classes AND for reporting all incidences of academic dishonesty to the Provost. Students are responsible for knowing what constitutes CHEATING,

PLAGIARISM and FABRICATION and for refraining from these and other forms of academic dishonesty. Violations of the Honor Code become part of a student's academic record.

1st Offense: Student receives a zero for assignment/exam and counseling with faculty on the honor code, consequences for violating the honor code, and the value of academic honesty in learning.

2nd Offense: Student fails course and receives counseling with faculty on the honor code, consequences for violating the honor code, and the value of academic honesty in learning.

3rd Offense: Student is expelled.

**The SNC Email System:** The SNC email system is the official communication vehicle among students, faculty members and administrative staff and is designed to protect the confidentiality of student information as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 Act (FERPA). Students should check their college email accounts daily during the school year.

Students have a right to forward their SNC e-mail to another e-mail account (for example, @hotmail or @gmail). However, confidentiality of student information protected by FERPA cannot be guaranteed for SNC e-mail forwarded to an outside vendor. Having email redirected does not absolve a student from the responsibilities associated with official communication sent to his or her SNC email account.