English 459
Advanced Poetry Workshop
Dr. Christine Butterworth-McDermott
SFASU Department of English
Ferguson 177
1-2:15 M/W-Spring 2016

Where To Reach Me:
E-mail: cmcdsfaclas@gmail.com (this is the easiest & best way to communicate with me);
mcdermotc@sfasu.edu
Phone: 936-468-2059; leave a message.
Office: Liberal Arts 227
Office Hours: 10-11:30 am MWF and 3:30-4:15 pm TR & by appointment.

Official Description:
Classroom analysis and discussion of student writing. Prerequisites: 12 hours of English
including ENG 261 and ENG 359 or graduate standing or consent of instructor. May be
repeated once for up to 6 hours.

Unofficial Course Description:
“A poet’s work is to name the unnameable, to point at frauds, to take sides, start arguments,
shape the world, and stop it going to sleep.” ~Salman Rushdie

Required Materials:
❖ Dorianne Laux, Facts About the Moon
❖ Ada Limón, Bright Dead Things
❖ Jamaal May, Hum
❖ James Tate, Memoir of the Hawk
❖ Plenty of money for copies.
❖ You need to be dedicated to both producing your own work and making others’
  work the best it can be.

Overview:
This course is a continuation of the skills learned in 359. Obviously, this course requires a
lot of writing. You will complete a collection of 8-10 linked poems (how they are linked is
up to you). There will also be plenty of workshopping of your own and others’ poetry. We
will also be talking about published work; why it is successful, what the author intended to
do with the work and how he/she achieved that effect. Except for work not turned in, all
work can be improved in the revision process. On the 400 level, however, I expect you to be
writing poems that are close to publishable.
459 helps to meet these Program Learning Outcomes:

- The student will demonstrate close reading skills and recognize strategies used by professional creative writers.
- The student will employ these techniques and strategies, crafting carefully composed, competent creative work in poetry.
- The student will articulate useful, critical editorial advice for peer writers.
- The student will demonstrate strategic revision on completed creative work.
- The student will compose a complete, polished manuscript of substance.

Grade Breakdown:
There’s no real secret to my grading style—I am open to almost any subject matter, as long as the poetry is employing elements of craft—but the people who impress me most work hard, are precise, love what they do and show that in their efforts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Discussion</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Papers on Poetry Collections</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poems Workshopped</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poet Response to Workshop</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Large Group Wksp./Written comments</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Large Group Wksp./Oral comments</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project (chapbook)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

100%

Important Note: Two missed assignments (papers, poems, etc) will constitute failure of the class.

I FAIL the following
- Late work.
- Work with insufficient number of copies; this will count as late work. Make sure you get your copies done well in advance of class. Remember if your printer breaks down the library has printers & copy machines. Contact me if you need to.
- Incomplete work—all creative work must be presented in its entirety.
- Assignments/creative work not typed in standard format
- Work with an abundance of spelling/grammatical errors
- Plagiarized papers/poems will result in failure of the course (see university policy below)
Attendance (5%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absences</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>B (5% of grade)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>C (5% of grade)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>D (5% of grade)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>F (5% of grade)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>fail the course (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Being absent is not an excuse for missed information or assignments. You should either e-mail a classmate (or me) to find out what went on in class if you are not able to attend. You should pick up any missed packets or material. You must be responsible for all the material discussed in class on the days you were absent—and for the material for the next class period. This is especially true of poems for Workshop. If you do not show up to your workshop day, you may not include those poems in your final project.

Cell Phone Policy:

Phones should be kept in pockets, purses, or backpacks—unless you are waiting for a notification during a family emergency (please tell me before class begins). If you text in class, I will count you as absent and you will receive 0s on your participation/quiz grades. Clearly this would affect your overall grade. Repeat offenders will be dropped a letter grade.

Class Discussion (10%)

You will have the paper assignment to do for each poetry collection, but you will also need to able to discuss the collection as a whole. Discussion on the days a collection is due is mandatory. I grade discussion on:

- Ability to discuss the material in class.
- Ability to ask intelligent, thoughtful questions. If you do not understand the work we’ve read, feel free to ask questions about what it means. Feel free to guess as well! Oftentimes you won’t be as off base as you might think. ☺
- Engagement with other students, particularly when they offer ideas (active listening)
- Respect for yourself, me, other students. Tread gently but don’t shy away from your opinion either. Even if you don’t agree with someone, treat them well.
Poetry Response Papers (20%; 5% each)

We will be reading four collections of professional poetry this semester. What I would like you to do is write a 3 page paper on each. Here’s the assignment, which should be written in MLA, with a formal tone, in essay format, and meticulously proofread/ spellchecked.

a) choose three poems which appear in a sequence.
b) write about how the poems “speak” to each other. How does the theme and/or craft of one poem work off the other. I expect a close textual reading of each poem and then a discussion of how they connect. You could discuss how the same image is played out.
c) Your paper should be organized around the question: why did the author choose to put these two poems in this order/place in the collection?

Professionalism (5%)

A portion of your grade is devoted to your ability to be professional and turn in all materials neatly and on time. This includes Rough Drafts, Final Drafts, Assignments, Portfolios, and email correspondence. I will grade you on whether:

a) you have emailed your rough draft to mcdermotc@sfasu.edu or cmcdsfaclass@gmail.com in a doc or docx file. This email needs to have a subject & a short note: “Hi, Dr. C., here’s my poems.” This email must come before class time.
b) you turned things in on time (at the beginning of class, I don’t accept late work)
c) everything is included and all requirements are met
d) everything is neat, easily readable (i.e. no faded printing, no colored ink), complete, ordered correctly and stapled.
e) everything is in the correct format (heading, correct genre format, correct font).
f) you have taken your assignment seriously (rather than phoning it in).

Four Poems Prepped for Workshop (10%)

You will be asked to workshop 4 poems at a time, so you will turn in packets of 4 poems to your peers. You will need to make enough copies for the class (including me). One poem should appear per page. Your packet should not be double-sided. If the poem runs more than a page, the phrase (cont’d) should appear in the lower right hand corner of the first page. You need to email me a copy of your poems. (This assists me in editing and getting your poems to people who may have missed class)

The poems must be linked in some manner—subject matter, idea, theme, form. Your poems should be meticulously proofread and presented in the most professional manner.
**Standard Format:**

- Poems need to be typed, single spaced on a sheet of white paper.
- Poems should be typed in a readable, 12 point font (preferably Times New Roman, Cambria, or Georgia) with one inch margins.
- Your heading (name, class title, etc.) need only appear on the first page of the packet, but your last name should appear on each subsequent page in the upper right corner.
- Your tentative theme should be indicated in your heading on the first page. Readers should read poems with this very vaguely in their minds (sometimes our links are not what we intend).
- The following is an example of how the heading should appear:

```
Poet Name
459
2-14-2009
Theme: Bone

Your Title
Your Poem Should Appear Here.
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If your poem goes onto a second page, *cont’d* should appear in the bottom right hand corner of the first page.

The second page would just have your last name and page number in the upper right hand corner.

Do not double side your work. I may do this for example work, but when you turn in your poems it should not be double sided. Remember, too, all formatting affects the overall feeling/reading of the poem, so don’t put something into columns or double-space unless you intend to.

**Grading for Poems:**

- All work MUST be turned in on the due date (at the beginning of class) or it will not be counted. If you do not turn in your work on time *in class*, I will not accept it, you cannot workshop it, and it cannot be revised. You will receive a 0/F. You cannot put that work in your portfolio.
- If you fail to make your workshop, you cannot use those poems in your project and you will receive a 0/F.
- All poems will be graded on imagery, use of language, placement, line breaks, and sound, which should be fairly sophisticated.
- All poems will be graded on professional format, spelling, etc. It is not your peers’ responsibility to correct typos/spelling errors, etc. Your poems should be presented in the “cleanest” way possible.
After I get your packets, I will include comments about how you can improve the poems. All comments will focus on how well you employ the elements of poetry. There should be a level of sophistication in terms of imagery, placement, and sound.

I will need to see how well you take my suggestions in your portfolio (how thoughtful, extensive, etc. your revisions are). Please save my edited copies for the portfolio.

Workshop (20%)
Each student will have a large group workshop on his/her 4 poems. Your job as peers is to:

A) **Write** significant, astute notes on each and every poem: both line edits and end comments (10%). You must be a careful reader. Remember make the poem the best it can be, not what you want it to be.

B) **Speak** about those poems in class in an intelligent and respectful fashion (10%).

I will grade you on your in-class comments and also collect written peer responses after each workshop, evaluate them, then return them to the poet. If you have poor handwriting or very small handwriting, *please type up your end comments.* If I can't read your writing, I may request this of you. If you do not make quality comments on the poet's work, you will be graded accordingly.

**Letter Grades in terms of poetry:**

A  exceptional use of imagery, language, placement, line length, and sound to highlight a specific message/idea. If rhyme is used it does not lean toward verse. Presented professionally. Poems are original in imagery & idea as well as sophisticated in use of craft

B  well-defined use of imagery, language, placement, line length, and sound to highlight a specific message/idea. If rhyme is used it does not lean toward verse. Poems are original in imagery & idea as well as sophisticated in use of craft, professionally presented in correct format. Not as original/sophisticated as an A but could get there with revision

C  simplistic or derivative use of imagery, language, placement, line length, and sound to highlight a specific message/idea, but presented in correct format. Rhyme leans toward verse. Revision would improve poems.

D  poorly developed use of imagery, language, placement, line length, and sound to highlight a specific message/idea OR incorrect format, simplistic rhyme, errors in terms of grammar or presentation.

F  plagiarized, grammatically unreadable, incomplete, doesn't fulfill assignment, not handed in.

*Except for poems not turned in (and thus not accepted), all creative work can be improved in the revision process.*
**Grading on Workshop:**

- Thoughtful and *constructive* written comments on peers' work in large group workshop are expected.
- Thoughtful and *constructive* oral comments in large group workshop are expected.
- Promptness, neatness of getting work to me and group students will be graded.
- Attendance and oral/written activity is mandatory.

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**Poet Response to Workshop (5%)**

I will ask the poet who has been workshopped to type up a one to two page response to their oral & written group workshop. The poet will discuss who gave them the best comments in workshop and what he/she learned about his/her craft from the experience.

This is also an opportunity to discuss any concerns he/she had regarding the process. This is to be turned in the *day after* you receive the large group workshop responses back from me and should address the oral portion of the workshop as well. *I will not remind you this is due, so please mark this on your calendar.*

- Response needs to be in MLA format
- Response must be written in a semi-formal tone (complete sentences, etc., but can use “I”)
- Response must mention specific responses from workshop (specific comments that helped you)

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**Poetry Portfolio (25%)**

At the end of the semester, you will hand in a collection of 8-10 linked poems. The collection will have a brief introduction about your intent and your execution. The poems should be arranged as they would appear in a book. You will have had a chance to workshop at least 4 of these poems in workshop. 4 other poems will be new. 2 poems are optional. **The project should be bound together in a folder with brads.** The order of the project should be:

- Title page
- Contents page
- Introduction
- Final poems (no headings, in aesthetic order)
- My graded copy (of your workshopped four)

**Revisions may include:**

- Verb changes
- Images developed, extended, changed
- Eliminations, block-outs
- Sound/rhythm development or changes
- Structural changes (i.e. line breaks, spacing)
My Pet Peeves:

Here’s the things that drive me crazy. Don’t do them and we’ll all have a happy semester! 😊

- Talking when others are talking. If someone “has the floor,” he/she is usually trying to make a worthwhile point. It will be in your interest to listen to them because it is polite.
- Students who are late, don’t show up, or participate in workshop. Remember we’re a team here and your input is important. If your classmates work their butts off to critique your work, you should do the same. It’s very clear who the “slackers” are. Slackers are graded accordingly. I have no respect for slackers.
- Okay, here’s the weird one—a lot of you already know it—I can’t stand it when people pack up early. I will try to never hold class over the allotted time, but if I am talking or someone else is, don’t move. Sit and listen—when I say “that’s it for today” you can start closing your book, putting stuff away, or zipping/unzipping your backpacks.
- The student who says, “I don’t know what this means,” but didn’t make an effort to look up the word or the reference on google.
- Never ever ever say that a poem “has no point.” It may not have a noticeable point to you as the reader at that particular moment, but I will say that to the writer it definitely has a point. Try to come from that place of understanding. You can say, “I’m not sure I’m getting this, but I think the poem is about...” is acceptable. “This has no point” is not. There’s a difference between “This poem is repetitive and I found it boring,” and “I’m not sure the repetition is working to help the message of the poem.”
- Please don’t say (to me, at least) that you “didn’t work on this all that hard” or “I’m not really a poet.” To be a poet, you just have to act like you care about poetry.
- Please don’t ask me to read your creative work outside of class ("Please read my novel!")) or someone else’s ("My girlfriend is a great poet, can you read her stuff?"). I’d like to say yes, but my time is really limited due to the amount I teach, how many theses I have, how much I have to grade, and my own creative & academic work.
- Meanness, prejudicial comments, arrogance, rudeness, general nastiness doesn’t fly here. Being mean isn’t cool, it’s mean and it’s bad karma. Kindness matters.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES YOU NEED TO KNOW:

Academic Integrity (A-9.1)
Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one’s own work when, in fact,
it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54)**

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

**Students with Disabilities**

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/)

**Calendar for 459**

*Subject to Revision as Necessary*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/20</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Intro.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>(For Next Time: You have to read Jamaal May's <em>Hum</em> by 2/3. Start as soon as you can.)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1/25</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Lecture on elements of poetry/craft/technique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/27</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Lecture on elements of poetry/craft/technique. <em>(For Next Time:)</em> Read student samples on the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/1</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Discuss project of linked poems. Discuss workshops/editing. Discuss papers. <em>(For Next Time:)</em> Read <em>Hum</em> by May. Write paper. POET 1 prepares poems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Discuss May, turn in papers. POET 1 hands out poems for workshop. <em>(For Next Time:)</em> Edit POET 1’s poems for workshop. POET 2 prepares poems.</td>
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2/8  M  POET 1’s workshop. POET 2 hands out poems for workshop. 
*For Next Time:* Edit POET 2’s poems for workshop.

2/10  W  POET 2’s workshop. *For Next Time:* Dorianne Laux’s *Facts About the Moon.* Write paper. POET 3 prepares poems.

2/15  M  Discuss Laux, turn in papers. POET 3 hands out poems for workshop. *For Next Time:* Edit POET 3’s poems for workshop.

2/17  W  POET 3’s workshop. *For Next Time:* James Tate’s *Memoir of the Hawk.* Write paper. POET 4 prepares poems.

2/22  M  Discuss Tate, turn in papers. POET 4 hands out poems for workshop. *For Next Time:* Edit POET 4’s poems for workshop.

2/24  W  POET 4’s workshop. *For Next Time:* Ada Limón’s *Bright Dead Things.* Write paper. POET 5 prepares poems.

2/29  M  Discuss Limón, turn in papers. POET 5 hands out poems for workshop. *For Next Time:* Edit POET 5’s poems for workshop.

3/2  W  POET 5’s workshop. POET 6 hands out poems for workshop. *For Next Time:* Edit POET 6’s poems for workshop. POET 7 prepares poems for workshop

3/7  M  POET 6’s workshop. POET 7 hands out poems for workshop. *For Next Time:* Edit POET 7’s poems for workshop. POET 8 prepares poems.

3/9  W  POET 7’s workshop. POET 8 hands out poems for workshop. *For Next Time:* Edit POET 8’s poems for workshop. POET 9 prepares poems.

*3/14 & 3/16: SPRING BREAK*

3/21  M  POET 8’s workshop. POET 9 hands out poems for workshop. *For Next Time:* Edit POET 9’s poems for workshop. POET 10 prepares poems for workshop

3/23  W  POET 9’s workshop. POET 10 hands out poems for workshop. *For Next Time:* Edit POET 10’s poems. POET 11 prepares poems for workshop
3/28 M  EASTER MONDAY

3/30 W  POET 10's workshop. POET 11 hands out poems for workshop. **For Next Time:** Edit POET 11’s poems. POET 12 prepares poems for workshop

4/4 M  POET 11’s workshop. POET 12 hands out poems for workshop. **For Next Time:** Edit POET 12’s poems. POET 13 prepares poems for workshop

4/6 W  POET 12’s workshop. POET 13 hands out poems for workshop. **For Next Time:** Edit POET 13’s poems. POET 14 prepares poems for workshop

4/11 M  POET 13’s workshop. POET 14 hands out poems for workshop. **For Next Time:** Edit POET 14’s poems. POET 15 prepares poems for workshop

4/13 W  POET 14’s workshop. POET 15 hands out poems for workshop. **For Next Time:** Edit POET 15’s poems. POET 16 prepares poems for workshop

4/18 M  POET 15’s workshop. POET 16 hands out poems for workshop. **For Next Time:** Edit POET 16’s poems for workshop. POET 17 prepares poems for workshop.

4/20 W  POET 16’s workshop. POET 17 hands out poems for workshop. **For Next Time:** Edit POET 17’s poems for workshop. POET 18 prepares poems for workshop.

4/25 M  POET 17’s workshop. POET 18 hands out poems for workshop. **For Next Time:** Edit POET 18’s poems for workshop. POET 19 prepares poems for workshop.

4/27 W  POET 18’s workshop. POET 19 hands out poems for workshop. **For Next Time:** Edit POET 19’s poems for workshop.

5/2 M  POET 19’s workshop  **For Next Time:** Start editing project.

5/4 W  Discuss editing/putting together project

**FINAL PROJECTS ARE DUE IN LAN 227 on Thursday MAY 12, 2015 by noon.**  
**They may be turned in earlier.**